



Consultation

by: The Osteopathic Council of New Zealand | Kaunihera Haumanu Tuahiwi o Aotearoa

for: Proposed 2026-2027 Annual Practising Certificate Fee Changes

Consultation released:	Thursday 11 December 2025
Deadline for submissions:	5PM Friday 16 January 2026
Submissions to:	oste.admin@osteopathiccouncil.org.nz

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1. Introduction

The Osteopathic Council of New Zealand | Kaunihera Haumanu Tuahiwi o Aotearoa (the Council) is seeking feedback on our proposed changes to the APC fee for the 2026/2027 APC period. The proposed change consists of a 5% increase in the general APC fee for this period.

Under section 130 of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (the Act), the Council may prescribe fees for a range of matters, including issuing a practising certificate. These fees are the primary source of Council’s revenue, which allows the Council to carry out its functions under the Act.

Osteopathic practitioners are now invited to provide feedback about this proposal. All feedback received by the due date will be carefully considered by Council before a final decision is made. The outcome will be communicated in early February 2026 and published in the New Zealand Gazette at least 30 days before any changes take effect.

2. Background

The Osteopathic Council is a regulatory body with a wide range of responsibilities under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003. Its primary purpose is to protect the health and safety of members of the public by ensuring that osteopaths are competent and fit to practise osteopathy.

The Council’s activities are not funded by government appropriation, but by the profession as a whole.

The major share of revenue to finance the Council’s activities comes from APC fees. Revenue next year from 2026/2027 APC fees is expected to be seventy-nine percent of the Council’s total income, the balance coming from small volumes of assessment fees, registration fees and bank interest.

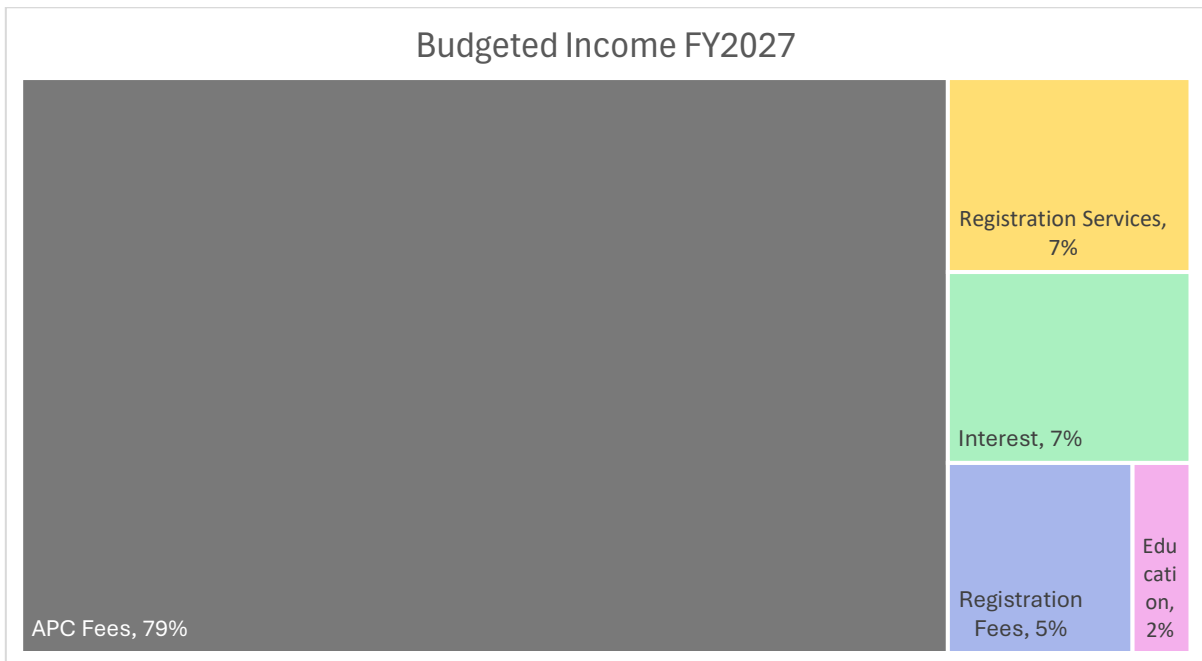


Table 1: Budgeted income sources FY2027

3. Functions

The functions of the Council are described in section 118 of the Act, and include:

- prescribing qualifications required for the osteopathic scopes of practice, and accrediting and monitoring educational institutions that teach and award/confer these qualifications
- considering applications for annual practising certificates
- reviewing and promoting the competence of osteopaths
- recognising, accrediting and setting programmes to ensure the ongoing competence of osteopaths
- receiving and acting on information from concerned parties about the competence of osteopaths
- considering the case of an osteopath who may be unable to perform the functions required for the practice of osteopathy
- setting standards of clinical competence, cultural competence and ethical conduct to be observed by osteopaths
- promoting education and training within the osteopathic profession

In addition to the business-as-usual activities the Council carries out to achieve these functions, the Council has developed a plan of strategic project work based on its Strategic Plan for the 2023-2026 period. Based on an overall aim of *Safe osteopathic care for Aotearoa*, the Strategic Plan consists of four strategic priorities:

- We will empower osteopaths to provide safe care
- We will foster a mature working relationship with the osteopathic profession
- We will engage with the public to inform and support healthcare decisions
- We will uphold and implement Te Tiriti throughout our work

In the 2026/2027 financial year, Council will continue with several key projects, many of which are nearing completion. These projects directly contribute to Council meeting its priorities and responsibilities under the Act:

- Western Medical Acupuncture Scope Review
- Competent Authority Pathway Programme Review
- Public Engagement Strategy Media Campaign
- Council Website Redevelopment
- International Osteopathic Regulation Collaboration and Development
- Development of Māori Responsiveness within Council and the Profession

Income and Reserves

In the second half of each financial year, the Council considers and approves a budget for the following year. Each budget must balance the expected revenue received (primarily derived from practising certificate fees) with the anticipated expenditure for the year. Any deficits in this budget are generally met either through increasing revenue from fees, reducing discretionary expenses, or meeting any shortfall from Council's reserves.

As part of this process, the Council considers projected income and expenses over a five-year period. While the small nature of the osteopathic profession, and the related regulatory activity, can make precise forecasting difficult, Council's intention is to avoid large, unexpected changes in fees.

For the year beginning 1st April 2022, the Council approved a 20% reduction in the total APC fee. This significant reduction was partially in response to the financial pressure osteopaths faced due to the COVID-19 pandemic but also reflected an aim to reduce the size of Council's financial reserves. In 2023, Council reduced the APC fee further by ceasing to collect an additional Disciplinary levy.

While Council has been able to maintain this reduced fee in the intervening years, this has required Council to set consecutive deficit budgets, resulting in the reduction of Council's financial reserves. Council's financial reserves, in line with the OCNZ Financial Reserves Policy, consist of two separate reserves:

General Reserves: These reserves help to ensure the resilience of Council, and that Council is able to respond to a changing business environment. They include allowances for Costs to Cease Operations (including six months of Commitments), Financial Resilience, and Long-term Projects

Disciplinary Reserves: These reserves include revenue collected from disciplinary levies and may only be used to fund disciplinary expenses. They allow Council to manage unexpected increases in disciplinary activity and related costs.

The Council's General Reserves are now approaching the level considered appropriate by the Reserves Policy and, as such, Council now needs to begin returning to a balanced budget. While some of this may be met through careful control of expenditure, Council considers that a modest increase in the APC fee is necessary to maintain Council's financial stability and ability to meet its statutory obligations.

Expenses

There have been gradual increases in many Council expenses since Council last made changes to fees. These costs increases are primarily due to inflationary pressures on core services, higher disciplinary activity, and the resumption of projects deferred during the pandemic and have made it necessary to review the APC fee to ensure continued delivery of Council functions.

The Council recognises their responsibility to be prudent stewards of the money collected from practitioner fees and charges, but that they also have a responsibility to carry out their functions under the Act as a responsive and forward-thinking regulator.

In reviewing the 2026/2027 budget, the Council has endeavoured to reduce expenditure where appropriate, without compromising Council’s business-as-usual or project work. Overall, this has led to a 6% reduction in budgeted general expenditure compared to the previous budget. This reduction includes a 17% reduction in budgeted project costs and an 8% reduction in Council and Committee expenses.

	FY2026 Budget	FY2027 Budget	Change%
Expenses			
Administration and overheads	\$ 104,540.00	\$ 100,540.00	-4%
Education and Standards	\$ 49,000.00	\$ 38,200.00	-22%†
Fitness to Practice and Competence	\$ 12,000.00	\$ 12,000.00	0%
Council and Committee expenses	\$ 211,750.00	\$ 195,450.00	-8%
Secretariat expenses	\$ 239,800.00	\$ 239,800.00	0%
Project expenses	\$ 91,000.00	\$ 75,500.00	-17%
Depreciation and amortisation	\$ 11,460.00	\$ 11,760.00	3%
General Expenses	\$ 719,550.00	\$ 673,250.00	-6%

Table 2: Comparison of budgeted General Expenses 2026|2027

†Note that the decrease in Education and Standards expenditure primarily relates to costs associated with the Competent Authority Pathway Programme. This programme attracts separate practitioner fees and has minimal impact on the overall final balance.

Through both this reduction in expenses, and the fee increases proposed in this consultation, Council expects to reduce the FY2027 deficit between general income and expenditure to less than half that budgeted in the current financial year.

	FY2026 Budget	FY2027 Budget	Change%
General Income	\$ 574,372.00	\$ 607,575.00	6%
General Expenses	\$ 719,550.00	\$ 673,250.00	-6%
General Balance	-\$ 145,178.00	-\$ 65,675.00	-55%

Table 3: Comparison of budgeted General Balance 2026|2027

Council anticipates that these changes, combined with further modest increases in revenue in subsequent years, will allow Council to return to a balanced general budget within five years.

4. Proposal

General APC Fee

The Osteopathic Council of New Zealand is proposing to change the Annual Practising Certificate fee by way of a **5% increase** from the 2025 amount of \$811.20.

This would see an **increase in the annual APC fee of \$40.56 (including GST)** and a **total cost of \$851.76 (including GST)** for the year. APC Fees paid during the year for less than a full year's APC will be apportioned.

The Council has set the proposed 5% increase with a view to avoid sudden significant increases in fees. The Council recognises that any increase in fees may impact practitioners and the proposed increase is intended to ensure adequate funding for Council's statutory responsibilities, while avoiding sudden or excessive changes.

As Council still needs to move towards a balanced budget, however, we anticipate that further changes of a similar nature may also be considered in subsequent years.

Disciplinary Levy

Council does not currently charge a Disciplinary levy as part of the total APC fee.

Disciplinary activity for osteopaths (such as Professional Conduct Committee (PCC) and Health Practitioner Disciplinary Tribunal (HPDT) activity) is funded by the Osteopathic Council. While the HPDT may order that a health practitioner found guilty of misconduct must pay part or all of the disciplinary costs associated with their case, this does not typically cover all of the related expenses. In order to ensure adequate funding for these activities, many Responsible Authorities include a Disciplinary Levy in their total APC fee. This dedicated levy also helps demonstrate the specific cost of disciplinary activity to the profession, compared to general Council operations.

Previously, the Council charged a Disciplinary levy of \$250 in 2017, reducing to \$20 in 2019 and \$5 in 2022 before being removed in 2023.

The Council has subsequently seen a significant increase in disciplinary activity, with disciplinary costs of \$40,511 in the 2025 financial year. Our expectation is that these costs will increase further for the current financial year.

Council is not proposing a disciplinary levy for the 2026 APC fee. However, if disciplinary activity and the associated costs remain high or increase further, Council will review the need for a disciplinary levy for the 2027 or 2028 APC period. Practitioners will be consulted if such a change is considered.

Other Fees

Council is not currently considering changes to any other fees.

5. Appendix A: Summary of fees

[Proposed changes highlighted]

Registration

Registration of applicants from New Zealand accredited programmes	\$690.00
Re-registration of osteopaths cancelled on the osteopath's request	\$750.00
Registration in the trainee scope (Unitec)	\$690.00
Registration extended and vocational scopes of practice (authorisations)	\$172.00
Registration assessment – overseas qualified (TTMR)	\$750.00
Registration assessment – overseas qualified (Competent Authority Pathway)	\$900.00
Registration assessment – overseas qualified (For the assessment of overseas qualifications not recognised by the Council)	\$1,898.00

Application for an Annual Practising Certificate

(all scopes of practice including extended and vocational):

Full year (no disciplinary levy is included)	\$811.20 \$851.76
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APC Fees paid during the year will be apportioned

Other Fees

Competent Authority Pathway Programme (12-month preceptorship support for overseas practitioners)	\$3,600.00
Re-registration following removal from the register following HPDT penalty	\$3,500.00
Copy of the register	\$100.00

Accreditation and Monitoring Fee

Accreditation and monitoring fees are based on recovery of reasonable and actual costs up to a maximum of:	\$22,222.00
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