



**MEDICAL SCIENCES COUNCIL
OF NEW ZEALAND**

TE KAUNIHERA PŪTAIAO HAUORA O AOTEAROA

Fees Consultation Outcome 2024

Medical Sciences Council

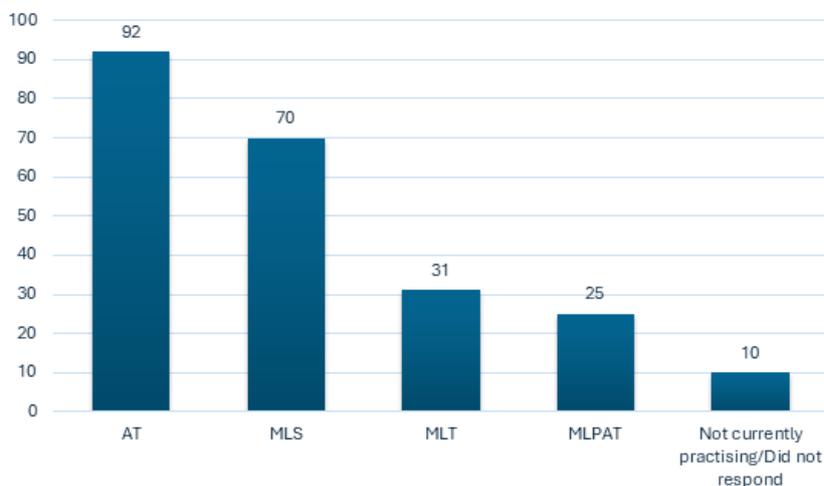
Fees Payable to Te Kaunihera Pūtaiao Hauora O Aotearoa | The Medical Sciences Council of New Zealand From 12 February 2024 for the Profession of **Anaesthetic Technology Practitioners**

Fees Payable to Te Kaunihera Pūtaiao Hauora O Aotearoa | The Medical Sciences Council of New Zealand From 12 February 2024 for the Profession of **Medical Laboratory Science**

Outcome of consultation of proposed changes to practitioner fees

Thank you to those individuals who took the time to read and respond to the consultation document on its [2023 review of fees](#) payable by medical laboratory science and anaesthetic technology practitioners.

This consultation ran from 6 November to 4 December 2023, proposing new fees for both medical laboratory science practitioners and anaesthetic technicians. A total of 228 responses were received – 92 were from anaesthetic technicians and 126 were from medical laboratory practitioners. This represents a response rate of 4.6% for the total workforce (approximately 5000 practitioners). Four responses were from organisations.



To decide about the fees increase, the Medical Sciences Council (the Council) was provided with summary statistics from the consultation responses, as well as all written feedback to the proposals.

Based on those responses the outcome determined by the Council is for -

- an increase in all fees
 - changes to time periods for reduced practising certificate fees for practitioners who apply after 1 December each year
 - removal of zero practising certificate fees for those practitioners applying for a first or return to practice 'practising certificate' after 1 February each year
 - introduction of a disciplinary levy.
-

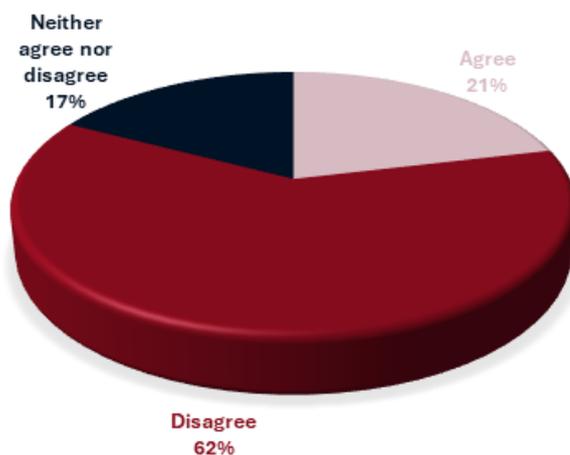
Outcome

Here's how that outcome was arrived at -

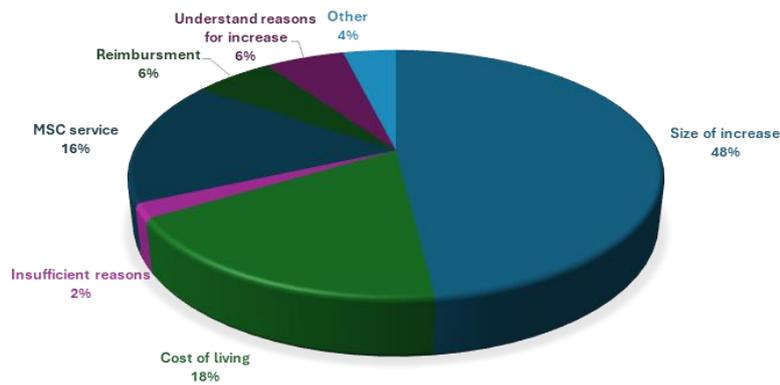
Proposal 1: Increase in all fees

Responses to the proposal to increase all fees were considered with the options – agree, disagree or neither agree nor disagree.

Although 62% of respondents did not support the proposal to increase all fees, the main reason noted was due to the proposed size of the change. Some respondents referred to the impact of the current cost of living changes and related this to the wages paid to practitioners.



Where there was agreement to the proposal this was explained by practitioners stating that they understood why the increase was necessary or because the cost of the practising certificate was covered by their employer.



Responses showed there continues to be a lack of understanding of the role of the Council, its functions and how it is funded.

Decision: The Council considered all the information presented to it. However, there are functions that it must carry out under the Health Practitioners Competency Assurance Act 2003 (HPCA Act). When considering the proposed budget and service level needed to provide effective regulation of practitioners, the Council determined that it has no option but to increase its fees as proposed.

Increasing fees will still mean that the Council operates a budget deficit in 2024-2025. Figures presented in October 2023 project a deficit, as explained below.

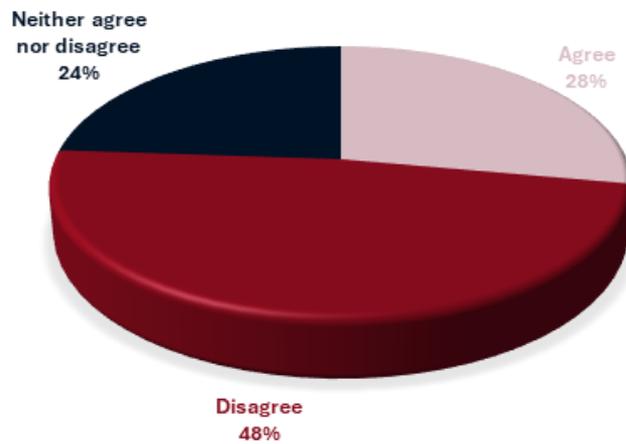
Medical Sciences Council	Draft budget 2024-2025
Income	
Practising certificate	\$1,624,096.00
Registration	\$ 263,714.00
Disciplinary levy	\$ 250,000.00
Other	\$ 56,150.00
Total income	\$2,193,960.00
Expenditure	
Council and profession	\$831,882.00
Secretariat services	\$1,655,906.00
Total expenditure	\$2,487,788.00
New surplus/(deficit)	(\$293,828.00)

Proposal 2: Remove reduced and zero fees for practising certificates issued after 30 September each year

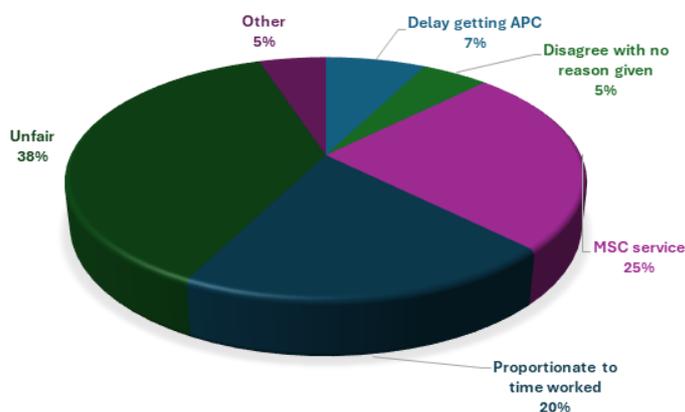
The Council currently offers a reduction in practising certificate fees for practitioners who apply for a first or return to practice 'practising certificate' after 30 September each year. The Council also offers a practising certificate for those practitioners applying after 31 January each year that has no associated fee.

The proposal to remove reduced fees was aimed at ensuring all practitioners would pay the same for their practising certificate regardless of the length of time they hold it.

Overall, 48% of respondents did not agree with this proposal.



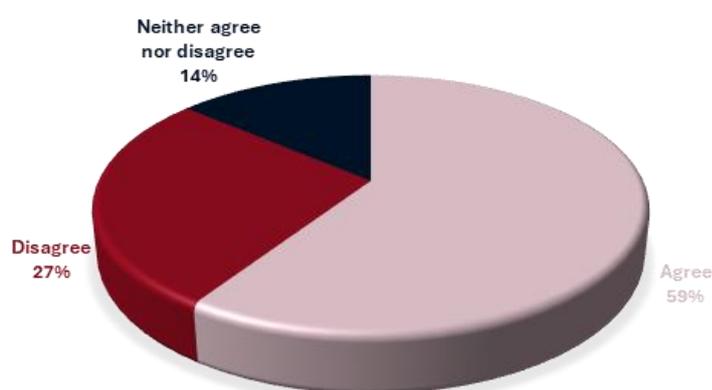
Responses showed there was a misunderstanding about the role of the Council and its functions. Some respondents claimed that it was unfair to charge the same amount for a practising certificate if it is only held for a short period, and others suggested a proportional fee. There was concern, however, that the total removal of any reduced fee could mean that individuals delay applying for certificates, and the impact that could have on workforce numbers.



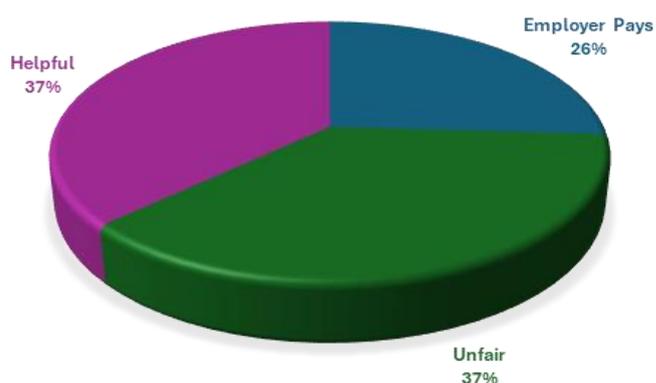
Proposal 3: Introduce a reduced fee for newly qualified practitioners entering the workforce

The Council had considered introducing a reduced fee to support newly qualified practitioners entering the workforce. Traditionally new graduates enter the workforce in December each year.

Feedback to this proposal was largely positive as this was seen as being a strategy to support those practitioners entering the workforce who have just completed their education with associated costs. Feedback against this proposal raised matters of fairness and the fact that employers either pay for or reimburse the practising certificate fee.



Although it is hard to make comparisons with other responsible authorities the Council reviewed fee information to understand how many offer a reduced fee for a partial practice year, or to see if reductions were offered for newly qualified practitioners.



The Council was informed that most responsible authorities do provide a reduced practising certificate fee although timeframes for reductions vary.

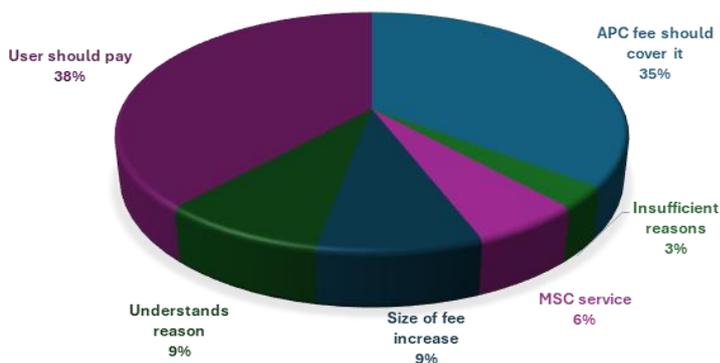
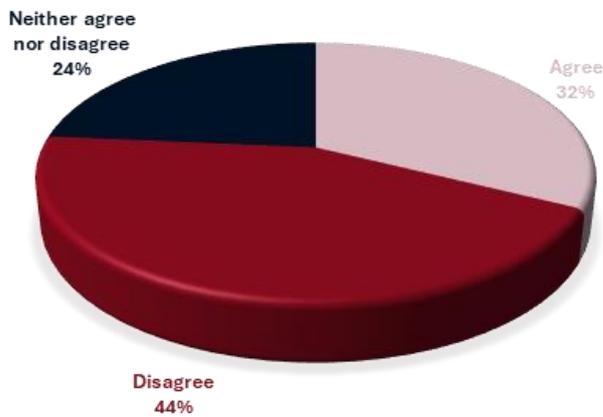
Decision: After considering the feedback to proposals two and three the Council made the decision to implement a reduced practising certificate fee for all practitioners who apply for a first, or return to practice certificate, after 1 December each year. It removed the zero fee for those practitioners who apply after 31 January, as providing a service for no fee is not sustainable.

Proposal 4: Introduction of a disciplinary levy

The Council has seen an increase in the number of cases referred to disciplinary processes and proposed a separate levy to cover those costs. The cost of discipline has historically been covered through the practising certificate fee.

In this instance 44% of respondents disagreed with the proposal to introduce the levy. Responses highlighted a lack of awareness of the purpose of the levy, with some replies (38%) suggesting that

the practitioner involved in the case should cover the costs. Others stated that a disciplinary levy, alongside the proposed fee increase, were excessive. Some 35% of respondents believed the Annual Practising Certificate (APC) fee should cover the cost of discipline.



Decision: The Council noted the responses, however, due to the increased volume of work and associated costs it agreed that with no alternative proposal to consider, the Council would introduce the disciplinary levy.

Council observations based on feedback received

The Council noted, as with previous consultations, some key themes. Information below explains why it could not consider some of the feedback.

Each authority is responsible for setting the fees for the practitioners they are responsible for regulating. Those fees are set in alignment with the business circumstances for each individual authority. It is therefore inappropriate to try and compare the fees paid by medical laboratory science practitioners and anaesthetic technicians with other regulated health professions in Aotearoa New Zealand. Fees are set through the review of budgets, reserves, and business decisions in consideration of the regulatory environment in which the authority operates. This includes taking into consideration matters of discipline.

It is not possible to align regulatory fees with practitioner salaries/wages. All operational revenue comes from practitioner fees (there is no general taxpayer contribution to any of its operations) and the Council must ensure there is sufficient revenue each year to carry out their workplan to meet legislative obligations. Fees are therefore set in alignment with the business year (which runs from April to March) and at a level to enable ongoing business sustainability.

There is a difference in the practising certificate fee for medical laboratory science practitioners and the fee for anaesthetic technicians. This is mainly due to fees being the main source of the Council's annual income.

Because there are more practitioners working in medical laboratory practice costs can be divided among a larger number. While there are significantly fewer anaesthetic technicians, the regulation requirements are no different.

Guidelines from the Office of the Auditor General advise that there can be no subsidisation of costs across the two different professions. Therefore, the fees differ accordingly.

Practitioner fees are reviewed on an annual basis. Fees were increased in 2019, 2020, 2022 and now 2024.

The **Council publishes a set of audited financial statements each year** - these are **available on the website** at www.msccouncil.org.nz. The **Council also publishes its strategic plan** and other information. This plan sets out the various strategies and initiatives for meeting core regulatory functions that are funded through the practitioners' fees framework. The Council is aware that those providing feedback have had to do so from the 2021-2022 accounts. This is and remains due to circumstances outside of the Council's control.

Consultation feedback demonstrated that some respondents continue to perceive the Council as a member organisation for the two professions (medical laboratory science and anaesthetic technology).

The purpose of the Council is to protect the health and safety of the Aotearoa New Zealand public by providing ways for practitioners, from these two professions, to demonstrate they are competent and fit to practise.

The Council has a responsibility to ensure their legislative functions are carried out consistently, fairly, and proportionately.

The Council will look at its communications with the sector and discuss this matter with the professional associations to resolve this confusion.