

Medical laboratory science fees - consultation outcome

January 2026

Te Kaunihera Pūtaiao Hauora O Aotearoa | The Medical Sciences Council (the Council) is responsible for protecting the health and safety of the public by ensuring medical science practitioners working in Aotearoa New Zealand are competent and fit to practice.

Background

The Council is legally required to consult when proposing changes to its fees and has recently consulted with practitioners and other stakeholders about a proposal to increase most fees charged for the 2026–2027 financial year. The consultation ran from 23 October to 3 December 2025 [Oct 2025 Consultation: proposed MLS fee changes 2026/2027 | Medical Sciences Council of New Zealand](#).

The Council does not receive direct government funding. Its costs are covered by fees for services provided to practitioners, under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (the Act). The Council can also charge a levy to cover disciplinary costs.

The Council wishes to acknowledge those who took the time to provide feedback on the proposal.

Consultation outcome

The Council's decision on the annual practising certificate fee and disciplinary levy is outlined in the table below. Most fees will increase by approximately five percent, for most practitioners this means an increase to the APC fee of \$19.10 (inc GST). The Council has retained the disciplinary levy at the 2025-2026 level.

Table 1: APC and disciplinary levy fees for medical laboratory science practitioners. The full schedule of fees is available from the resources section on the Council's website [here](#).

	2025/2026 fee (Inc GST)	2026/2027 fee (Inc GST)	Change
Renewal of an Annual practising certificate before 31 March	\$372.90	\$392.00	+\$19.10
Disciplinary levy	\$57.50	\$57.50	No Change

The Council carefully reviewed the consultation feedback and the comments before making its decision and considered several alternatives to increasing its fees by the amount proposed in the consultation document. Options considered included the effect of no increase, or of a smaller increase than proposed.

Ultimately, the Council decided that an increase to most fees is required for the 2026-2027 practising year, however the increase is to be five (5) percent which is less than that proposed in the consultation where the proposal was to be seven and a half (7.5) percent. The Council's decision to increase its fees is based on several factors which include consideration of the historic advice it received from its accountant, feedback received from the consultation, inflationary pressures and an increase in notifications regarding fitness to practise which must be paid for by the Council. The Council also decided not to increase the examination fee.

The main change is to increase the APC fee. This is used to pay for the cost of running the Council and for it to meet all the requirements of [section 118 of the Act](#). The Council has not increased the disciplinary levy as it does not expect there to be a significant increase in the matters referred to conduct at this time and the reserves it will hold for this function are sufficient to cover projected costs. Matters of discipline are managed in accordance with the Act and the Council must follow these processes. The disciplinary levy is used solely for the purposes of this function which is limited to matters referred to professional conduct committees and the Health Practitioner Disciplinary Tribunal. The Council is only able to recoup costs associated with these processes if a finding is made in the Tribunal that requires a practitioner to repay costs. This means that the profession must pay for matters of discipline to be investigated and disciplinary action to be taken.

A summary of the feedback is provided below, along with responses to several of the themes raised in the consultation.

What does the Council do?

Many of the Consultation responses received by the Council indicated confusion about the role of the Council and what it does.

The Council is a responsible authority established by the Government under the Act to regulate the profession of medical laboratory science. The Council's mandate is to protect the health and safety of the public by ensuring that medical laboratory scientists, technicians and pre-analytical technicians are fit and competent to practise. The Council is required to perform the functions defined in section 118 of the Act which includes (among other things) setting the standards of competence required of practitioners, ensuring that education programmes are of a suitable standard, issuing practising certificates, assessing and registering international practitioners and managing concerns and complaints.

The Council does not have a specific mandated role in advocating for the profession but is supportive of the professional associations such as New Zealand Institute of Medical Laboratory Science that do perform this role and engages with them regularly about issues relevant to the profession.

For many practitioners, their interaction with the Council is limited to their initial registration, and annual practising certificate renewal. This is appropriate and the Council acknowledges those practitioners who continue to provide safe and effective care to patients.

The Council seeks to engage with practitioners and raise awareness of its work by attending relevant conferences and ensuring practitioner representation on committees such as the expert advisory group for the recent Scope of Practice and Competence standards review.

As a responsible authority, the Council receives no government funding and charges fees to cover the cost of these activities from the profession. The Council reviews the fees it charges each year to ensure that it can continue to provide the required services, while being mindful of practitioner circumstances.

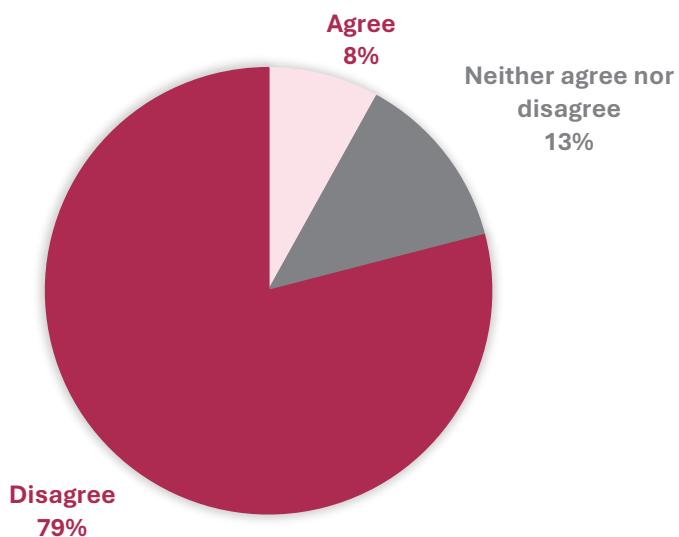
Consultation responses

Responses were received from 64 individuals, all of whom are registered medical laboratory science practitioners, and one organisation (the Australasian Association for Clinical Biochemistry and Laboratory Medicine | AACB). This represents a response rate of 1.6% of the total workforce.

Number of responses by scope of practice

Scope	Number of responses	Response rate of scope
ML-PAT	13	1.1%
MLT	16	2%
MLS	35	1.8%

The Council is proposing to increase most practitioner and applicant fees for the 2026-2027 practising year. After reading the consultation document, do you agree or disagree with this proposal?



Twenty-one percent (21%) of the respondents agreed or were neutral about the proposed increase in fees. The remaining practitioners disagreed with the proposed fee increases. Reasons for this generally fell into the themes below.

Service	<p>Reference made to the level of service they receive for their fees.</p> <p>The Council is engaged in continuous quality improvement of the services it provides and is considering feedback received about service levels as a part of this process.</p> <p>Some responses indicated confusion about the role of the Council and likened it to a professional membership association for practitioners. The Council is a regulatory authority established under legislation and has the mandate to protect the health and safety of the public by ensuring that practitioners are competent and fit to practice.</p> <p>As with all other regulated health professions in Aotearoa New Zealand the costs of performing these functions falls on practitioners.</p>
Cost of living/wages	<p>Reference made to the cost-of-living crisis and practitioner wages not increasing at the same rate.</p> <p>The Council is mindful of the cost-of-living pressures experienced by practitioners, as they too are subject to these increases - many are unavoidable, such as electricity and rent.</p> <p>In response to the feedback the Council has decreased the amount of the proposed fee increase and retained some fees at the current level.</p>
Timing	<p>Reference made to the timing of the consultation, considering recent strikes and poor economic conditions.</p> <p>As noted above the Council is mindful of the economic pressures experienced by practitioners and has adjusted the proposed fee changes because of consultation feedback. The timing of the consultation is driven by legislative requirements for consultation and publication of fees, as well as the Christmas break.</p> <p>The Council is required by law to consult the profession and other stakeholders on matters that affect practitioners, including any changes to fees.</p>
Expense	<p>Reference made to the fee being too expensive and the fee increases in recent years.</p> <p>The fees for the profession are comparable to other similar sized professions such as Occupational Therapy (APC \$588 inc disciplinary fee) and Paramedicine (\$645 inc disciplinary fee).</p> <p>The Council has adopted a practice of incremental increases as required to prevent the shock of larger, more infrequent raises, and to ensure the ongoing viability of Council functions as required under the Act. While this may have the effect of fees rising frequently, the Council aims to keep the size of the increases as low as possible.</p>

	<p>The Council has planned a further review of its budget to see where potential savings could be made. This may include a review of strategic projects to manage costs by deferring or slowing down planned timelines.</p> <p>Insufficient reasons</p> <p><i>Reference made to the documentation providing insufficient reasons to justify the increase.</i></p> <p>The Council is subject to an annual audit by external auditors. The Council's financial accounts are publicly available on both the Charities Services website and in the Council's annual reports. The 2024-2025 results are with the Auditors and will be published as soon as possible.</p> <p>The Council has been working with accounting professionals to ensure its ongoing financial viability to performing the required functions both now and into the future. This includes ensuring that provision is made for unexpected increases such as a significant increase in notifications that need to be managed.</p> <p>The Council must also undertake a five yearly performance review from the Ministry of Health. This work is currently underway and the costs of this must be paid for from fees the Council collects.</p> <p>Funding</p> <p><i>Reference made to the lack of government funding and the effect this has on the workforce.</i></p> <p>The Council recognises the constraints in funding to medical laboratory services and has adjusted the proposed fee changes because of consultation feedback.</p> <p>The Council does not receive any funding from the Government, all of its income is from fees received from practitioners.</p>
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