



**MEDICAL SCIENCES COUNCIL
OF NEW ZEALAND**

TE KAUNIHERA PŪTAIAO HAUORA O AOTEAROA

**MSC
NEWS**

TE HEAMANA | FROM THE CHAIR

Tēnā tātou katoa,

Winter has been a busy period for both practitioners and Medical Sciences Council staff alike, with not only the usual high winter workload but also with the changing shape of our workforce and the requirement to consider not only work as it is currently being completed but also what it may look like in the future. A topic which has had a great influence with the current consultation on the scope of practice review of Anaesthetic Technology and the upcoming consultation on the scope of practice for Medical Laboratory Science practitioners.

As a Council we would like to thank all those practitioners and associates who have taken the time to provide us with their thoughts, concerns, and questions regarding the current anaesthetic technician review. I would like to make particular reference to those who attended the webinars held in early August – face to face, albeit digitally. Meetings of this sort are a valuable means of being able to communicate and address topics in real time, and we will look to adopt this method more into our communication with stakeholders.

Speaking of kanohi ki te kanohi (face to face) meetings, several members of the Council and staff, including the CE and Registrar attended the NZIMLS South Pacific conference held in Auckland recently. The wide variety of speakers and topics highlighted the pace at which change is occurring within this field, and how much of a disruptor emerging technology and methodologies can be in the ways in which work is done. This again highlights the importance of the requirement for scope of practice reviews and the consultation process to be as much future focussed as it is rooted in the present.

It was also an excellent opportunity to acknowledge the work and commitment of the outgoing NZIMLS Council members and to meet the incoming members. We look forward to continuing to develop relationships with professional bodies, building on the foundations in place.

Finally, we would also like to acknowledge the NZIMLS Life membership award conferred on Ailsa Bunker at the conference, a much deserved recognition of significant contribution to her profession.

Ngā mihi,

Brett Besley
MSC Chair

COUNCIL'S RESPONSIBILITY

The primary responsibility of the Council is to protect the health and safety of the New Zealand public by ensuring practitioners registered with the Council are competent and fit to practise.

Message from the Chief Executive

Kia ora koutou

I would like to reiterate the comments made by Brett. This has been an extremely busy time for the Council and the Medical Sciences Secretariat staff as we work on the scope of practice review for Anaesthetic Technicians and also consider the Medical Laboratory Science practitioner review.

I was fortunate to be able to attend a workshop for Anaesthetic Technician leaders recently and enjoyed the opportunity to discuss with them the scope of practice review as well as hear from them the issues they face. The NZIMLS conference also provided an opportunity to network with practitioners, educators, and students from across Aotearoa. Staff and Council members present met a vast number of practitioners and were able to answer questions and provide resources to support practitioners understand some of our requirements.

We have also welcomed our Māori practitioner advisory committee members into the Medical Sciences Secretariat. Our first meeting was held recently and members of the committee were welcomed in a mihi whakatau by staff and Council members. The Committee is comprised of representatives of both Anaesthetic Technician and Medical Laboratory Science practitioners from across Aotearoa. It also has an independent lay member. Two Council members (Judy Campbell and Angela Dewhirst) form part of the committee.

Connecting with practitioners is an important part of the work of the Secretariat. I would like to acknowledge my team who continue to demonstrate utmost professionalism in their work and in their communications with the sector. I look forward to meeting other members of the professions over the next few months.

Dr Susan Calvert | Chief Executive

Māori Practitioner Advisory Committee

At its recent meeting, the committee appointed Chelsey Loader as its Chair. Chelsey Loader (Kāti Mamoe, Kāi Tahu) is a practising Medical Laboratory Scientist and has been working in transfusion science for the last eight years. She currently works for the New Zealand Blood Service in the Christchurch Hospital Blood Bank. She is of Māori and Pākehā descent from Te Waipounamu. She also serves on Kakapa Manawa (the pulse) for NZBS where she helps with tikanga, cultural competency, and providing feedback for research proposals. She is honoured to have been appointed chair and looks forward to representing Māori. Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, engari he toa takitini. Success is not the work of an individual but the work of many.

We will provide more information about the committee on our website so we encourage you to check this regularly.

Meet the Medical Sciences Secretariat Team



Alison McKessar - Executive Assistant to CE and Registrar

Alison (Ali) McKessar joined MSS in June as the Executive Assistant to the CE and Registrar. She has extensive experience in the administrative field, including working with the Board of the Reserve Bank of New Zealand, National Council for the New Zealand College of Public Health Medicine, and as Education and Training Coordinator for the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists. Her last role was at Worksafe New Zealand in the Health and Technical Services group. A past National President of the Association of Administrative Professionals of New Zealand (AdmiNZ), Ali has a strong belief in continuing professional development. She loves working with the healthcare sector and is excited by everything medical. A proud born and bred Wellingtonian, Ali is married to Mark and they have a feline fur-baby called Pepper. In her spare time Ali handmakes dolls clothes and soft toys which she sells at local craft markets.

Health Workforce Plan

Te Whatu Ora and Te Aka Whai Ora recently released its workforce plan which identified a number of workforces that have critical shortages within Aotearoa | New Zealand. The team at the Council have been and actively continue to work to support initiative proposed in the plan. For example, we provide advice, data to support modelling, guidance, and advice to people considering recruitment and make presentations to people on our processes and ways to enter a regulated workforce. The regulation team at the Council continue to receive many applications for registration from internationally qualified practitioners and are processing applications as quickly as possible. While this does not address the shortfall in local graduates, it does go some way to support the number of practitioners who are able to practise their profession in Aotearoa.

Recording Calls

Following the comments made in the May newsletter regarding communication with staff, the Council is in the process of implementing a system whereby all calls will be recorded. We are in the process of completing our retention and recording process and policy which we will upload onto the website for your information.

Practitioner Wellbeing

Over the past few years there has been an increase in discussion around wellbeing and there has been a shift in focus towards not only physical but also mental health. While as health professionals a primary focus is the health and wellbeing of people that care is provided for, there is also a need for practitioners to consider their own health and wellbeing.

Research shows there are a range of factors that contribute towards wellbeing. From a work and career perspective, these include the culture of the organisation in which they work, leadership, opportunities for career development, workload, as well as the environment in which the person works. (Worksafe, 2022).

With the end of winter and as part of mental health awareness week, reference is made to resources that support ways to wellbeing which includes those from the Mental Health Foundation. The Foundations theme of Five Ways, Five Days and resources provide insight and information for people on wellbeing.

Professionally the Code of Conduct for both medical laboratory science practitioners and anaesthetic technicians clearly states that practitioners take responsibility to maintain their personal health and well-being, promptly seeking assistance if their health impacts on their ability to practise safely (section 4.9). Reassuringly the numbers of notifications to the Council for health-related matters is low (3 in 2021-2022). Personal health and wellbeing should be a practitioners priority.

Recertification

While there has been no practitioner audit during 2023, the Council's expectation is that all anaesthetic technicians and medical laboratory scientists, technicians, and pre-analytical technicians will continue to engage in learning and professional development. To support practitioners, a number of resources including those that relate to cultural competence and safety have been provided on our [website](#) and we encourage you to review and undertake relevant education.

Update on the Medical Laboratory Science Scope of Practice Review

Earlier this year, the Council met with representatives from professional bodies, unions, and education providers. The Council has received a lot of information since its meetings with the sector and is working on a revised consultation document.

A paper is being prepared for discussion by the Council as to what steps it needs to take to ensure that any future scope of practice is contemporary and reflects practice now and into the future. A further consultation will occur with the sector in due course.