OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S CHIEF SCIENCE ADVISOR

Professor Sir Peter Gluckman, ONZ KNZM FRSNZ FMedSci FRS
Chief Science Advisor

Media Release

EMBARGOED until Friday 7 July, 2017 at 6 am

Protecting and enhancing evidential input into the policy process is an important defence against the rise of post-truth polemic.

Sir Peter Gluckman, the Prime Minister's chief science advisor today released a report on "Enhancing evidence-informed policy making". In 2016 Prime Minister Key asked Sir Peter to further review the state of New Zealand's science advisory mechanisms as an update following his earlier report in 2013. Prime Minister English reaffirmed this request.

The New Zealand science advisory system has matured into one that is well regarded internationally. Nevertheless, globally there has been increasing concern about risks to the effective interface between science and public policy. The rise of post-trust and post-expert rhetoric elsewhere has influenced public policy decisions, a situation which New Zealand has fortunately thus far largely been spared, but we cannot be complacent.

In his covering letter to the Prime Minister Sir Peter states:

"*The worrisome rise of 'post-truth' polemic and the greater and easier promulgation of 'false news' that we have seen globally in recent times can be seen as threats to the democratic process, social cohesion and good governance. I believe that a commitment to protect and enhance the evidential input into the policy process is an increasingly important defence against these trends.*"

The report discusses the development of Departmental Science Advisors, a major development since 2013, and the role of the Committee of Science Advisors (CoSA). It explores in depth the relationship between academia and policy making, identifying the perceptional and actual barriers that have inhibited better engagement of the policy and academic communities.

The role, opportunities and limits on the use of big data in evidence-informed policy making are discussed and in particular in the context of the development of the social investment approach.

The increasing importance of the science advisory system in risk management, crises and emergencies is a further focus of the report. Some other dimensions such as horizon scanning and foresighting are briefly discussed.

There will always remain complexities at the interface between science and policy, and between science and society that largely relate to matters of effective engagement, transparency and accessibility of expertise. These issues will inevitably require ongoing consideration and discussion.

The report is available at www.pmcsa.org.nz (from Friday morning)

Mail: PO Box 108-117, Symonds Street, Auckland 1150, New Zealand
Physical: Ground Floor, Boyle Building (505), 85 Park Road, Grafton, Auckland 1023
Telephone: +64 9 923 6318 **Email:** csa@pmcsa.org.nz **Website:** www.pmcsa.org.nz

For further information contact Sir Peter Gluckman on 021 775568

Mail: PO Box 108-117, Symonds Street, Auckland 1150, New Zealand
Physical: Ground Floor, Boyle Building (505), 85 Park Road, Grafton, Auckland 1023
Telephone: +64 9 923 6318 **Email:** csa@pmcsa.org.nz **Website:** www.pmcsa.org.nz