

December 2025

From the Chair

Dental Council

Te Kaunihera Tiaki Niho

As we approach the festive season and the close of 2025, many of us are taking time to reflect on the achievements and challenges of the past year. At our recent Council meeting, we did just that, acknowledging the progress we've made this year, and the challenges facing the sector. We remain dedicated to delivering risk proportional and responsive regulation of oral health practitioners, to ensure public safety in NZ going into 2026.

Before our offices close for a few weeks to mark the end of the year, I wanted to share a quick update:

- Our **plain language guides** on Council inquiry and review processes are now published and available
- Advice on **AI in oral healthcare**
- We have several **current consultations** open for your input
- **Engagements** and other updates

Most importantly, I want to wish you all a wonderful, restful holiday season. Thank you for your contributions and commitment throughout the year.



Ngā manaakitanga,

Dr John Bridgman

Chair



2026/27 budget

We are seeking feedback from practitioners and stakeholders on the draft 2026/27 budget, proposed Annual Practising Certificate (APC) fees and disciplinary levies, and other fees for oral health practitioners.

Details are set out in this [consultation document](#).

It is open until **19 December 2025**. We will consider all submissions received with a view to making a final decision at our January 2026 meeting.

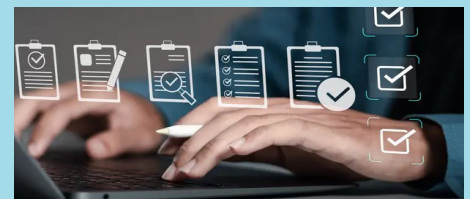
Consultation documents



Registration pathways and prescribed qualifications – Q&A guide

As part of the consultation, Chair John Bridgman and Chief Executive Marie MacKay hosted two webinars to discuss the proposals and answer emerging questions. A Q&A guide on the proposals has been published on our website. The consultation is open until **29 January 2026**, and you can submit a response through the [online survey](#).

Read the Q&A guide



Australia/New Zealand Accreditation Standards consultation

We have launched a joint consultation with the Australian Dental Council on the revised Accreditation Standards, to ensure that education programmes meet criteria for the education of newly qualified dental practitioners who are competent and safe to practise in New Zealand and Australia. The consultation is open until **27 February 2026**.

Consultation documents

Upcoming consultation

Sedation Practice Standard in early January

Explaining our processes through plain language guides

The Dental Council has published new plain language guides to help oral health practitioners understand what to expect during our competence, disciplinary or health processes. We understand these processes can feel daunting, and these guides are designed to give clear, accessible information and remove uncertainty about each step of our processes, when Council is required to act on information it receives about a practitioner.

The five guides explain our existing processes under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 and cover:

- [Facing a Dental Council inquiry](#)
- [Facing a Dental Council inquiry \(detailed\)](#)
- [When there are concerns about your health](#)
- [What to expect during a competence review](#)
- [What to expect during a professional conduct committee investigation](#)

AI in oral health practice



Artificial intelligence (AI) is everywhere, including oral healthcare. It is essential practitioners are using AI responsibly, understanding its functions and limitations, to both protect patients and meet professional standards.

Read Council's advice on your responsibilities in using AI, and the [guidelines published by Health NZ](#) on navigating AI in practice.

Council advice on AI

Schedule of senior engagement

Dental Council Chair and Chief Executive engage widely across the sector. Meetings include:

November-December 2025

26 Nov	Te Ao Mārama, Aotearoa Māori Dental Association
26 Nov	Registration pathways consultation webinar
1 Dec	Clinical Directors Group meeting, and National Clinical Director of Oral Health
1 Dec	Registration pathways consultation webinar
3 Dec	Professional Standards Authority (UK), Medical Council, Nursing Council and Pharmacy Council
11 Dec	NZAO membership webinar on budget consult 2026/27 and APC fees and disciplinary levies
18 Dec	National Dental Examining Board of Canada

Recertification - oral health practitioners cycle ending 31 March

Recertification forms an essential part of our role in promoting public safety and trust. Our annual programme gives Council assurance that practitioners are competent, continuing their professional development, and not working in isolation.

We have two recertification cycles, with oral health practitioners including dental hygienists, dental therapists, oral health therapists, clinical dental technicians, dental technicians and orthodontic auxiliaries running 1 April - 31 March. The cycle for dentists and dental specialists runs 1 October - 30 September.

The annual recertification cycle gives practitioners scope in deciding the best areas for development, and in discussion with a peer, a tailored plan that best meets your learning and development needs. We encourage you to review your professional development plan early, check that your peer relationship is current and effective for your professional development needs for the next year. Please update any changes to your professional peer relationship in your [practitioner portal](#) to ensure we communicate with the correct peer.

Since the introduction of an annual recertification cycle in 2022, Council has had contact with over 1,300 registered oral health practitioners across all professions in response to recertification responses. This means we can identify any compliance gaps and offer remedial advice at an early stage, to encourage safe dental practice.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!



Wishing you and your whānau a restful holiday season and a happy new year.

Dental Council will be closed Monday 22nd December and reopen Monday 5th January.

Dental Council
Te Kaunihera Tiaki Niho