



New Zealand  
Medical Radiation  
Technologists Board  
*Te Poari Ringa Hangarua Iraruke*

# Strategic Directions April 2021 – March 2026

## Contents

Our Work .....	3
The Principles We Work Within .....	5
Organisational Structure .....	6
Our Strategic Directions over the Next Five Years .....	7
Key Outcomes of Our Strategic Directions.....	7
Our Strategic Directions in Context .....	8
Strategic Direction 1: Standards .....	9
Strategic Direction 2: Practitioner Competence .....	9
Strategic Direction 3: Accountability.....	10
Strategic Direction 4: Organisational Performance.....	10
Strategic Planning Environmental Influences .....	12
Economic Factors .....	13
Legislative and Regulatory Change .....	13
Political Factors.....	14
Social and Demographic Factors .....	14
Technological Change .....	15
Appendix 1: The Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 – Section 118 Functions of Authorities .....	15

## Our Work

---

*The Medical Radiation Technologists Board is a responsible authority under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (the Act). We are one of sixteen independent health regulators responsible for protecting the health and safety of the New Zealand public by ensuring health practitioners are competent and fit to practise. We regulate medical imaging and radiation therapy practitioners.*

---



The Board's functions<sup>1</sup> are set out in section 118 of the Act. In summary this includes a number of core responsibilities:

**Prescribing qualifications and accrediting education programmes** to ensure graduates have the competencies and attributes required of registered medical imaging and radiation therapy practitioners.

**Setting the standards for clinical and cultural competence and ethical conduct** that must be met by all medical imaging and radiation therapy practitioners.

**Registration and recertification** of medical imaging and radiation therapy practitioners ensuring that only those with the relevant skills, competencies and fitness to practise are able to practise in New Zealand.

**Ensuring registered medical imaging and radiation therapy practitioners continue to be competent and fit to practise** by investigating their performance, conduct or health in response to concerns raised, and taking appropriate action to protect the safety of the public.



The focus of our work is the health and safety of the public. The Board is not responsible for protecting the interests of medical imaging and radiation therapy practitioners. However we do have a responsibility to ensure our legislative functions are carried out consistently, fairly and proportionately. Our intention is to achieve the best outcomes for the public through appropriate and sustainable regulation.

---

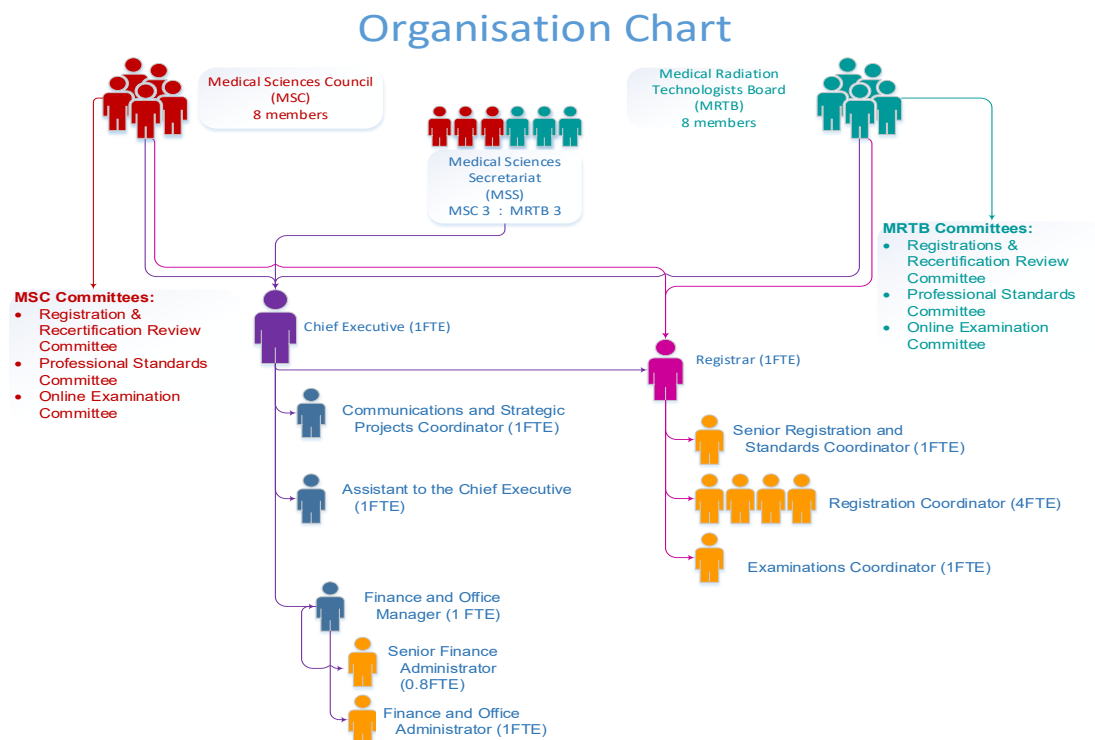
<sup>1</sup> An unabridged extract of section 118 of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 is provided in Appendix 1

## The Principles We Work Within



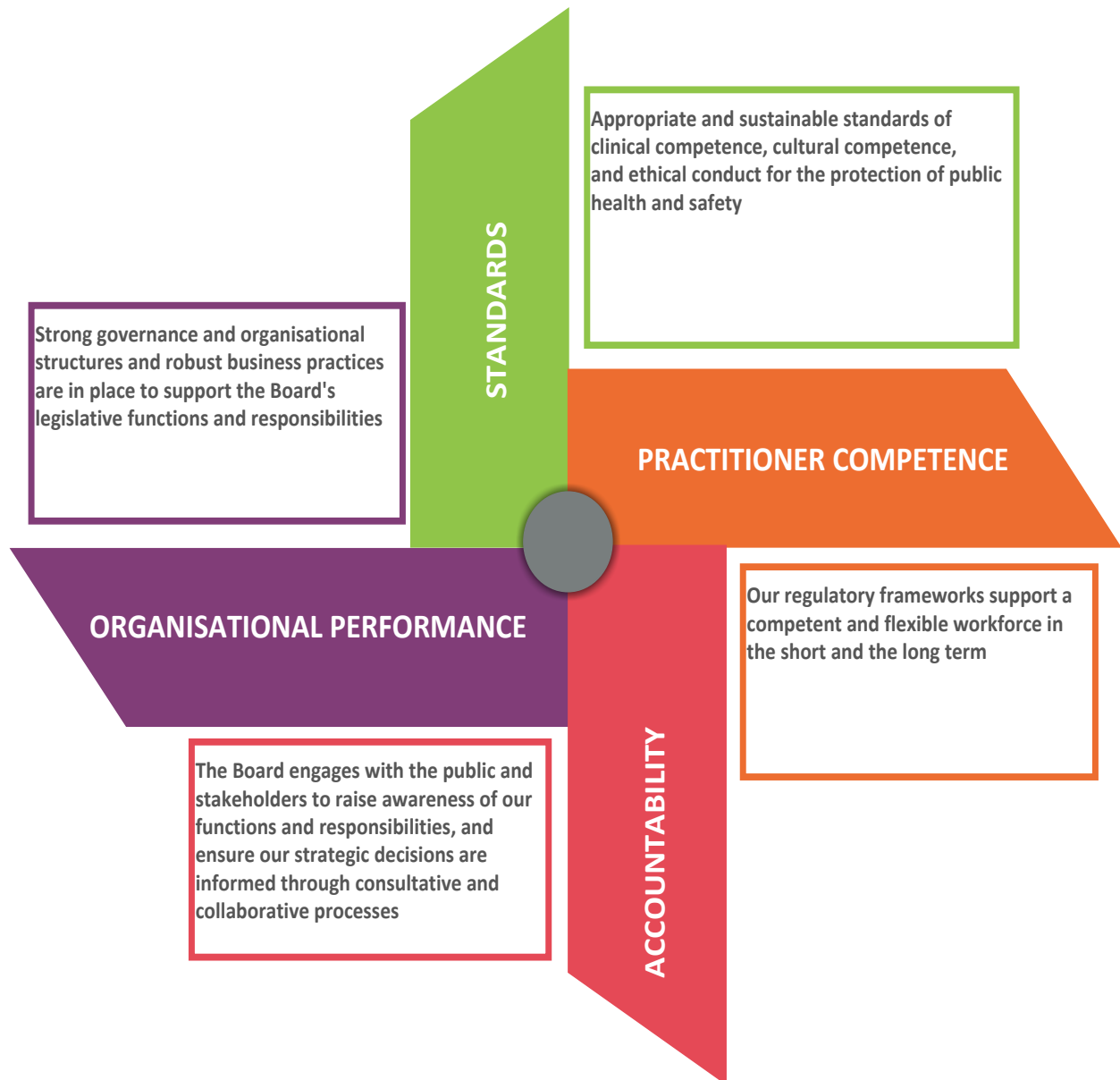
## Organisational Structure

Secretariat services are provided through a New Zealand registered company, Medical Sciences Secretariat (MSS) that is jointly owned by the Medical Radiation Technologists Board and the Medical Sciences Council. This shared arrangement enables both responsible authorities to achieve efficiencies in terms of costs and consistency in regulatory standards. While each Board and Council is a separate responsible authority with legal responsibilities for the statutory regulation of different groups of health professionals, our strategic priorities and objectives are similar. Sharing secretariat resources enables both authorities to manage a number of strategic objectives and subsequent business goals as joint initiatives. Consequently our individual strategic planning documents share many similarities.

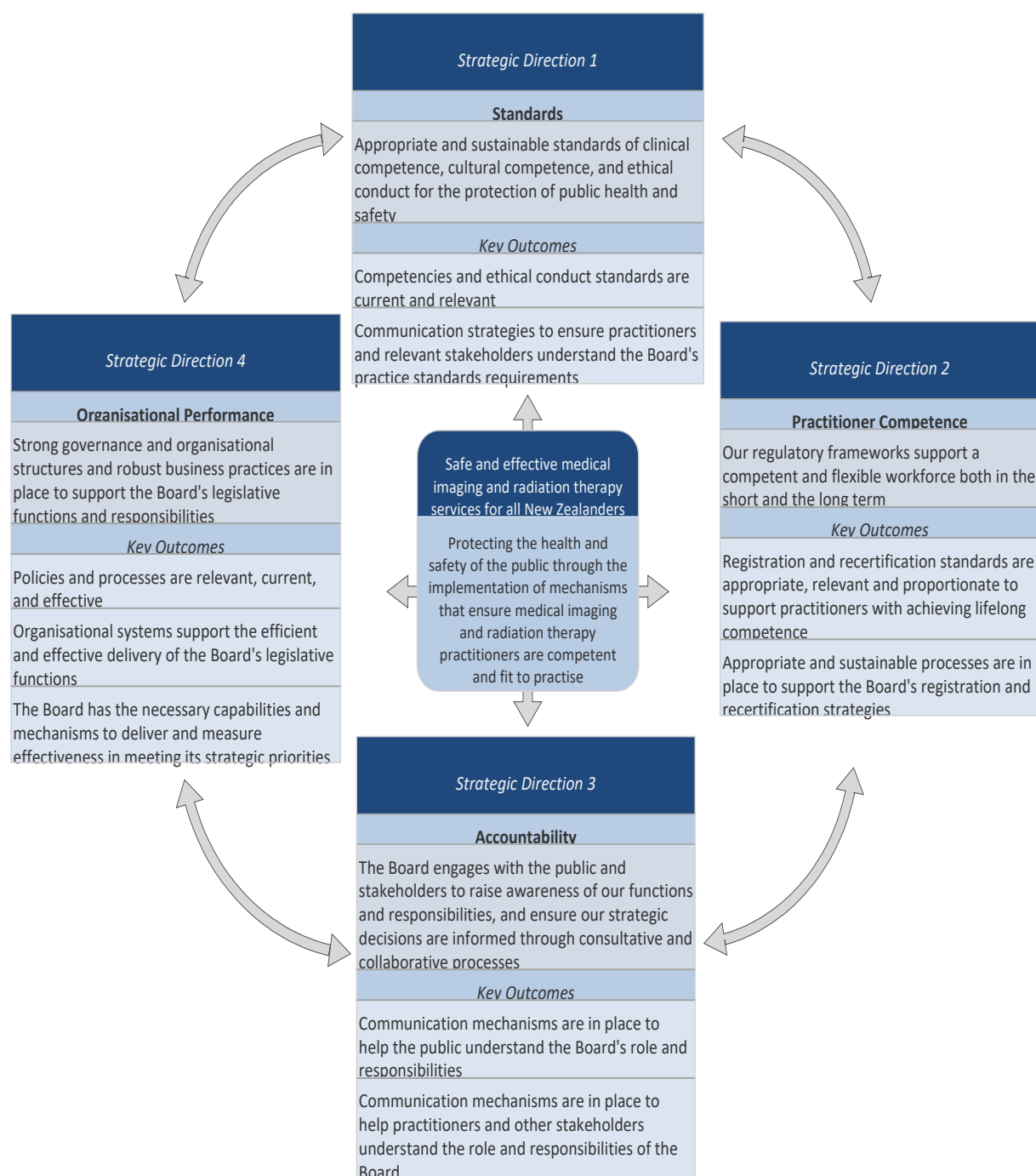


## Our Strategic Directions over the Next Five Years

The Board has continued its theme of the four core strategic directions from its previous five-year strategic plan (2019-2025) for the next five-year period, April 2021 to March 2026. These directions articulate the areas of activity that will help us to move from where we are now to what we need to achieve in meeting our regulatory responsibilities. By explicitly stating our strategic directions we are better able to balance resourcing our business-as-usual activities with directing resources into areas that will improve our effectiveness and efficiency.



## Key Outcomes of Our Strategic Directions



## Our Strategic Directions in Context

The social, political, economic and cultural environments within which medical imaging and radiation therapy practitioners work, continues to evolve. The Board's five-year strategic directions document for the period April 2021 – March 2026 has been formulated with a view to ensuring our work both



now and in the foreseeable future continues to be responsive to the world within which medical imaging and radiation therapy is practised.

Utilising a strategic framework provides the Board with a focused approach for steering our regulatory work in a world typified by changing environmental influences. It allows us to continue to protect public safety in the years ahead through ensuring medical imaging and radiation therapy scopes of practice, standards, competencies, education, and remedial measures are sufficiently robust and responsive.

## Strategic Direction 1: Standards

---

*Appropriate and sustainable standards of clinical competence, cultural competence, and ethical conduct for the protection of public health and safety*

---

Under the Act the Board is responsible for setting the standards of clinical competence, cultural competence, and ethical conduct. It is the sole organisation with the legal authority to do this for medical imaging and radiation therapy practitioners in New Zealand.

The standards of practice set by the Board provide the minimum threshold for competence and acceptable behaviour that registered medical imaging and radiation therapy practitioners must meet to ensure the protection of public health and safety.

The Board acknowledges Te Tiriti o Waitangi as the founding document of Aotearoa New Zealand and the importance it has in informing legislation, policy and practice. As tangata whenua of Aotearoa New Zealand, Māori hold a unique position in our society and the Board acknowledges and respects the specific importance of health services for Māori. The Board will work to improve cultural safety for patients and medical imaging and radiation therapy practitioners to help facilitate health equity.

Having clearly articulated competencies and standards of ethical conduct can help to inform patients and the public of what they can expect from registered medical imaging and radiation therapy practitioners. They also provide clarity to practitioners themselves about the standards they must meet.

The Board also employs mechanisms to ensure practitioners continue to meet the standards for ongoing fitness to practice. The Act includes specific provisions for the Board to respond to concerns that may be raised about an individual practitioner in terms of their competence, health, or conduct.

## Strategic Direction 2: Practitioner Competence

---

*Our regulatory frameworks support a competent and flexible workforce both in the short and long term*

---

Under the Act registered practitioners must firstly be registered and then recertified on an annual basis. Registration requires practitioners to demonstrate they have an appropriate qualification to demonstrate they meet the minimum competencies required for the relevant scope of practice, to be able to practise in Aotearoa New Zealand. They must also demonstrate they meet fitness to practise requirements. The Board's recertification mechanisms can assure the public that individual practitioners continue to be competent to practise. Recertification covers a number of complementary strategies including annual renewal of practising certificates, and evidence of engagement in ongoing learning and professional development.

Flexibility across the medical imaging and radiation therapy workforce is critical and the Board's regulatory framework will need to ensure practitioners continue to demonstrate competence in an ever-changing world of health demands and delivery.

### Strategic Direction 3: Accountability

---

*The Board engages with the public and stakeholders to raise awareness of our functions and responsibilities and ensure our strategic decisions are informed through consultative and collaborative processes*

---

Health regulation does not occur in a vacuum. For many of our activities the Board is reliant on the participation of stakeholders including practitioners, patients and the public, educators, employers, professional bodies and other regulators. This helps us to ensure our activities remain appropriate, relevant, and consistent in regulating medical imaging and radiation therapy practice.

We operate in a world where there is increasing and continually changing societal expectations in respect of health care and health practitioners. The Board needs to understand the views of our stakeholders, and offer ongoing opportunities for people to tell us what they think about our work.

Anecdotal information indicates there is a gap in many of our stakeholders understanding of the Board's role and purpose. We need to continue to explain the range and limits of our responsibilities. This may require an increased level of visibility with some of our stakeholders.

### Strategic Direction 4: Organisational Performance

---

*Strong governance and operational structures and robust practices are in place to support the Board in achieving our legislative functions and responsibilities*

---

Effective governance is essential for good decision-making and ensuring quality of our regulatory actions. This leads to better outcomes for the public and reasonable impacts for practitioners. Governance is concerned with roles and responsibilities, accountability measures, oversight of business processes, financial reporting, and risk and performance management.

Having the right capabilities in place is critical for ensuring the Board operates effectively and efficiently. Having the systems, policies and processes necessary for delivering our functions within an environment that minimises costs, compliance and complexity for practitioners underpins the Board's work.

The success of our work is dependent on having reliable and integrated IT systems to ensure we have the necessary functionality for operating effectively in the contemporary regulatory environment. This includes taking advantage of new technology and our partnership arrangement with the Medical Sciences Council to not only improve the way we operate, but also to improve the ways we interact with our stakeholders.

The Board's website is a core communication tool for ensuring the public, the profession, and stakeholders are well informed in respect of the Board's responsibilities and strategic and operational priorities and objectives. This will require ongoing investment to ensure the IT infrastructure, inclusive of website platforms, continues to serve the needs of the Board and users of the systems.

Under section 118 of the Act the Board has a duty to uphold the ethical conduct of practitioners and, as such, needs to provide ethical leadership in the custodianship of the current state of information security. With the increasing profile of data breaches, and the introduction of the Health Information Security Framework in 2015, information security is a critical component of the Board's quality monitoring programme. In addition the Board has other regulatory responsibilities to keep data safe, notably but not exclusively, the Privacy Act 2020 which includes the public naming of organisations which have significant data breaches.

Over the lifetime of this plan the Board will continue to develop its quality management system and processes. This work is undertaken as a joint initiative with the Medical Sciences Council through our jointly-owned secretariat (MSS). It includes revising and improving our IT systems to support core regulatory and business functions, financial management, and information management. Furthermore, the Board operates within a world susceptible to the destructive impacts of climate change and has a key leadership role to manage its business operations in ways that are environmentally sustainable. The effects of climate change will likely impact on the health workforces of the future especially as health services respond to the effects of climate change on the health of New Zealand communities.

Over the span of this strategic plan the Board will engage in an ongoing programme of performance measurement. This will help us to better understand whether our strategies are fit for purpose and we have achieved/are achieving what we said we would. Our performance measures framework will be developed and implemented as a joint initiative with the Medical Sciences Council. In accordance with the 2019 amendments to the Act, the Board will be subject to 5-yearly independent performance reviews commissioned through the Ministry of Health. The first of those reviews must be completed by April 2022.

## Strategic Planning Environmental Influences

Health regulation is impacted by wider national and global factors such as economic, legislative and regulatory change, political, social and demographic, and technological change.

Adaptable and flexible governance will be critical in considering the impacts of these factors on health regulation.

## Economic Factors

There is a global trend for demand for health services to be higher than the resources available. In 2020 this was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and it is reasonable to assume that the economic impact of this global phenomenon will continue for several years post-pandemic.

Economic factors the Board will need to consider in respect of its regulatory work include:

- An ongoing gap between available health resources and demands on health services.
- An ageing population will put increased pressure on health resources, and there is likely to be a corresponding trend in an ageing medical imaging and radiation therapy workforce.
- A significant reliance on being able to recruit well-trained medical imaging and radiation therapy practitioners from overseas is likely to be impacted by increasing global competition for trained health professionals.
- An expectation that quality standards will continue to improve, and there will be a reduction in both waiting times and adverse events, all within current public economic resources.

## Legislative and Regulatory Change

The 2019 amendment to the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act (the Act) included a number of legislative changes that the Board will need to give effect to. These include:

- The ability to immediately suspend a practitioner's practising certificate where their conduct poses a risk of serious harm to the public.
- Removal of the mandatory referral of all conviction notices to a professional conduct committee (PCC), with the Board having an option to refer the notice to a PCC or to order some other form of assessment, treatment, therapy or counselling.
- The Board must undergo a performance review by April 2022 with subsequent reviews at no more than 5-years apart. Any recommendations from each review must be published in the Board's annual report and include any corrective actions the Board intends to take.
- To meet the requirement for the Board to provide the Director General of Health with specified workforce data, there will need to be a review of policies, procedures and systems to ensure we are able to obtain and store that data.
- Enactment of the Board's 2020 publication of its policy on naming practitioners in respect of an order or direction issued to a practitioner.
- The Board will need to review its regulatory frameworks to ensure there is appropriate inclusion of two significant amendments to the Board's statutory functions (*amendment highlighted*):
  - o set standards of clinical competence, cultural competence (*including competencies that will enable effective and respectful interaction with Māori*), and ethical conduct to be observed by medical imaging and radiation therapy practitioners; and

- *to promote and facilitate inter-disciplinary collaboration and cooperation in the delivery of health services*

Other legislative changes under development and/or recently enacted will also have an impact on the Board's work. These include:

- The Privacy Act 2020 includes increased penalties for privacy information breaches. A review of Board policy and procedures will be required.
- Proposed reforms to the Secondary Legislation Bill could come into effect by mid-2021. A component of the proposed changes would classify Board-issued standards as secondary legislation. This would see Board standards being subject to potential parliamentary review and disallowance. The Board will need to ensure compliance with these reforms should they go ahead.

### Political Factors

The Board considers its strategic directions as set out in this document are consistent, and in sync with, the *New Zealand Health Strategy*. The latter sets the high level direction for New Zealand's health system over the ten years from 2016 to 2026. The strategy embraces five strategic themes of *people-powered; closer to home; value and high performance; one team; and smart systems*.

In 2020 a New Zealand Health and Disability System Review (commonly referred to as *The Simpson Report*) recommended to the Government that a number of wide-ranging changes are made to enable a stronger and sustainable health system, and more equitable outcomes for all New Zealanders. From a regulatory perspective the report calls for responsible authorities to move towards more interdisciplinary, flexible, consumer-focused and competency-based approaches to regulation over the next five years after which time there should be a review of the effectiveness of these voluntary changes.

There is opportunity and challenge for the Board to review its regulatory frameworks as a component of this strategic plan to foster alignment with the principles as articulated in the Simpson report.

### Social and Demographic Factors

New Zealand's population not only continues to grow, future demographics are typified by an increased proportion of older people who live longer, have more complex conditions, and who will require long-term health care which is being increasingly provided through primary and community-based health services.

The Board will need to give consideration to a number of factors that may impact on its regulatory frameworks including:

- Changes in the demographics of the New Zealand medical imaging and radiation therapy workforce.

- Changing work patterns of practitioners including increased demands for more flexible working arrangements.
- Recruitment and retention issues within particular regions.
- Public expectations for immediate access to good health care irrespective of where they live.
- The importance of cultural safety to appropriately respond to the changing demographics of New Zealand.
- Ensuring effective working relationships between the health and education sectors and professional bodies.
- The impact of global pandemics on the delivery of health services and regulatory processes.

### Technological Change

Technological advances are evolving rapidly with potential to change models of health care and regulatory frameworks.

Consideration will need to be given to:

- The ability for technology to provide faster and more accurate diagnosis of conditions and the impact for clinical practices to become outdated more rapidly.
- The blending of technologies across medical imaging and radiation therapy modalities of practice and the impact of that for the configuration of scopes of practice.
- Cutting edge digital platforms and improved operational efficiencies and the impact of that for the delivery of health care and regulatory services.
- Improved communication and easier collaboration both within the medical imaging and radiation profession and with other health professions.
- Analysis and interpretation of regulatory data to demonstrate risks and trends and show the effectiveness of frameworks and initiatives.

## Appendix 1: The Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 – Section 118 Functions of Authorities

The functions of each authority appointed in respect of a health profession are as follows:

- (a) To prescribe the qualifications required for scopes of practice within the profession, and, for that purpose, to accredit and monitor educational institutions and degrees, courses of studies, or programmes
- (b) To authorise the registration of health practitioners under this Act, and to maintain registers
- (c) To consider applications for annual practising certificates
- (d) To review and promote the competence of health practitioners
- (e) To recognise, accredit, and set programmes to ensure the ongoing competence of health practitioners
- (f) To receive and act on information from health practitioners, employers, and the Health and Disability Commissioner about the competence of health practitioners
- (g) To notify employers, the Accident Compensation Corporation, the Director-General of Health, and the Health and Disability Commissioner that the practice of a health practitioner may pose a risk of harm to the public
- (h) To consider the cases of health practitioners who may be unable to perform the functions required for the practice of the profession
- (i) To set standards of clinical competence, cultural competence (including competencies that will enable effective and respectful interaction with Māori), and ethical conduct to be observed by health practitioners of the profession
- (j) To liaise with other authorities appointed under this Act about matters of common interest
- (ja) To promote and facilitate inter-disciplinary collaboration and cooperation in the delivery of health services
- (k) To promote education and training in the profession
- (l) To promote public awareness of the responsibilities of the authority
- (m) To exercise and perform any other functions, powers, and duties that are conferred or imposed on it by or under this Act or any other enactment