

Te Heamana - message from the Chair

Kia ora tatou

It's hard to believe we are nearly through November already. I'm sure most of our practitioners have had a busy year and will be looking forward to some down time over the summer. Please ensure you take some of the annual leave you are owed and use it to relax and recharge. I hope this is accompanied by some great weather.

The Medical Sciences Council (Council) and the Medical Science Secretariat (MSS) have also had a busy year. Council members and MSS staff have attended several events for the professions – and enjoyed meeting practitioners. Hopefully we've been able to answer questions and provide useful information.

We have farewelled three Council members recently after they completed their terms with us – Natasha Caldwell, Erolia Rooney and Varsha Desai. We thank them for their commitment and sharing of skills and experience over the last six years. We've also had three new Council members join us – Marike Rossouw, Grandy Li and David Cumin – whom we welcomed at our last meeting in October.

There have been a number of projects progressing during the year. The scope of practice review has been completed for the anaesthetic technician workforce – and there's been quite a bit of work involved with updating competence standards, accreditation guidelines, sedation policy, etc. The scope of practice review is in full swing for the medical laboratory science profession. The MSS staff have been busy with this, and the expert advisory group has met several times. We're hoping that the consultation period on the draft medical laboratory science (MLS) scopes of practice will start in January 2026. I encourage all our practitioners to review this and consider responding.

In September, we received a letter from the Ministry of Health | Manatū Hauora reminding us of the obligations that registered health professionals have with early detection and reporting of child abuse.

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cont.,

In cases of suspected child abuse and neglect, there are processes that health practitioners are required to take which are set out in a Memorandum of Understanding between Health New Zealand, Oranga Tamariki and the New Zealand Police. For those who interface directly with the public, it's important to recognise that we have a responsibility to report any signs of child abuse or neglect. The Director General of Health has recommended that we encourage our practitioners to participate in child protection training. You'll find information and a link to more information in this newsletter.

My best wishes to you all over the summer and festive season.

Ngā mihi nui



Ruth Beeston
Chair

Te Manahautū - message from the Chief Executive

Tēnā koutou katoa

As we move towards the end of the year it's pleasing to look back on all that has been achieved during 2025. The Council has had a busy and productive year with several consultations completed, and three key consultations now underway. We were pleased to be able to roll out the new scope of practice for anaesthetic technicians which came into effect in April 2025, and have made changes to the recertification programme for that group of practitioners.

With that key initiative completed we've focussed our attention on the scope of practice for the medical laboratory science profession and will be consulting with the profession during 2026. We encourage you to participate in any consultations that are underway so that we can know, and be informed, about your opinions. When the Council consults on matters we often hear different

perspectives. It's vital this occurs so the decisions we make are informed by best practice, and expertise of the workforce that we regulate.

As many of you will know the Government consulted on the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (the Act) during 2025. Since then, we've been advised that changes to the Act are being drafted, although there's no definitive timeframe for this to be moved to the next stage. When this does occur, the Council will be making written submissions and will consider whether it will also make submissions in person to the Select Committee.

Recently, Ruth Beeston and I met with Minister Simeon Brown and discussed matters of importance to the Council. This included discussion on the workforces that we regulate, the scope of practice project that's underway, and we took time to update him on our registration statistics. Due to a reallocation, Associate Minister of Health Matt Doocey now has responsibility for the Council. Ruth and I are meeting with the associate minister in December.

This is a great time of year, and the MSS office is abuzz as we register new graduate practitioners entering the workforce. We're doing this by using our new registration database. Welcome to you all and to your new careers. I take this opportunity to refer you to our website where you can find information about the Council's role, its policy, and secondary legislation that impacts on you.

Finally, I take this opportunity to wish you all the best for the festive season. I acknowledge that many of you will be working during this time but hope that outside of work you are able to spend time with friends and whānau. I look forward to connecting with you again in 2026.

Ngā mihi nui



Dr Susan Calvert - Chief Executive
Medical Sciences Secretariat

Council changes

Farewell and thank you to:

- Erolia Rooney (Medical Laboratory Scientist). Erolia was first appointed to the Council in June 2019 when she was the Regional Director Pacific Health for Te Wai Pounamu at Te Whatu Ora. Her term with the Council ended in August this year.
- Natasha Caldwell (Medical Laboratory Scientist). Natasha was appointed to the Council in June 2019 – ending her term in August 2025 while also working in Histology as the Service Manager, at Middlemore Laboratory, Auckland.
- Vasha Desai (Medical Laboratory Pre-Analytical Technician). Varsha was appointed to the Council in June 2019, ending her term in August 2025, while also working as the Area Manager, ADHB Central Collection Centres with Labtests.

Welcome to the following new Council members, appointed in September:

- Marike Rossouw (Medical Laboratory Pre-Analytical Technician (MLPAT) Phlebotomy). Marike is the Patient Services Manager for Awanui Labs in the Auckland region, overseeing nearly 300 pre-analytical staff across more than 50 collection centres and mobile services.
- Dr David Cumin (PhD/Biomedical Engineering and Council lay-member). David is also a senior lecturer in the department of Anaesthesiology at the University of Auckland, with responsibilities at the Simulation Centre for Patient Safety.
- Grandy Li (Medical Laboratory Scientist). She has over 15 years' experience as a medical laboratory scientist and is currently the Head of Department in the Specimen Reception for Awanui Labs, Dunedin - leading a team of over 20 professionals.

For more about our current Council members view details on the website [here](#).

Te Ama Tōtika

Te Ama Tōtika | The Māori Practitioners Advisory Committee is made up of representatives from different scopes of practice (as well as lay people) from consumers of health care services. They assist with the review of key standards and codes of conduct, inform the Council about policy changes required to ensure practitioners have the competencies to enable effective interaction with Māori, and advise on related matters as per section 118 of the Act.

Tokowaru nga tangata o Te Ama Tōtika. Ko rātou ngā māngai o nga momo hōkaitanga katoa (me nga tangata reimana hoki) mai i nga kirtaki o nga ratonga hauora, hei awhina i te arotake i ngā paerewa matua me nga tikanga whakahaere. He kaitohutohu hoki ratou ki te Kaunihera.

For more about them, view website details [here under About us/Māori Practitioners Advisory Committee](#).



HPDT decision

The Health Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal (the Tribunal) recently published a decision about a health practitioner's conduct, which amounted to malpractice – likely to bring discredit to the profession. Because of this matter the practitioner had their registration cancelled. This practitioner has been given name suppression as part of the Tribunal's decision.

The decision is published on the Tribunal's website (19 November 2025) www.hpdt.org.nz

Social media and professional conduct

Following the recent disciplinary case and decision the Council reminds all practitioners of the [Social Media and electronic communications policy](#), and the [Code of Ethical Conduct](#) for medical laboratory science and anaesthetic technology practitioners in Aotearoa New Zealand (the Code).

These documents explain that health practitioners must act professionally. This includes when using social media, and when presenting themselves as health professionals.

The Code of Ethical Conduct sets out the standards for how practitioners should behave. It is used to judge behaviour, as shown in a recent HPDT case. The Code expects practitioners to act honestly and with integrity, take responsibility for their work, and always put the person receiving care first.

The social media policy reminds practitioners to stay professional online and think about the way their posts affect how others see them and their profession. Integrity is key. Breaching this code can lead to severe consequences. There is growing attention on this issue, and several tribunal cases have shown that inappropriate use of social media can result in action being taken against health practitioners.

What is secondary legislation?

This is law developed by a person or organisation that has the delegated authority from Parliament to create it. The Council has the power to develop secondary legislation, such as defining the scope of practice, and the Code of Ethical Conduct.

Raising a concern

Whether you're a member of the public, a registered practitioner, or an employer, we encourage you to get in touch if you have any questions or concerns about a practitioner's competence, fitness to practise, or conduct.

There's information about how to do this on the website under [Raising a concern](#):

- [what you need to know](#)
- [as a member of the public](#)
- [as a registered practitioner](#)
- [as an employer](#).

We also publish [decisions](#) made by the Health Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal (HPDT) in this area.

If you're unsure about raising a formal concern you can discuss this first by emailing pro-standards@medsci.co.nz

Recertification (CPD) audit 2026

Every two-years we randomly select and audit a number of practitioners as part of the bi-annual recertification programme. You can read more about this on the website [here](#).

Keeping up to date

Doing activities to keep learning and recording what you've done helps you to keep growing in your career. The Council is also required to assure itself that practitioners continue to practise safely, effectively, and legally within the scope of practice, as it evolves.

It's always a good reminder, before practitioners are called for the audit, to find out what's required on the website [here](#) (declarations, filling in a logbook, providing evidence and reflective statements, how to submit documents for audit, resources, FAQs).

It's worth keeping a record as you go so, you're not scrambling to try and remember when it comes to report on this later.

Consultations - outcomes - policies

Consultations

Since our previous newsletters, we've published several consultations, and one consultation outcome:

Current

- MSC proposed fee change (Anaesthetic Technician | AT) – view details on the website [here](#) – includes a survey, consultation doc (with FAQs and list of survey questions), reserve funds policy doc. Consultation ends 11.59pm, Wednesday 3 December 2025.

- MSC proposed fee change (Medical Laboratory Science | MLS) – view details on the website [here](#) – includes a survey, consultation doc (with FAQs and list of survey questions), reserve funds policy doc. Consultation ends 11.59pm, Wednesday 3 December 2025.
- AT safe sedation standard – view details on the website [here](#) – includes a brief survey, consultation doc, and AT Scope of Practice sedation draft standard.

Outcomes

- Recertification programme (International Anaesthetic Technician) and 'return to practice' – view details on the website [here](#) – includes the consultation outcome doc, AT return to practice policy, and Recertification International Qualified ATs doc. A key change here is the requirement for all internationally qualified anaesthetic technicians new to practise in Aotearoa New Zealand to engage in a recertification programme as they adapt to practise. Details about the programme are available on our website.

Policies

The following policies are either new or recently updated and available on the website here:

- [AT locum practice policy](#) (Aug 2025)
- [MLS locum practice policy](#) (Aug 2025)
- [AT return to practice policy](#) (Oct 2025)
- [Recertification for internationally qualified anaesthetic technician policy](#) (Oct 2025) = NEW

Annual practising certificate renewals 2026

Just a reminder about Annual Practising Certificate (APC) details:

- Registered practitioners must hold a current annual APC to practise as a medical laboratory scientist or anaesthetic technician in Aotearoa New Zealand.
- The practising year runs from 1 April to 31 March the following year.

- Details about APCs, including FAQs, forms and documents on how to apply, the practitioner privacy statement, and the practising certificate policy are on the website [here](#).

Bulk billing update

Some employers pay APCs for their staff using bulk funding. While we have offered this payment option before, we regret to advise it won't be available for the 2026 renewal period. We are looking into whether we can bring it back in the future.

Accreditation standards - coming up

Accreditation is one of the core functions of the Council and is required under the Act. These are the standards that providers of education must meet in order for a qualification that leads to registration to be approved.

The Council has been working on a revision of its Accreditation Standards and an expert group was established to undertake this work. This included representatives with extensive experience in education and education quality assurance.

The Council plans to consult on the Accreditation Standards for Anaesthetic Technicians in the first instance and this will occur in early 2026.

Tell us what you think

How do you know what's going on, what's new, what's changed, comment on consultations about proposed regulation or policy changes? Is it word-of-mouth, emails from the Council/Secretariat staff, details on the Council website – maybe these newsletters?

We want to make sure you get the information you need, when you need it. Please take a few minutes to fill out a short, anonymous survey. It's multiple choice and you can add comments if you like.

[Click here to do the survey](#)

+64 4 801 6250
msc@medsci.co.nz
www.msccouncil.org.nz

Child protection education

Health practitioners play an important role in identifying and raising concerns about possible signs of child harm, abuse, or neglect. Indeed, they may often be the first person to notice signs.

The health system has an important role in the detection and reporting of abuse. It's vital therefore that health practitioners who work with children have the knowledge and skills to make sure they're aware of possible signs and can take the necessary steps when they have concerns.

Education to support this work is essential and the Council encourages all health practitioners to engage in child protection education to support efforts to keep children safe. Guidance is provided on the Te Whatu Ora website [Family violence and sexual violence](#) – Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora



We're taking a holiday break

Like many New Zealand organisations, the Secretariat will be closed from Wednesday, 24 December 2025 – back on Monday, 5 January 2026.

Feel free to email us during this time.



We have a new system

In June this year we went live with our new practitioner management system. To ensure the security of the system you will need to reset your password the first time that you login using the same email as in our previous system. Instructions for this are available on our website.

For more information view details on our website [here](#) under News/new practitioner system LIVE.



Voluntary bonding scheme

Te Whatu Ora | Health NZ are running an initiative that encourages newly qualified health professionals to work in communities and specialties that need them the most.

Right now (between 21 Nov and 21 Dec) Te Whatu Ora are informing those who graduated in 2024 that they are accepting applications from anaesthetic technicians. Further information can be found [here](#) on their website.



The Medical Science Council (the Council) is one of 18 health responsible authorities (RAs). Members are appointed by the Minister of Health under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (the Act).

The Council makes sure that medical laboratory science and anaesthetic technology practitioners are competent and safe to practise.