



Te Poari Kaimātai Hinengaro o Aotearoa

NEW ZEALAND PSYCHOLOGISTS BOARD

Whakaatu | Notification

25 September 2026

Notification Subject

- Board confirms one-off disciplinary levy for 2026/27

Tēnā koutou katoa,

Following consultation with the profession, the New Zealand Psychologists Board has decided to impose a one-off disciplinary levy of **\$247.83 plus GST (\$285.00 including GST)** on practising registrants (excluding interns) for the 2026/27 practising year. The decision was made at the Board's meeting on 18 September 2026 after careful consideration of all submissions received during the consultation period from 29 July to 2 September 2026. The Board received 43 individual submissions, together with submissions from Ara Poutama Aotearoa, the New Zealand Defence Force and Apex Union on behalf of groups of registrants. The feedback raised important questions about affordability, fairness, transparency, cost control and the sustainability of disciplinary funding.

Why the levy is necessary

The Board is facing an exceptional and immediate increase in disciplinary costs. Over the five years before 2025, it received an average of 1.4 new Health Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal (HPDT) cases each year. This rose to eight new cases in the year ended 31 March 2025 and a further seven in the year ended 31 March 2026. The Board currently has 10 live HPDT cases in the 2026/27 financial year. The Board's fees have remained comparatively low among responsible authorities and regulated professions, and no disciplinary levy was charged for several years while reserves were reduced in response to previous audit advice. Unfortunately, the rapid rise in HPDTs has resulted in the Board's reserves being exhausted, and funding ordinarily required for business-as-usual operations is now being used to meet the substantial increase in costs arising from HPDT cases. This has placed the Board in a critical financial position.

Psychologists are the third most represented profession in HPDT proceedings (of the 17 health professions regulated by the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003). The average cost to the Board is approximately \$65,000 per case, including prosecuting counsel, Tribunal members, administration and travel. However, several cases over the past two years have cost significantly more than this average, including two cases with a combined cost of \$360,000. At the same time, more complaints are requiring investigation by Professional Conduct Committees. This marked increase in disciplinary activity is the principal reason for the levy. Under the HPCA Act, the Board is required to protect the health and safety of the public by regulating the profession. As the Board's regulatory and disciplinary functions are funded by the profession, the associated costs are shared collectively by practising registrants when a practitioner does not meet the required standards of conduct, competence or fitness to practise.

Although the HPDT may award costs to the Board following a successful proceeding, those awards generally cover only 30% to 50% of the Board's actual costs. Recovery can also be limited where a censured practitioner's employment is affected, with amounts sometimes becoming doubtful debts or being repaid through small weekly instalments over several years. Cost awards therefore offset only a small part of the disciplinary costs ultimately funded by the profession.

The Board's latest financial reforecast projects a shortfall of approximately **\$657,000** for the 2026/27 financial year before the levy is received. Without the levy, the Board expects its available cash to be exhausted by December 2026. The levy is therefore necessary to enable the Board to continue meeting its statutory obligations and carrying out its regulatory and disciplinary functions. For clarity, the levy will address the immediate funding shortfall but will not replenish the disciplinary reserve.

Legal basis and timing

Section 131 of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 permits a responsible authority, by notice in the New Zealand Gazette, to impose a disciplinary levy to fund Professional Conduct Committee investigations and HPDT proceedings. The Board has lodged the **Psychologists (Disciplinary Levy) Notice 2026** for publication in the New Zealand Gazette on 22 September 2026. The notice will come into effect 28 days after it was lodged, on 20 October 2026. Practitioners will be required to pay the levy 10 working days after that date. Each practising registrant will receive notice that the levy is now payable through their practitioner portal where payment instructions will be provided.

What the levy will achieve

The levy addresses the immediate disciplinary funding shortfall for the current financial year. It is expected to return the Board to approximately a break-even operating position for 2026/27, but it will not restore the Board's reserves.

The Board will consult separately on the APC fee and disciplinary levy for 2027/28. That consultation will consider how to fund the disciplinary function on a more sustainable and forward-looking basis, including the appropriate approach to rebuilding reserves over time.

Cost control and fairness

The Board recognises that an unexpected levy creates pressure for practitioners. It has considered whether recovery could be spread over more than one year, but this is not possible because the costs are being incurred now and there are no reserves available to fund the shortfall.

The Board has taken steps to reduce costs, including:

- restructuring in 2025 to focus resources on core regulatory work and bring legal capability in-house;
- holding some Board meetings online to reduce travel and related expenditure;
- undertaking pre-hearing work to reduce hearing time and overall case costs; and
- seeking competitive rates and monitoring external legal costs.

The levy will apply at the same rate to all practising registrants. No reduced rate will apply based on part-time status, hours worked or recency of registration because the Board's regulatory and disciplinary responsibilities apply to all practising registrants.

Thank you

The Board acknowledges the financial impact of this decision and the burden it places upon all practising registrants, and thanks everyone who contributed to the consultation. The concerns raised will inform the 2027/28 levy-setting process as the Board works to fund its disciplinary responsibilities fairly, transparently and sustainably.

Nāku noa, nā

Nalini Meyer

Chief Executive/Registrar | Tumuaiki/Pouroki

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