



**MEDICAL SCIENCES COUNCIL  
OF NEW ZEALAND**

TE KAUNIHERA PŪTAIAO HAUORA O AOTEAROA

# Strategic Directions

April 2020 – March 2025

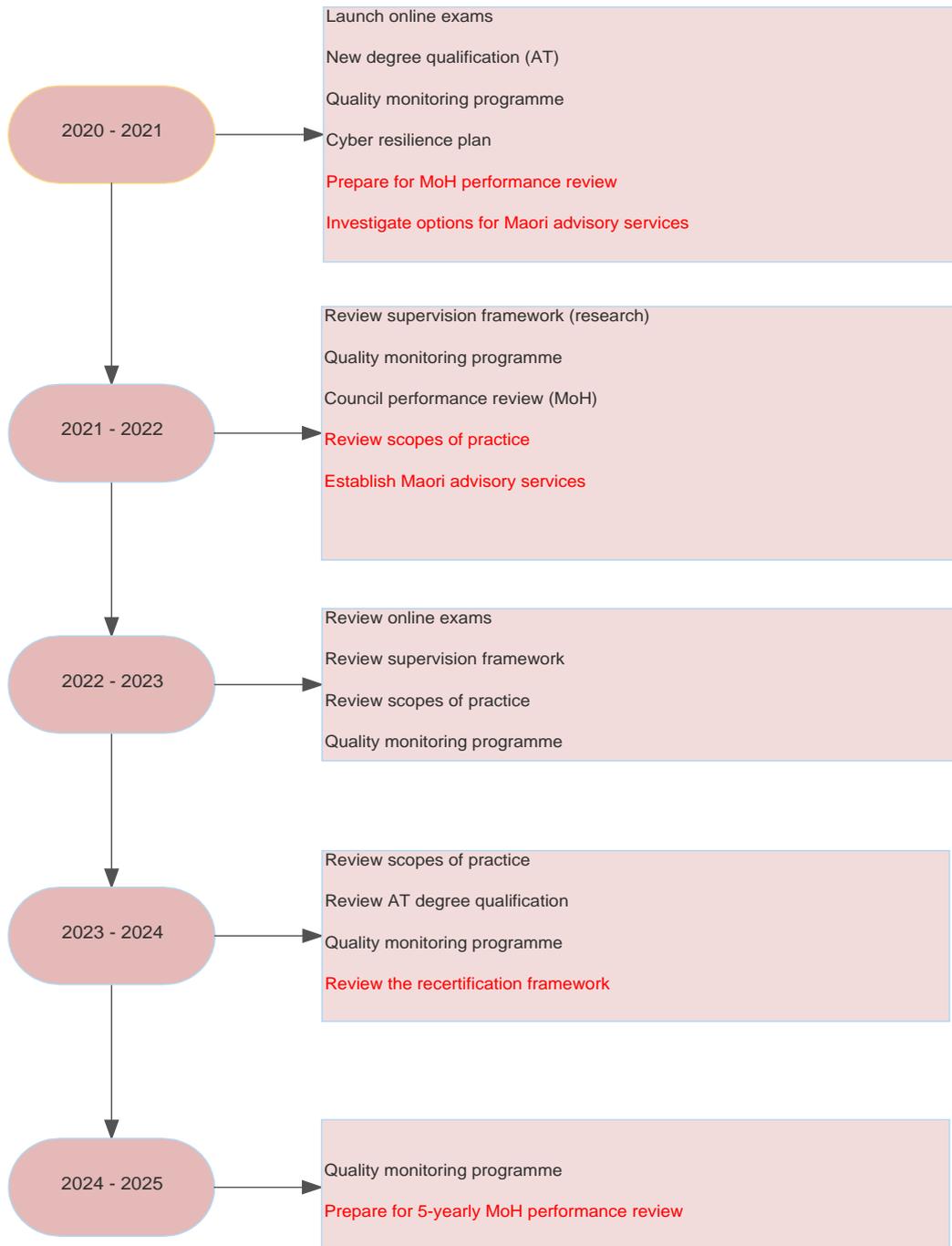
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## Executive Summary

This document sets out the Medical Sciences Council's (the Council) strategic directions for the five-year period from April 2020 to March 2025. It builds on previous strategic directions documents published by the Council.

The Council's Strategic Directions 2020 -2025 document provides the foundational framework of our work over the next five years. It identifies areas of particular focus, and provides a benchmark against which we can measure our progress in achieving our strategic priorities.



## Our Work

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The Medical Sciences Council of New Zealand is a responsible authority under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (the Act). We are one of sixteen independent health regulators responsible for protecting the health and safety of the New Zealand public by ensuring health practitioners are competent and fit to practise. We regulate medical laboratory science practitioners and anaesthetic technology practitioners

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The Council's functions<sup>1</sup> are set out in section 118 of the Act. In summary this includes a number of core responsibilities:

**Prescribing qualifications and accrediting education programmes** to ensure graduates have the competencies and attributes required of registered medical laboratory science and anaesthetic technology practitioners.

**Setting the standards for clinical and cultural competence and ethical conduct** that must be met by all medical laboratory science and anaesthetic technology practitioners.

**Registration and recertification** of medical laboratory science and anaesthetic technology practitioners ensuring that only those with the relevant skills, competencies and fitness to practise are able to practise in New Zealand.

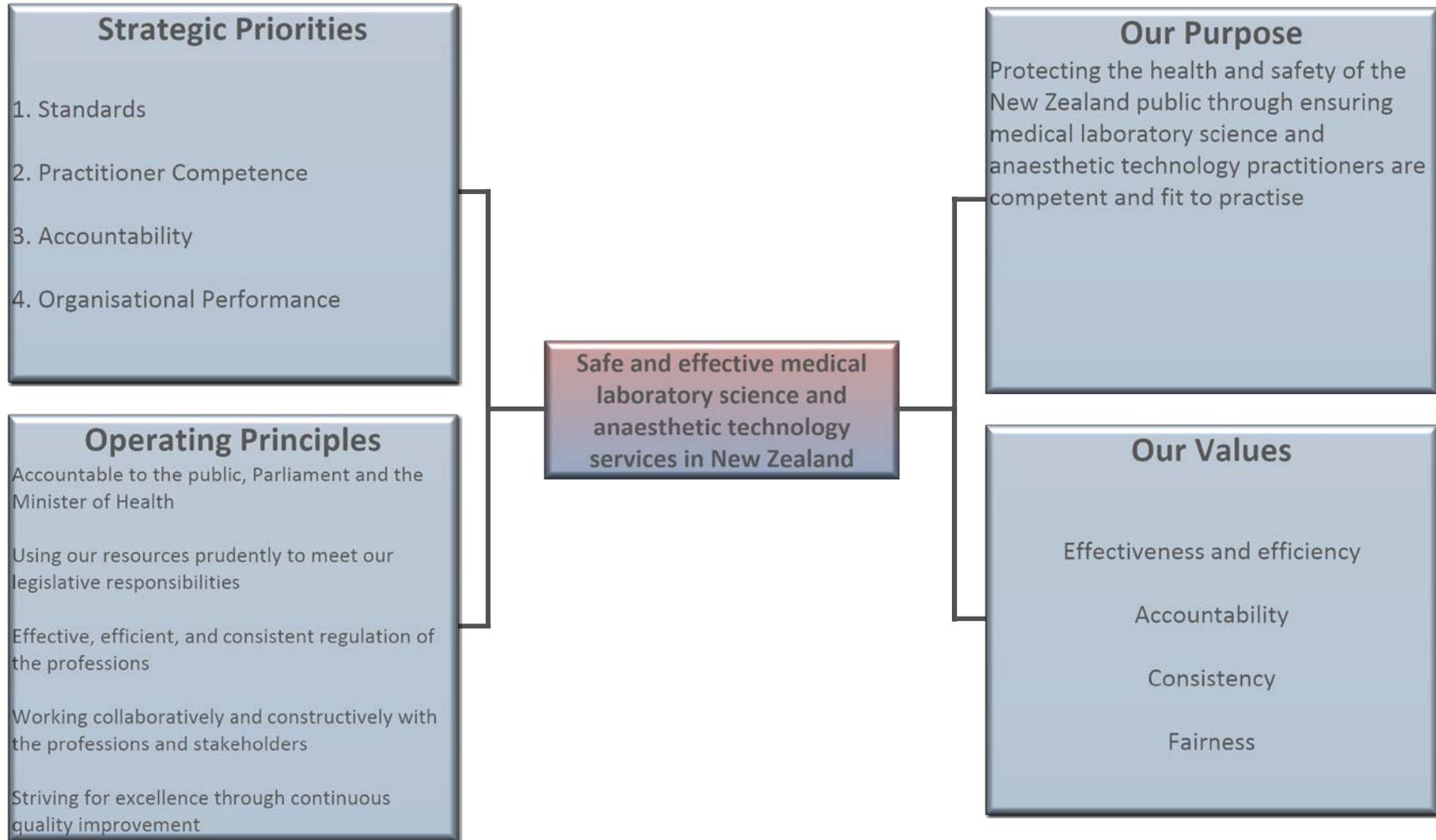
**Ensuring registered medical laboratory science and anaesthetic technology practitioners continue to be competent and fit to practise** by investigating their performance, conduct or health in response to concerns raised, and taking appropriate action to protect the safety of the public.



The overriding focus of the Council's work is the health and safety of the public. The Council is not responsible for protecting the interests of medical laboratory science or anaesthetic technology practitioners. That said, the Council does have a responsibility for ensuring we undertake our legislative functions consistently, fairly, and proportionately. Our intention is to achieve the best outcomes for the public through appropriate and sustainable regulation..

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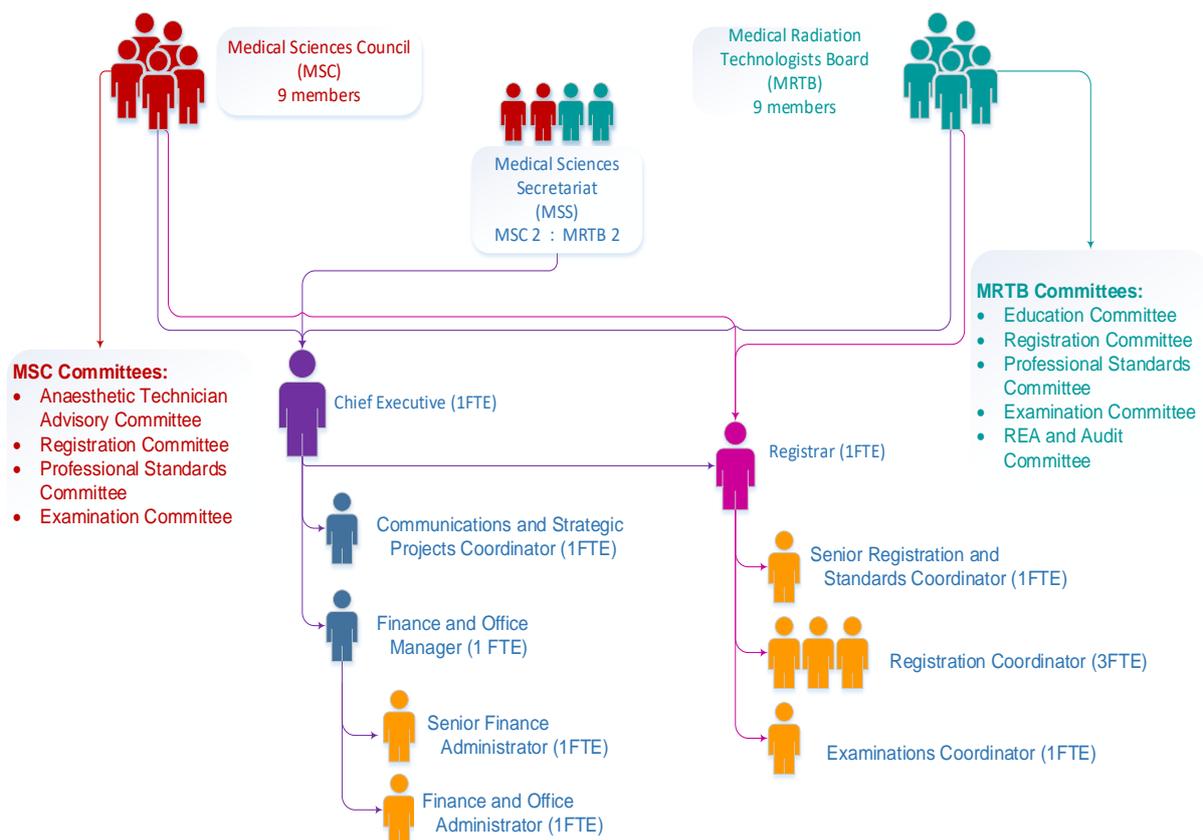
<sup>1</sup> An unabridged extract of section 118 of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 is provided in Appendix 1



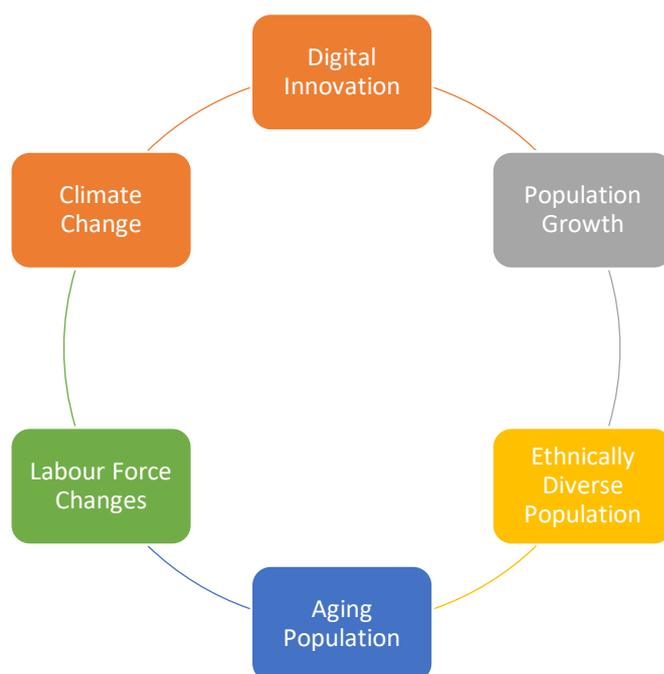
## Organisational Structure

Secretariat services are provided through a New Zealand registered company, Medical Sciences Secretariat (MSS) that is jointly owned by two responsible authorities - the Medical Sciences Council and the Medical Radiation Technologists Board. This shared arrangement enables both responsible authorities to achieve efficiencies in terms of costs and consistency in regulatory standards. While each Council and Board is a separate responsible authority with legal responsibilities for the statutory regulation of different groups of health professionals, our strategic priorities and objectives are often similar. Sharing of our secretariat resources enables both authorities to manage a number of strategic objectives and subsequent business goals as joint initiatives. Consequently our individual strategic planning documents share a number of similarities.

## Organisation Chart



## Health Regulation in a Changing World



Health regulation is impacted by wider national and global trends such as population demographics, the impact of rapidly changing technology both within the health sector and beyond, and changing lifestyle trends and related health issues. Climate change is expected to have significant impacts on human health. Adaptable and flexible governance will be critical in considering the impacts of these trends on health regulation.

### Digital Innovation

- Cutting edge digital platforms
- Improved operational efficiencies
- Better treatment options
- Improved prediction of diagnosis and life expectancy
- Faster and more accurate diagnosis of conditions
- Improved recording of information in real time
- More ability to do research into problems
- Improved communication
- Easier collaboration

## Population Growth<sup>2</sup>

In 2016 New Zealand's population was 4.69 million. By 2068 the population is projected to be around 6.59 million. Population is growing at an average of 1.1% per year.

Population growth is projected to slow as New Zealand's population ages and the gap between the number of births and deaths narrows.

There is a growing trend towards the population being Auckland-centric: in 2013 34% of New Zealand's population lived in Auckland. By 2043, it is expected 40% of the New Zealand population will live in Auckland.

## An Ethnically Diverse Population

Ethnic Group	% of Total NZ Population <sup>3</sup>	
	2013	2038
European/Other	74.6%	65.5%
Maori	15.6%	18.4%
Pacific	7.8%	10.2%
Asian	12.2%	22%
Middle Eastern, Latin American, African (MELAA)	1.2%	3%

- The population growth rate in the European/Other ethnic group is projected to be slower than all other ethnic groups, leading to a New Zealand population more ethnically diverse in 2038 than in 2013.
- The European/Other ethnic group is projected to be the only ethnic group to decrease its share of New Zealand's population.
- The highest population growth rate is projected for the MELAA ethnic group where population growth is expected to triple between 2013 and 2038.
- The Asian ethnic group is projected to exceed the Maori population by the early 2020s.

## An Aging Population

- The number of individuals aged 65+ is expected to increase dramatically, more than doubling in numbers between 2016 and 2068:

Year	Number of People Aged 65+
2016	0.7 million
2043	1.37 million
2068	1.84 million

- The number of people aged over 65 years is set to increase in all ethnic groups.

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<sup>2</sup> Population demographics have been sourced from Statistics New Zealand at [www.stats.govt.nz](http://www.stats.govt.nz)

<sup>3</sup> The % of ethnic groups do not sum to 100% as people can and do identify with multiple ethnicities  
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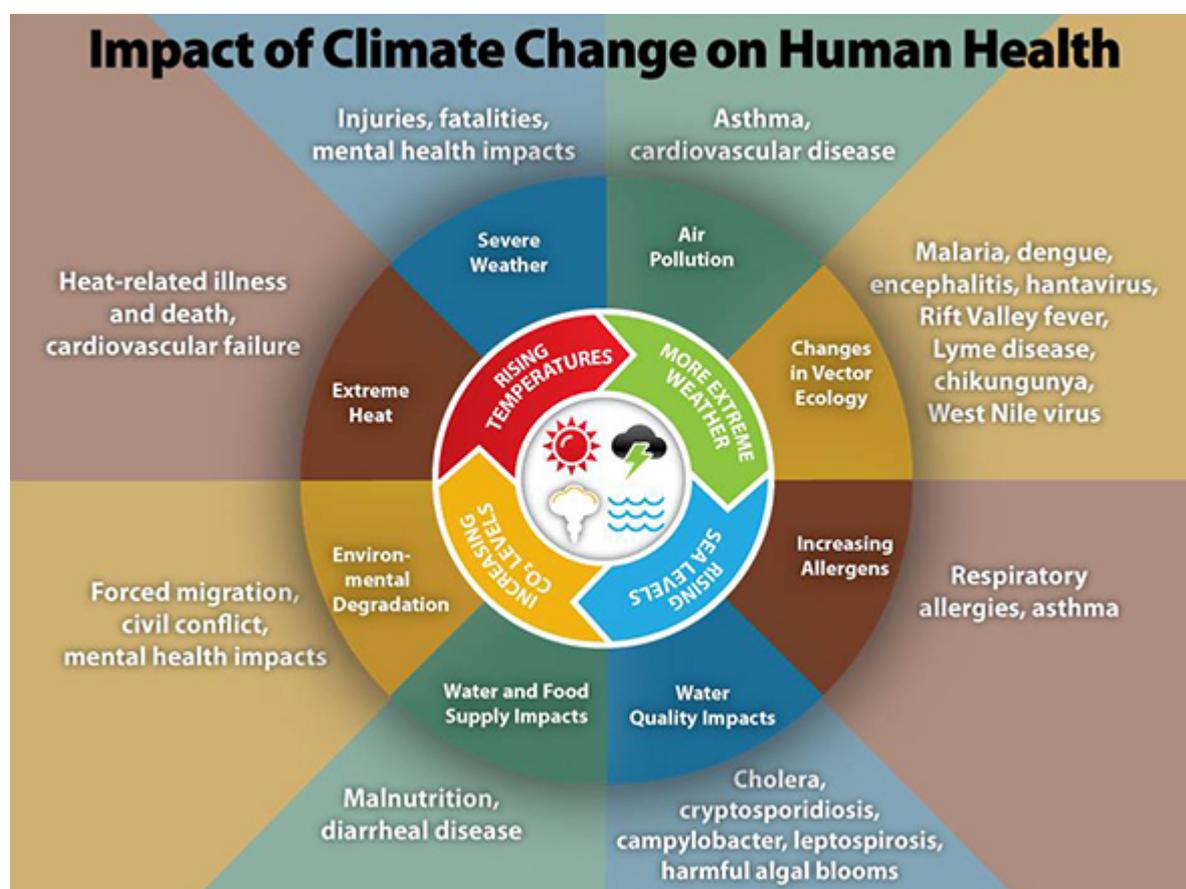
## Labour Force Changes

- In recent years the nature of jobs in New Zealand has shifted towards services, high-skilled and non-routine jobs.
- Migration is a major source of new workers.
- The age of workers in the labour force is projected to increase:

Year	Age Groups per % Labour Force
2038	45+ years: 50%
2050s	65+ years: 11%
2068	65+ years: 12.5%

## Climate Change

- Climate change affects the social and environmental determinants of health – clean air, safe drinking water, sufficient food and secure shelter.
- Between 2030 and 2050, climate change is expected to cause around 250,000 additional deaths per year, from malnutrition, malaria, diarrhoea, and heat stress<sup>4</sup>.



<sup>4</sup> Reference: World Health Organisation [www.who.int](http://www.who.int)

## The Next Five Years

The Council has identified four core strategic priorities for the next five-year period (2017-2022). They articulate the areas of activity that will help us to move from where we are now to what we need to achieve in meeting our regulatory responsibilities. Explicitly stating our strategic priorities helps us to balance resourcing our business-as-usual daily activities with directing resources into areas that will improve our effectiveness and efficiency.

## Legislative Responsibilities

The Council's 2020-2025 strategic plan takes cognisance of the amendments to the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 that came into effect in April 2019. This includes preparing for 5-yearly independent reviews of the Council's performance which will be managed by the Ministry of Health (on behalf of the Minister). Another significant addition to the Act has been the requirement to publish a naming policy in respect of practitioners who have been subject to an order or direction made by the Council.

## Our Operating Base

Following the Kaikoura earthquake of 2016 the Council, along with the Medical Radiation Technologists Board and the MSS Board of Directors, agreed that a return to the office premises at The Terrace in Wellington would not be prudent. The decision was made in response to ongoing unresolved issues with being able to access information as to the seismic rating and safety of the building. The premises at The Terrace were co-shared with a number of other responsible authorities, all of whom made a similar decision to not re-occupy the premises.

MSS remains in office accommodation located in the Wellington CBD (Panama Street). On the advice of independent auditors, the lease obligations pertaining to The Terrace tenancy have been treated as an onerous contract with provisions accordingly being made in the financial statements for the duration of the remaining lease period.

While a sub-lease was secured for part of The Terrace floor space this is for a period that is circa 18-months shorter than the expiry of the lease period. The group of responsible authorities have continued with their collective efforts to secure a sub-lease for the remaining section of the floor space. This is being somewhat hindered by the ongoing uncertainty in respect of the building's seismic rating and safety.

There has been an ongoing financial impact resulting from the situation with the premises at the Terrace, particularly in terms of additional lease costs, legal expenses, and accounting treatment of the lease as an onerous contract. The Council and the Medical Radiation Technologists Board have respectively agreed they each have sufficient reserve funds to meet the ongoing additional lease costs without compromising their respective core business functions and responsibilities.

## Strategic Priorities

The social, political, economic and cultural environments within which medical laboratory science and anaesthetic technology practitioners work, continues to evolve. The Council's five-year strategic directions document for the period 2020-2025 has been formulated with a view to ensuring our work both now and in the foreseeable future continues to be responsive to the world within which medical laboratory science and anaesthetic technology are practised.

Utilising a strategic framework provides the Council with a focused approach for steering our regulatory work in a world typified by rapidly changing technology. It allows us to continue to protect public safety in the years ahead through ensuring medical laboratory science and anaesthetic technology scopes of practice, standards, competencies, education, and remedial measures are sufficiently robust and responsive.

### Strategic Priority 1: Standards

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**Appropriate and sustainable standards of clinical competence, cultural competence, and ethical conduct for the protection of public health and safety**

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Under the Act the Council is responsible for setting the standards of clinical competence, cultural competence, and ethical conduct. It is the sole organisation with the legal authority to do this for medical laboratory science and anaesthetic technology practitioners in New Zealand.

The standards of practice set by the Council provide the minimum threshold for competence and acceptable behaviour that registered medical laboratory science and anaesthetic technology practitioners must meet to ensure the protection of public health and safety.

Having clearly articulated competencies and standards of ethical conduct are critical tools in helping to inform patients and the public of what they can expect from registered medical laboratory science and anaesthetic technology practitioners. They also provide clarity to practitioners themselves about the standards they must meet.

The Council also employs mechanisms to ensure practitioners continue to meet the standards for ongoing fitness to practice. The Act includes specific provisions for the Council to respond to concerns that may be raised about an individual practitioner in terms of their competence, health, or conduct.

### Strategic Priority 2: Practitioner Competence

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**Our regulatory frameworks support competent and flexible medical laboratory science and anaesthetic technology workforces both in the short and long term**

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Under the Act registered practitioners must be recertified on an annual basis. Through the mechanism of recertification the Council can assure the public that individual practitioners continue to be competent to practise. Recertification includes a number of complementary strategies including annual renewal of practising certificates, and evidence of engagement in ongoing learning and professional development.

The effects of climate change will likely impact on the health workforces of the future especially as health services respond to the effects of climate change on the health of New Zealand communities. Flexibility across the medical laboratory science and anaesthetic technology workforces will be critical and the Council's regulatory framework will need to ensure practitioners continue to demonstrate competence in an ever-changing world of health demands and delivery.

### Strategic Priority 3: Accountability

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**Strengthen our engagement with stakeholders and their confidence in the work of the Council**

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Health regulation does not occur in a vacuum. For many of our activities the Council is reliant on the participation of our stakeholders including practitioners, patients and the public, educators, employers, professional bodies and other regulators. This helps us to ensure our activities remain appropriate, relevant, and consistent in regulating medical laboratory science and anaesthetic technology practices.

We operate in a world where there is increasing and continually changing societal expectations in respect of health care and health practitioners. The Council needs to understand the views of our stakeholders, and offer ongoing opportunities for people to tell us what they think about our work.

Anecdotal information indicates there is a gap in many of our stakeholders understanding of the Council's role and purpose. We need to do more to explain the range and limits of our responsibilities. This will require an increased level of visibility with many of our stakeholders.

Narrowing this gap in understanding is integral for the Council's success in achieving our other strategic priorities.

### Strategic Priority 4: Organisational Performance

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**There are strong governance and operational structures and robust practices in place to support the Council in achieving our legislative functions and responsibilities**

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Effective governance is critical for good decision-making and ensuring quality of our regulatory actions. This leads to better outcomes for the public and reasonable impacts for practitioners. Governance is concerned with roles and responsibilities, accountability measures, oversight of business processes, financial reporting, and risk and performance management.

Having the right capabilities in place is critical for ensuring the Council operates effectively and efficiently. Having the systems, policies and processes necessary for delivering our functions within an environment that minimises costs, compliance and complexity for practitioners underpins the Council's work.

Having reliable and integrated IT systems is critical to the success of our work to ensure we have the necessary functionality for operating effectively in the contemporary regulatory environment. This includes taking advantage of new technology and our partnership arrangement with the Medical Radiation Technologists Board to not only improve the way we operate, but also to improve the

ways we interact with our stakeholders. The Council's website is a critical communication tool for ensuring the public, the professions, and stakeholders are well informed in respect of the Council's responsibilities and strategic and operational priorities and objectives. This will require ongoing investment to ensure the IT infrastructure, inclusive of website platforms, continues to serve the needs of the Council and users of the systems.

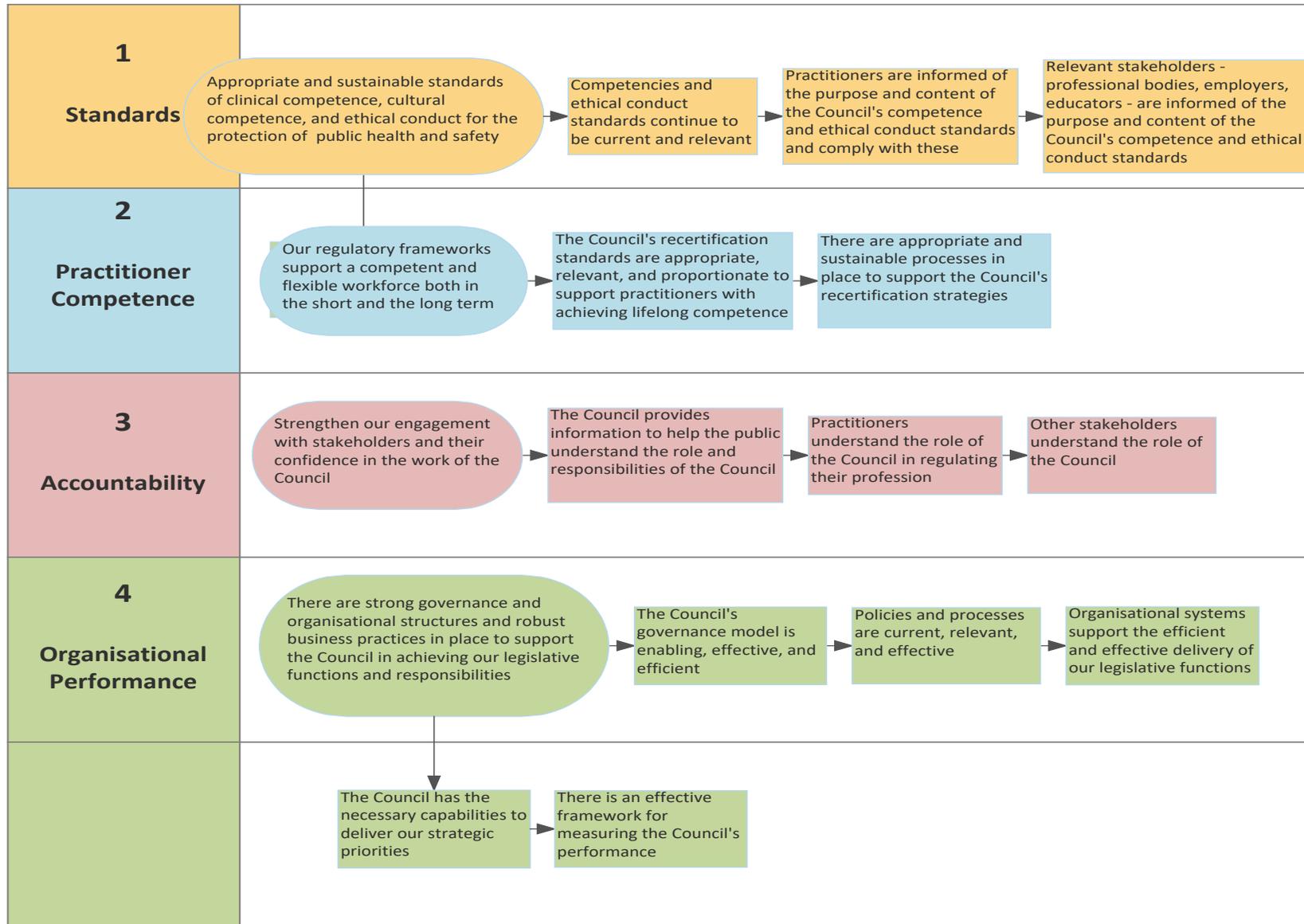
Under section 118 of the Act the Council has a duty to uphold the ethical conduct of practitioners and, as such, needs to provide ethical leadership in the custodianship of the current state of information security. With the increasing profile of data breaches, and the introduction of the Health Information Security Framework in 2015, information security is a critical component of the Council's quality monitoring programme. In addition the Council has other regulatory responsibilities to keep data safe, notably but not exclusively, the Privacy Act 1993 which is scheduled to be strengthened in 2020 as the Privacy Bill becomes law and will include the public naming of organisations which have significant data breach.

Over the lifetime of this plan the Council will continue to develop its quality management system and processes. This work is undertaken as a joint initiative with the Medical Radiation Technologists Board through our jointly-owned secretariat (MSS). It includes revising and improving our IT systems to support core regulatory and business functions, financial management, and information management. The Council operates within a world susceptible to the destructive impacts of climate change and has a key leadership role to manage its business operations in ways that are environmentally sustainable.

Measuring our performance is integral to the Council being able to evaluate the status of meeting our strategic priorities and objectives and subsequent business goals. Performance measures help to ensure our actions remain focused on the appropriate areas to deliver better outcomes for the public through competent and safe medical laboratory science and anaesthetic technology workforces.

Over the span of this strategic plan the Council will engage in an ongoing programme of performance measurement. This will help us to better understand whether we are achieving what we say we will. Our performance measures framework will be developed and implemented as a joint initiative with the Medical Radiation Technologists Board.

## Strategic Priorities and Key Indicators



## Appendix 1: The Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003: Section 118

The functions of each authority appointed in respect of a health profession are as follows:

- (a) To prescribe the qualifications required for scopes of practice within the profession, and, for that purpose, to accredit and monitor educational institutions and degrees, courses of studies, or programmes;
- (b) To authorise the registration of health practitioners under this Act, and to maintain registers;
- (c) To consider applications for annual practising certificates;
- (d) To review and promote the competence of health practitioners;
- (e) To recognise, accredit, and set programmes to ensure the ongoing competence of health practitioners;
- (f) To receive and act on information from health practitioners, employers, and the Health and Disability Commissioner about the competence of health practitioners;
- (g) To notify employers, the Accident Compensation Corporation, the Director-General of Health, and the Health and Disability Commissioner that the practice of a health practitioner may pose a risk of harm to the public;
- (h) To consider the cases of health practitioners who may be unable to perform the functions required for the practice of the profession;
- (i) To set standards of clinical competence, cultural competence (including competencies that will enable effective and respectful interaction with Maori), and ethical conduct to be observed by health practitioners of the profession;
- (j) To liaise with other authorities appointed under this Act about matters of common interest;
- (ja) To promote and facilitate inter-disciplinary collaboration and cooperation in the delivery of health services;
- (k) To promote education and training in the profession;
- (l) To promote public awareness of the responsibilities of the authority;
- (m) To exercise and perform any other functions, powers, and duties that are conferred or imposed on it by or under this Act or any other enactment.