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**IS AOTEAROA'S RESEARCH ETHICS
SYSTEM 'FIT FOR PURPOSE'?**

WORKSHOP SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

Aotearoa's research ethics landscape is fragmented, inconsistently applied, and increasingly strained by new technologies, workload pressures, and gaps in oversight beyond health research. This panel examines key vulnerabilities in the current system and explores whether a national research ethics statement could provide the coherence, protection, and resilience needed for a rapidly evolving research environment.

KEY POINTS AND OBJECTIVES

- Outline of Current System
- Potential Vulnerabilities
- Potential Solutions
- Benefits and Challenges of change
- Future forecasting



THE ECOSYSTEM

WHAT DOES IT DO WELL?

Aotearoa's current research ethics system excels in its flexibility, local responsiveness, and strong tradition of impartial, principled decision-making grounded in reviewer expertise and community values.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT CHALLENGES AND VULNERABILITIES?

The system is increasingly strained by inconsistent standards, gaps in oversight outside health research, limited resilience and capacity, and emerging challenges such as AI, big data, insurance ambiguity, and growing workload pressures.

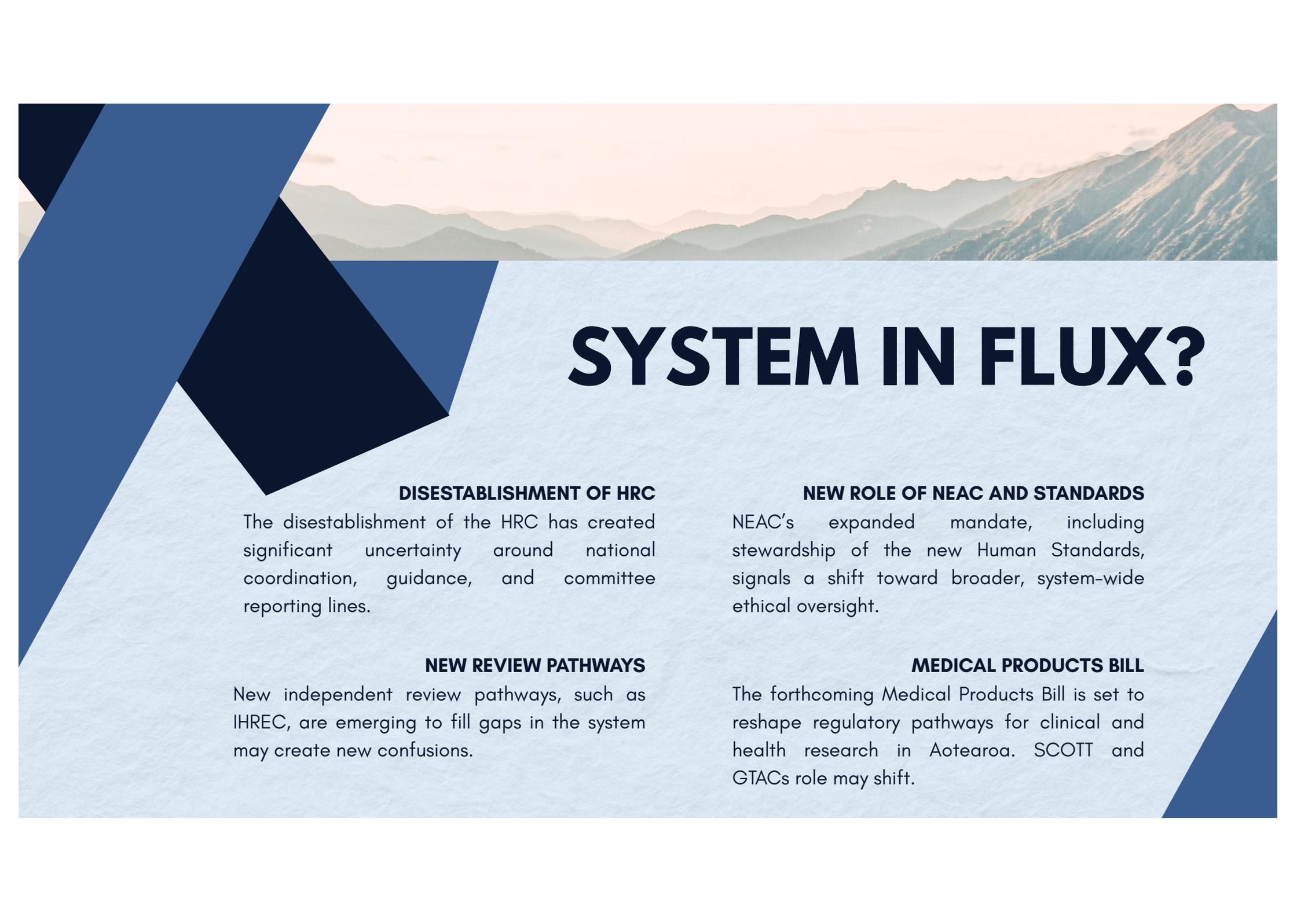
WORKSHOP QUESTION:

FOR THE NEXT 10 MINUTES

Consider the current **benefits** and **challenges** facing you in this area. Consider:

- Emergence of new tech/AI
- Workload and resourcing
- Guidance and reporting/oversight
- Independence of processes/silo'd approach
- What are we getting right?
- What are we not?





SYSTEM IN FLUX?

DISESTABLISHMENT OF HRC

The disestablishment of the HRC has created significant uncertainty around national coordination, guidance, and committee reporting lines.

NEW REVIEW PATHWAYS

New independent review pathways, such as IHREC, are emerging to fill gaps in the system may create new confusions.

NEW ROLE OF NEAC AND STANDARDS

NEAC's expanded mandate, including stewardship of the new Human Standards, signals a shift toward broader, system-wide ethical oversight.

MEDICAL PRODUCTS BILL

The forthcoming Medical Products Bill is set to reshape regulatory pathways for clinical and health research in Aotearoa. SCOTT and GTACs role may shift.



HOW OVERSEAS SYSTEMS WORK

AUSTRALIA

- National Statement for Human Research managed by NHMRC
- Registration process for HRECs
- HREA for clinical research (not mandatory)

UNITED STATES

- Federal regulations
- Single IRB Mandate: Multi-site research typically requires one IRB of record, enabling harmonisation

UNITED KINGDOM

- Oversight by Health Research Agency
- Integrated review system for health and social care research (IRAS)

CANADA

- Tri council Policy on Ethics
- Canadian Association of Research Ethics Boards (CAREB-ACCER) as a organisation for all IRBs

WORKSHOP QUESTION:

FOR THE NEXT 20 MINUTES

Consider the **future** of New Zealand **research ethics**:

- What can we learn from overseas?
- If a National Statement, who will own this?
- What are some challenges that are still present even under a 'unified' system?





THANK YOU

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