MEDICAL SCIENCES COUNCIL OF NEW ZEALAND
TE KAUNIHERA PŪTAIAO HAUORA O AOTEAROA

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MSC News

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Te Heamana - Te Manahautū

Message from the Chair

Tēnā koutou katoa

As we approach the end of another year, I would like to acknowledge all practitioners across our professions. While many of you may be looking forward to a well-earned break, I also recognise the significant number of anaesthetic technicians and medical laboratory science practitioners who will continue providing essential services throughout the holiday period. Thank you for your ongoing dedication and commitment to our healthcare users.

It has been another productive year for the Council. Over the past 12 months, Council members have participated in six scheduled meetings, along with additional meetings as required to progress important work. Many Council members also attended and presented at professional events throughout the year, providing opportunities to engage directly with practitioners and stakeholders.

The Medical Sciences Secretariat has also had a busy year, supporting the Council's work across registration, Annual Practising Certificates (APCs), policy development, professional standards, recertification (with the Continual Professional Development audit), gazette notices, research, and stakeholder engagement.

A key highlight has been the successful APC renewal round. The implementation of a new customer relationship management (CRM) system has helped improve efficiency and supported a smooth renewal process for practitioners.

A significant focus this year has been the Medical Laboratory Science scope of practice review. This work involved extensive engagement with practitioners, employers, educators, and other stakeholders. Thank you to everyone who took the time to provide feedback during the consultation process. The outcome of this consultation is now available on the Board's **website**.

Following completion and gazetting of the Anaesthetic Technology scope of practice review, work has continued on related initiatives, including accreditation requirements and sedation guidelines. Scope reviews are an important part of ensuring professional practice remains relevant, safe, and responsive to changes in healthcare, and they require a considerable contribution from many people across the sector.

It has also been a privilege to continue working alongside Te Ama Tōtika, our Māori Practitioner Advisory Committee. During the year the committee hosted another successful hui for Māori practitioners and continued its valuable work in supporting the development of cultural standards and promoting cultural safety. I encourage all practitioners to engage with this important work as part of their ongoing professional development and recertification requirements.

The health workforce has faced significant pressures in recent years, making the contribution of healthcare practitioners more important than ever. The people of Aotearoa New Zealand benefit every day from your professionalism, expertise, and commitment to providing safe, high-quality care.

On behalf of the Council, thank you for your contribution throughout 2026. I wish you a safe and restful holiday period and hope you have the opportunity to recharge and spend time with those important to you. We look forward to working with you again in 2027.

Ngā mihi nui



Ruth Beeston
MSC Chair

Message from the Chief Executive

Tēnā koutou katoa

As another year comes to a close, I want to thank everyone who has contributed to the Council's work during 2026. This includes our Council members, staff, practitioners, professional groups, and stakeholders. Your input and support have helped us make significant progress on several important initiatives.

A major focus this year has been the development of the new **medical laboratory science practitioner scope of practice**. This has been a substantial project, and we are now planning for implementation. Given the complexity of the changes, we are taking the time needed to identify and address any implementation challenges. We know practitioners will need clear and timely information throughout this process, and communication will be a key priority.

One outcome of this work will be a new **Gazette notice**, which is the legal document that formally sets out the scope of practice. As a responsible authority, the Council can create this type of secondary legislation, but there are strict requirements around how it is written, published, and made accessible. You may have noticed some recent changes to how Gazette notices are presented on our website, where current and previous notices are now available to view.

Alongside the scope of practice project, the Council has continued its work on the regulation of **advanced practice**. During the year, we met with professional associations and workforce groups to gather advice and feedback. This information is being carefully considered alongside the Council's public safety responsibilities. Work is ongoing, and there will be further consultation in 2027.

The Council has also been considering the role of **Anaesthetic Technicians** in providing sedation services without an anaesthetist present. Decisions on this matter will be announced soon. We have also restarted discussions about the profession's name, and consultation with anaesthetic technicians will begin shortly.

Consultation remains one of the most important ways the Council gathers information before making decisions. We genuinely want to hear the views of practitioners and stakeholders, and no decisions are made before consultation takes place. Feedback is carefully reviewed alongside summary reports, expert advice, and, where appropriate, independent analysis. This was the case for the scope of practice project, with consultation reports and summaries available on our website.

I encourage all practitioners to take part in consultations. Thoughtful feedback and practical suggestions help the Council make informed decisions and often highlight perspectives or solutions we may not have considered.

Looking ahead to 2027, consultation will continue on a range of issues, and we look forward to hearing your views as this work progresses.

During 2026, the Council also completed its **five-year Ministry of Health performance review**. The report, available on our website, provides a useful overview of the Council's role and responsibilities. Regulation can sometimes be confusing, particularly as practitioners are influenced by decisions from employers, professional associations, unions, accrediting bodies, and regulators. The review helps explain what the Council does and how it carries out its responsibilities under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act.

The review confirmed that the Council is meeting its legislative obligations and has the systems and processes needed to carry out its functions effectively. While a small number of recommendations were made, many have already been completed, and progress on all recommendations is reported annually.

In 2027, the Council will continue implementing the medical laboratory science scope of practice and progressing work relating to anaesthetic technician practice. We will also be consulting on other important regulatory matters, including competence and accreditation standards, and I encourage you to share your views when the opportunity arises.

I would also like to acknowledge **Te Ama Tōtika**, the Council's Māori practitioner advisory committee. The committee has provided valuable advice and guidance throughout the year and continues to make an important contribution to the Council's work. Their presentations at the New Zealand Institute of Medical Laboratory Science (NZIMLS) annual meeting, and the New Zealand Anaesthetic Technicians Society (NZATS) conference highlighted both the value of their work and the positive impact they are making.

I want to acknowledge the Council and the work that has been undertaken. And the staff that work for the Council – their commitment ensures the Council's policies are implemented effectively, practitioners receive the advice they need, and the organisation continues to meet its responsibilities. The team have worked incredibly hard, being responsive to the many different requests they receive every day.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the practitioners. Many of you continue providing essential healthcare services throughout the festive season, often without the opportunity for an extended break. Thank you for the expertise, professionalism, and care you bring to your work every day. I hope you are able to spend some time with whānau and friends over the holiday period, and we look forward to connecting with you again in 2027.

Ngā mihi nui



Dr Susan Calvert
Chief Executive Medical Sciences Secretariat

2027/28 fees and APCs

Having your say - consultation feedback

Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to provide feedback on the Council's proposed fees for 2027/28 (anaesthetic technician/AT and medical laboratory science/MLS).

Feedback being considered

Information about the proposed fee changes, frequently asked questions, current and proposed fee schedules, how the Council is funded, how fees and levies are charged, and the online feedback survey is available on the Council's website under: **News – Consultation: proposed changes to anaesthetic technician practitioner fees 2027/28** and **Consultation: proposed changes to medical laboratory science practitioner fees 2027/28**.

The consultations (AT and MLS) closed **on Wednesday 25 November 2026**. The Council will consider all feedback before making a final decision. The outcome will be shared with practitioners and stakeholders, and any approved fee changes will be published in the *New Zealand Gazette*.

Preparing for your 2027/28 APC renewal

If you are practising in Aotearoa New Zealand, you must hold a current Annual Practising Certificate (APC) for your scope of practice.

To renew your APC, you will need to submit an application to the Council and pay the prescribed fee. Please note that the Council does not offer a bulk-funding arrangement where employers pay fees on behalf of practitioners.

The APC renewal period takes place between **February and March each year**. We will be in touch with practitioners in the New Year to let them know what's required, when, and how.

For information about the APC application process, including how to apply, what happens next, key documents, and frequently asked questions, visit the **Already registered/Annual Practising Certificate (APC)** section of the Council's website.

Raising a concern and resolving complaints

Raising a concern

If a health practitioner, a colleague, an employer, or a member of the public wants to raise a concern about a medical laboratory science or anaesthetic technician practitioner please get in touch with the Council by emailing pro-standards@medsci.co.nz.

First, check the website information under **Raising a concern** - what you need to know.

We know that whether you are making a complaint or receiving notice that a complaint has been made about you, it can be a stressful experience. While we have a responsibility to assess and respond to concerns brought to our attention, our approach is guided by a number of principles, including natural justice – this means providing practitioners with the information received about them and giving them an opportunity to respond.

Many of the concerns that the Council receive relate to incidents arising during everyday practice. We recognise that many of these concerns can be appropriately addressed through education and supportive measures rather than formal statutory action.

Assessing what action to take

The Council's role is to assess whether any risks to public safety have been appropriately addressed. This includes understanding what happened because of the incident and the steps taken to reduce the chance of a similar event occurring again, such as professional development, reflection, or other quality improvement activities.

We know that most Council registered practitioners practise safely and effectively every day. However, when mistakes or concerns arise, constructive engagement with Council processes helps the Council staff to make well-informed decisions. A genuine commitment to reflection, learning, and improvement is often key to achieving a timely resolution of complaints.

For more about what to do if you wish to make a complaint, or a complaint has been made against you, view the details on the website under **Raising a concern - what you need to know**.

Naming policy

This policy is important because it helps ensure the Council's decisions about publishing practitioner names are clear, consistent, and transparent. We encourage practitioners, stakeholders, and members of the public to review the proposed changes and share their views.

Have your say on the proposed Naming Policy

The Council is currently reviewing its Naming Policy. This policy explains when the Council may publish the name of a practitioner following regulatory, competence, health, or disciplinary action under the Act. It also outlines the factors that may be taken into account when deciding whether publishing a name is appropriate.

The current policy is available on the website under **Resources and Publications > Health, Competence and Conduct**.

Consultation now open

Practitioners, stakeholders, and members of the public are invited to review the proposed new policy and provide feedback.

To learn more and view the draft policy, see the website **News** item **Consultation on proposed Naming Policy.**

Feedback can be submitted by email to **mscconsultation@medsci.co.nz** by **11.59pm** on **Monday, 11 January 2027**. Please use the subject line **MSC Naming Policy consultation**.

Next steps

The Council will carefully consider all feedback received before making a final decision on the policy. A summary of the consultation results, along with a link to the final policy, will be published on the website and included in the **February 2027 newsletter**.

Performance review 2026

Regular independent reviews help ensure the Council is carrying out its responsibilities effectively and identifies opportunities to improve. The Ministry of Health commissions these reviews on behalf of the Minister.

2026 Performance review highlights

The Council recently completed its 2026 independent performance review, with very positive results. The review found that the Board is performing well and made only three recommendations for improvement.

The Council welcomes the findings and has considered the recommendations as part of its commitment to continuous improvement. Updates on actions are provided in the Annual report.

Report available

The full **2026 MSC Performance Review** is available on the Board's website under **Resources and Publications > Other Publications.**

Cultural resources

You will find useful cultural resources, including links to further information for health practitioners on our website under Puna rauemi | Cultural resources – whether you are graduating or a registered international practitioner seeking registration in Aotearoa New Zealand.

For example:
Human rights-focused Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Human Rights | Evidence-Based Resources and Information – it includes a useful three-minute video about Te Tiriti.

Council projects and updates

Healthcare is a busy and changing environment. It can be challenging to keep up with new requirements, consultations, and guidance. Here is a snapshot of some of the work the Council is currently progressing, much of which involves input from practitioners and stakeholders.

Current projects

Medical Sciences Council scope of practice review
The Council is continuing its review of the Medical Sciences Council scope of practice. This work includes considering current practice, future needs, and opportunities to better support the profession. Further updates will be provided as the review progresses. A summary of the feedback received from the Scope of Practice consultation has been published and some high-level decisions have been made. For more information about this, check out the **News** articles on the website: Feedback on medical laboratory science scope of practice review – see also Anaesthetic technician accreditation standards – consult outcome – monitoring framework consultation, and Consultation outcome: AT safe sedation and further consultation on endorsement and education programme.

Recent consultations and publications

Since the last newsletter in July, the Council has completed or progressed a number of important projects, including:

- Consultation on proposed practitioner fees for 2027/28.

- MSC scope of practice review
    - Consultation on the review of anaesthetic technician standards: anaesthetic technician accreditation standards and monitoring framework.
    - Sedation standards.
- Consultation on the proposed Naming Policy.
- Updates to the Online Examination Policy and refresh of the examination committees for the MLS and AT examinations.
- Publication of AI guidance for Anaesthetic Technicians.
- Publication of the 2026 MSC Performance Review report (you can view the report on our website under **Resources/Other publications**).

Find out more

Information about these projects, consultations, policies, and reports is available on the Council's website under **News**, **Consultations**, and **Resources and Publications**. Stay up to date by checking the website regularly for new information and opportunities to provide feedback.

Recertification and continuing professional development (CPD)

Continuing professional development (CPD) is an important part of maintaining your competence and supporting safe, effective, and legal practice throughout your career. As a registered practitioner, holding a current Annual Practising Certificate (APC) includes taking part in the Council's recertification programme and completing ongoing learning and development activities.

Recertification - CPD audit 2026: Thank you for participating

Every two years, the Council carries out a Recertification Continuing Professional Development (CPD) audit as part of practitioners' engagement in the recertification programme. Up to 40% of practitioners are selected and asked to provide information about the CPD activities they completed over the previous two-year period.

The 2026 CPD audit has now been completed. **Thank you to everyone who took part**.

From reviewing material, we have noted that compared with previous audits some submissions provided only limited information about CPD activities. However, many practitioners submitted thoughtful and detailed reflections, particularly when explaining how an activity related to their practice and how they would apply what they had gained from it.

Many practitioners also exceeded the minimum requirements. Those who were highly engaged often took part in additional learning opportunities, such as presenting at or attending education sessions, and reading and reflecting on professional journal articles.

The Council's Regulation team will look at ways to better support practitioners' understanding of CPD requirements and encourage greater engagement in future recertification programme audits.

While the next audit is not until 2028, now is a good time to make sure you understand the requirements and are keeping accurate records of your activities.

Some useful **things to think about** include:

- How much is required each year.
- Keeping a record of your activities and any supporting information you may need if selected for audit, ie evidence of activities completed.
- Understanding what types of learning activities count towards your requirements.
- Knowing where to find the Council's recertification policy and guidance documents.
- Understanding the audit process and what you may be asked to provide.
- Becoming familiar with requirements such as practitioner declarations, peer declarations, evidence of activities, and reflective statements.

Find out more

Detailed information about recertification and the audit process is available on the website under **Already Registered > Recertification – Continuing Professional Development (CPD).**

This includes guidance, **frequently asked questions**, and practical information to help you meet your CPD requirements (including **a 'how to' guide**) and prepare for an audit if selected.

Examination writers appointed

In July 2026 the Council sought expressions of interest from registered medical laboratory science (MLS) and anaesthetic technician (AT) **health practitioners** who would be **interested in writing questions and answers** for the MLS and AT examinations.

The exams are based on competence standards for each profession – whether applicants have the foundational knowledge needed to practise safely and competently within their intended scope of practice. The exam is used to assess suitability for registration of overseas qualified applicants wanting to practice in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The **online exam** is **only made available** to the registration applicant **if the Council asseses them as having met the criteria** to be offered the opportunity to sit the exam (a pathway to registration under the Act). For more about the online exam view details on the website under **Pre-registration>Online examination.**

There is an **Online Examination Committee** consisting of a group of well-regarded and enthusiastic health professionals from across the motu. They **play an important role in supporting the exam process.** Members help maintain the quality of the exam and ensure it is current, fair, valid, and robust. Their expertise helps the Council make informed decisions about applicants seeking registration and supports public confidence in the profession.

Using AI to support our work

The Council is using artificial intelligence (AI) in a careful and responsible way to support its regulatory work. We mainly use Microsoft 365 Copilot, which includes enterprise-level data protection. This means the information we use stays within our organisation's secure environment and is not used to train external AI systems.

Where possible, we remove identifying information before using AI tools. We also follow the Ministry for Regulation's *Responsible AI in Action* guidance for regulatory organisations.

AI helps us with lower-risk administrative tasks such as drafting documents, summarising information, and checking information and data for completeness. It does not make regulatory decisions. Those decisions remain the responsibility of our people, who are accountable for ensuring decisions are fair, accurate, and meet our legal obligations.

By following New Zealand guidance on the responsible use of AI, including guidance from the Ministry for Regulation, public service AI frameworks, and the Office of the Privacy Commissioner, we aim to use AI in ways that improve our work while protecting the privacy, rights, and trust of the practitioners and the public.

You can read the Ministry for Regulation's *Responsible AI in Action* guidance here: https://www.regulation.govt.nz/publications-and-resources/resource-library/responsible-ai-in-action/.

The Council has recently developed and published AI guidance for the anaesthetic technician profession and is considering the best way to provide guidance for the medical laboratory science profession. The guidance provided for anaesthetic technologists can be found on the Council's website, under Resources and Publications or accessed directly via the following link 20260707-MSC-AT-Artificial-Intelligence-Guidance-v1.pdf.

Know what to do if you change your name?

The Council is reviewing how practitioner names are displayed on the public register. As part of this work, it's important that the information we hold is accurate and up to date.

If you change your name for any reason, such as through marriage, civil union, dissolution, or a legal name change, you must let the Council know.

Under the Act, practitioners are required to notify the Council within **one month** of a name change. To update your details, we need official evidence of the change, such as a birth certificate, marriage certificate, civil union certificate, or other formal name change documentation.

Please note that we cannot accept the form signed on the day of a marriage or civil union ceremony. We require the official certificate issued after the marriage or civil union has been formally registered. Keeping your details up to date helps ensure the register remains accurate and that practitioners can be correctly identified.

If you have any questions about updating your name, please contact the Regulation Team at **msc@medsci.co.nz** or phone **+64 4 801 6250**.

Website – what's changed lately

Here's a reminder of some things that have changed, been added, or updated on the website since our July newsletter:

- ☐ Medical Sciences Council performance review 2026
- ☐ Anaesthetic technician proposal for practitioners' fees 2027/08 – see also the News item
- ☐ Medical laboratory science practitioners' fees 2027/28 – see also the News item
- ☐ Feedback on medical laboratory science scope of practice review
- ☐ Anaesthetic technician guidance: artificial intelligence – AI
- ☐ Update: Changes proposed for medical laboratory science scopes of practice
- ☐ Anaesthetic technician accreditation standards – consult outcome – monitoring framework consultation
- ☐ Consultation outcome: Anaesthetic technician safe sedation. Further consultation: endorsement and education programme

More than a register – what you can find on our website

Did you know our website offers much more than access to the practitioner portal and public register?

Some of the information you can find includes:

- **Annual Practising Certificate (APC) and fees** - what it is, who needs it and why (**you must have a current APC to work in any scope of practice in Aotearoa New Zealand**), when, and how to apply).
- **Raising a concern** – what you need to know as a member of the public, a registered practitioner, or an employer – and recent decisions made by the Health Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal (HPDT).
- **Accreditation standards** – meeting education standards, obtaining accreditation, accredited programmes, monitoring. And yes, there's an accreditation policy.
- **International practitioners** – how to apply to register if you're living overseas and planning to work in Aotearoa New Zealand
- **How to register if you're a graduate** – find out if you're eligible for registration.

Whether you're a registered practitioner, employer, student, international applicant, or member of the public, the website is a useful source of information about the Council, registration requirements, and professional standards.

The Council and others – different roles

Our job, as the Medical Sciences Council, is to protect the public through the regulation of practitioners. Stakeholders are the individuals and organisations that we work with, consult, or engage with because they have an interest in the profession, or are affected by our decisions.

This distinction is why responsible authorities (healthcare regulators like us) often talk about 'engagement with stakeholders'. They seek input from professional bodies, educators, employers, unions, practitioners, and consumers, but the responsibility for making regulatory decisions remains with the authority itself.

In New Zealand's health regulatory system, **responsible authorities** and **stakeholders** have different roles, responsibilities, and legal obligations.

Responsible authorities

Responsible authorities like ours are organisations established under the **Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (the Act)** to regulate specific health professions.

The Council's primary role is to **protect public safety**. Responsibilities typically include:

- Setting scopes of practice.
- Registering practitioners.
- Issuing practising certificates.
- Setting standards of competence, conduct, and ethics.
- Managing recertification and continuing professional development requirements.
- Reviewing competence, health, and conduct concerns.
- Taking regulatory action where necessary.

Responsible authorities must make decisions based on their legal duties under the Act, even when those decisions are unpopular with practitioners, employers, or professional groups.

Stakeholders

Stakeholders are people, groups, or organisations that have an interest in the profession, or are affected by the responsible authority's decisions. They are not regulators and generally do not have statutory decision-making powers.

Examples include:

Stakeholder type	Typical role
Professional bodies/associations	Represent members' professional interests, provide networking and professional development.
Educators and training providers	Deliver qualifications and programmes of education.
Employers	Employ practitioners and implement workplace policies and standards.
Unions	Advocate for employment conditions, pay, and workforce issues.
Professional colleges and specialty groups	Support professional standards and development within specific disciplines.
Consumer advocacy groups	Represent the interests of consumers of health care services.
Government agencies and health organisations	Help shape policy and workforce planning.

Getting in touch and more

You'll find most things on the website www.mscouncil.org.nz but if you want to get in touch, please email the team at msc@medsci.co.nz - you can also phone +64 4 801 6250.

Closed during the festive season

Council staff will be taking a break over the festive season from **Wednesday 23 December** – returning on **Monday 11 January 2027**.

We will monitor the Council's email box and pro-standards@medsci.co.nz for any urgent queries over the break.

Te Kaunihera Pūtaiao Hauora o Aotearoa | Medical Sciences Council
Email msc@medsci.co.nz - Phone +64 4 801 6250 - www.mscouncil.org.nz