

APC Consultation (Nov 2023) - Submissions by individual

Name	Comments
Miles Denton	There is little to no point in this consultation. Forgone conclusion it will increase again. Appreciate the standard waste of time in asking us to submit our objections and falling on deaf ears. How much do you think Pharmacists earn in comparison to other health professional's fees? All the best.
Samuel Ataalla	I am unaware why there is a consultation every year for a rise. I suspect the majority are against a rise, but the council goes ahead with a rise anyway. I think as a member of the council, it is imperative that we see a summary of the feedback, if there is a democratic agreement for a cessation of the annual rise then we have the right to stop the increases.
Mark Bedford	Having read the consultation document I fully support the proposed fee increase.
Donna O'Sullivan	ARE YOU JOKING! I am a 56 year old pharmacist completely disillusioned with these fees and what the council does for the pharmacy profession. It has become a joke in the health industry. It is a big chunk out of our wages as most employers struggling to survive. For goodness sake! Advocate for us to get rid of the Chemist warehouse model. Give us some incentive to actually want to be a Pharmacist. IT IS NOT!!!! WORTH IT!!!!
Brad Weir	In response to the proposed APC increase: Whilst there is no doubt or denying the pressure that inflation has brought on to the entire worlds economy, simply passing this cost on to those providing healthcare during one of the worst states the NZ healthcare system has been in is something that does not sit well. The budget that has been laid out in this document year-after-year continues to highlight that the single largest expense for PCNZ is the WAGES of the council themselves. If the council is to continue operating appropriately, I suggest that the most efficient cost-saving measure would actually be to look at the internal wage structure. One cannot fathom personally why this number needs to be at \$1.9million per year. I do not believe increasing the APC as proposed is the answer, nor do I think it is fair to continue to push the cost to us whilst not disclosing the aforementioned wage structure that is providing the largest expense to the council. Please explain. My vote is to not increase.
Paul Walsh	This seems to be akin to a broken record. The annual plea to council to consider installing a special APC fee for pharmacists near the end of their career, who wish to remain available to work the odd emergency locum work for pharmacists, particularly sole charge pharmacists in the community, who need a locum in situations like being able to attend a funeral or health emergency or similar. I know from personal experience in years gone by, how important it was to have a retired pharmacist available to come and work even a half or full day whenever I had an emergency to attend to, or wanted to attend a funeral or health emergency or the like. It was possible to call on one of a few local retired pharmacists at short notice to enable me to attend the event I needed to. This situation has now become impossible for most pharmacists who are in a sole charge situation in their everyday businesses. Firstly, the pool of "normal" locums has diminished greatly for well documented reasons, and secondly the pool of recently retired pharmacists who choose to be available for emergency locum work has disappeared totally due to the rules surrounding the need to have a current APC to be able to help out on the odd occasion. Of course the main barrier to these pharmacists is the high cost of obtaining the APC – they see this cost as extremely excessive, especially given the fact that would only be working a very small number of days during the year. Once again from personal experience, I have seen a number of pharmacists deciding to de-register totally because of these current rules regarding the APC. Unfortunately I will be adding my name to this list come March 31st 2024, if nothing is done to accommodate pharmacists like myself. I have been doing locum work the last few years and previous to that I owned my own pharmacy for 34 years. I would like nothing better now than to just be available for urgent locum work when a sole charge pharmacist needs to get away to attend an event. After all, the only other option to these pharmacists if they cannot get a locum, is to close their business for the 1 or 2 days that they have to be away.

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	<p>I have 2 recommendations for the council to consider:</p> <p>1: Have a reduced APC fee for part time pharmacists (less than 20 hours per week) – why should the part timers be subsidising the full time pharmacists anyway?</p> <p>2: Enable recently retired pharmacists to work as “urgent” locums without having to obtain an APC. Allow these pharmacists to work in these situations for 2 or 3 years after they retire. After all, these pharmacists have a wealth of knowledge gained over their career which is simply lost to pharmacy overnight with the current situation.</p> <p>Finally, I can only assume that these submissions are read. I have provided previous consultations but never had any feedback from council. It would be nice to be acknowledged at least.</p>
Trish White	<p>I am a pharmacist wishing to send feedback to these fee changes . I am expecting to reduce to parttime work next year prior to retiring, but these proposed increases are making it very difficult to justify continuing. There is still a great need for relief pharmacists in this country and having to pay nearly a thousand dollars for registration, plus defence fees is going to exacerbate this problem. Council needs to justify these increases when the profession they are supposed to represent are struggling both economically and in terms of workload. The last 5 years have been the most stressful of my 45 year working career.</p>
Brenda Buck	<p>I am writing in regards to your proposal to increase the APC fee for the 23/24 practicing year. As a pharmacist who has worked in New Zealand now for nearly 20 years I think this is totally outrageous and unacceptable.</p> <p>I would like to know if it is actually people who are registered pharmacists making these decisions? Are you actually aware of what pharmacists go through at the coal face? I would also like to have a comparison of the average salary of a pharmacist compared to what the people in power making these decisions at the Pharmacy Council earn. I would not be surprised if it was considerably higher than an average pharmacist. Also I would like to know how much your salaries will be going up this coming year as I am sure they will be? You have been asked numerous times to please consider a reduced rate for part time pharmacists, yet you continually choose to ignore these requests. Do you actually know there is a crisis in the pharmacy industry, that there is a shortage of pharmacists? I would like to know what you are doing as the professional body to help address these issues? I am burnt out and completely over the lack of support that you give your professionals. I have just had to take a 3 month sabbatical as I felt I just could not go on anymore. Please tell me what you have actually done that has benefited me personally as a pharmacist? My salary has not increased significantly over the past 5 years, certainly not enough to match inflation. Yet you want to bleed us dry. Also why was there not a longer consultation period allowed? It seems like you have made it as short as possible so that fewer people would have time to give you feedback.</p> <p>Just for your information, I am seriously considering leaving the profession. I have recently applied for several jobs outside of the pharmacy field. I don't feel that I am valued at all by the Pharmacy council. Yes I understand you have to protect the public, but you are alienating the pharmacists who work so hard. I look forward to a response to my questions.</p>

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David Lu	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback to the proposed increase in Pharmacy Council Annual fees. I will list my feedback concisely so it will be easier to be read.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * There was an online submission form for consultation in previous years. Why wasn't this implemented for this consultation? I do not believe it would be difficult to implement, via Google Form or Microsoft software and I am sure many pharmacists, like myself, would volunteer to help implement it for you if it helps to get more people to provide feedback to the consultation. * Research should be conducted and encouraged on the impact of annual fee increases on pharmacist retention & recruitment. I think there are myths out there that states that annual fee increases, that pharmacists pays far more than other health professionals, and so on, affecting prospective students from studying pharmacy and becoming pharmacists, and that it aggravates the shortage of pharmacists around the country. Collaborative research project with pharmacy schools around the country should help to reveal the facts with substantial evidence, to prevent the Council and its functionaries from being slandered with blatant false assertions, which can be disheartening and unfair. * The Pharmacy Council of New Zealand should consider re-naming itself to a name more reflective of its regulatory and role, to avoid confusion as an advocate and representative body for pharmacist. The word "Council" is widely used, such as in the case of the New Zealand Maori Council, to "acts as the legal entity representing groups of iwi and hapū, and offers a forum for them to act collectively". Some of these council receive funding from the government budget, not solely from those they are governing. This is definitely not the case for the current functioning of the Pharmacy Council of New Zealand. A name more akin to NZQA or NZTA, like the New Zealand Pharmacy Authority or New Zealand Pharmacy Agency (with appropriate Maori equivalents), would be more suitable and attract less criticism, especially on the issue of fee increases and collection (which happens across the board, such as rates, taxes, commodities etc.). <p>I hope my feedback has been helpful.</p>
Blair Murray	<p>I find it appalling that you are proposing such a large increase and that pharmacists will have to pay one of the highest professional fees.</p> <p>I know that you probably will not read this but as a 67 year old pharmacist, I don't have to work. I have remained on the register this year to help out friends who are short staffed or needing a break. I have even spent time in Gisborne after the devastating natural event this year. Because of your short-sighted decision not to make a part-time fee, I and quite a few of the pharmacists in a similar situation will not be renewing our membership next year. It just isn't worth it.</p> <p>I feel sorry for the owners out there, especially in rural areas, who will struggle to find staff or locum pharmacists. This will put extra stress and pressure on them in what can be an already stressful.</p> <p>Please consider if it is better for you to receive \$500 from me or nothing because that is your option.</p>
Kim Lischner Crawford	<p>I am very upset at the proposed increases in fees for the Pharmacy Council. As a part-time pharmacist it just does not make sense for me to continue on as a pharmacist.</p> <p>I find the inability of the council to stick to budget absolutely abhorrent and reflects how badly this organisation is run. Your customers are pharmacists and the willy nilly spending of money which is not in budget is an insult to all of us who fund you.</p> <p>I cannot see the value in this organisation compared to the previous arrangement of recertification. Costs have absolutely exploded. The website developed by the council for recertification is abysmal and still really bad (the most un-user friendly platform I believe I have used in a long time).</p> <p>I have been a pharmacist for over 30 years and I will be considering seriously my registration for next year. I would not have thought that pharmacy as an industry can afford to lose pharmacists for reasons of recertification cost to the organisation which is meant to foster involvement in the industry.</p>

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Joanne Poulson	<p>I note the proposition to increase the APC from \$850 to \$925 pa for 2024-2025.</p> <p>The current Medical Council APC fee is \$927.68. Please consider the relative income of medical practitioners to APC and adjust the pharmacist APC relative to our significantly lower incomes.</p> <p>I note that the unavailability of a part-time pro rata APC fee already discourages potential part-time pharmacists from registering. With a view to improving workforce shortages, adequate staffing and the safety of working conditions, Council needs to encourage part-time pharmacists to register and work by providing affordable part-time APC fees.</p> <p>I call upon Council work to improve public safety by improving staffing levels and APC affordability.</p> <p>An old English proverb describes cutting your coat according to your cloth and Council would do well to keep this in mind when planning work according to resource.</p>
Kelsi Freer	<p>Quite frankly, I can't see how you can justify an increase in the APC fee when pharmacist wages have not met inflation for over 20 years. There is little room to move once you are qualified for 5 years plus, so I cannot see why you should ask us for more. Maybe the government could be asked for more money, or a restructure of what you are doing, especially as the profession is burnt out as a whole as all have to work harder to cover the droves of people leaving the profession due to dissatisfaction. Our APC fees are higher than professions such as Doctors and Dentist and their earning capacity is exponential compared to ours. It is not surprising we are not attracting more people to our profession with the exorbitant fees we pay for our APC.</p>
Emma Griffiths	<p>I am writing to oppose the proposed fee increase for pharmacists APC next year (2024/2025). This proposed fee increase follows increased fees last year and is occurring during a cost of living crisis. It is outrageous to be asking already stretched pharmacists to be paying an 8.8% increase in council fees and particularly because our fees are already one of the highest of any health professional in Aotearoa.</p> <p>I worry that we will lose even more pharmacists overseas with this being a final straw for many who are already struggling financially. I urge you to reconsider the proposed increase and to consider whether there are other ways to reduce operational costs within the Pharmacy Council instead.</p>
Lilian Shuh	<p>I trust this message finds you well. I am writing to express my concerns regarding the proposed increase in the APC fee.</p> <p>A rise in APC fee could impose a significant burden on pharmacists, particularly those with limited financial resources. As mentioned, the rise will make pharmacist APCs one of the most expensive of any health profession in the country, which is disproportionate to the income earned by pharmacists to other healthcare professionals in NZ. Pharmacists are a trusted and valued profession, and changes need to be made to aid in the growth of this profession, rather than the opposite.</p> <p>I kindly request a reconsideration of the proposed APC fee increase, with a focus on exploring alternative strategies to ensure financial stability without placing undue strain on pharmacists.</p> <p>Thank you for considering my perspective on this matter</p>
Tracey Borrie	<p>I do not support an increase in the Pharmacy Council fees for 2023/24 as this cost is becoming unsustainable for the profession. I think the Council needs to undertake a thorough review of their activity and eliminate anything that is not essential in order to cut costs. Additionally, it would be preferable for these fees to be funded by central government since the primary function of the Pharmacy Council is to protect the public from unsafe pharmacist practice, not to serve the needs of pharmacists.</p>

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Anthea Gregan	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this document.</p> <p>While I can appreciate that you are not in an ideal financial position, I do not feel that it is my responsibility to pay to change this. Neither I nor my workplace colleagues have ever behaved in a manner that required prosecution and while there are no guarantees that will never occur, I feel that my colleagues who intentionally act in an illegal or unethical manner should be paying this shortfall, not us.</p> <p>There are three points I am interested in hearing about in more detail:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1the large amount you are paying in bank fees;• 1the CPD platform;• 1your intentions to increase your FTE. <p>An increase from \$46,000 to \$55,000 sounds like a large amount to start with and a large increase; is it usual for a company to pay this much? Can you please explain the large increase?</p> <p>The new CPD platform I assume is something our fees are funding, however it is inferior to the one provided by PSNZ and overseeing our CPD I don't believe is what you are mandated to do. I would far prefer returning to the previous system run by the PSNZ.</p> <p>What is the increase in FTE for? I look forward to hearing from you.</p>
Blair Murray	<p>Why should we bother with telling you what we think. You probably won't bother reading them and will do exactly what you want as always.</p>