

Social Work Registration Board Education Fees

October 2025



New Zealand Council Of
Christian Social Services

Tirohanga Whānui | Overview

The New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed changes to Social Worker Registration Board Education Fees. We do not support the proposed fee changes due to concerns about the potential for increased costs to create barriers to the affordability and accessibility of social work education.

Taunakitanga | Recommendations

NZCCSS members note concerns regarding the following potential impacts of the proposed education fee changes on the social work sector and workforce:

- We are primarily concerned about the impact that increased monitoring and support costs may have on tertiary education organisations' (TEOs) ability to deliver programmes, and the potential for reduced programme offerings and/or programme closures.
- The proposed fee structure appears to disproportionately increase costs for smaller providers over those of larger providers, with the consultation document noting that only TEOs that usually graduate fewer than 20 EFTS per year may pay a higher annual support fee than previously.
- This is particularly of concern for smaller centres and/or rural and regional areas where there may be lower uptake of courses due to population size.
- Programme reductions or closures may result in those wishing to study having to relocate, creating further barriers to training.
- While the FAQ document assures that cost increases will not affect fees paid by social work students, it is logical that an increase in compliance costs for TEOs may result in increased course fees for students.
- We note that these changes, along with the changes occurring through Te Pūkenga, may influence course provision and consequently the workforce pipeline needed to support delivery of the [Sustainable Social Work Pathways Strategy – Tauwhiro Ararau 2025-2030](#).
- These increases are occurring within the context of the social services sector funding crisis, and the compounding effect of no CPI adjustments since 2019.
- We recommend that changes to education fees are based on improved educational outcomes rather than regulatory expansion and cost-recovery.

We recommend the following initiatives be undertaken in relation to the proposed changes:

- An impact analysis on programme viability, especially for smaller TEOs/programmes
- Student cost impact modelling
- Alternative fee structures explored, such as graduated flat fees, caps, transition support
- Evidence that more intensive monitoring improves outcomes
- Sector sustainability analysis

Ko wai tātou | Who we are

NZCCSS has six foundation members; the Anglican Care Network, Baptist Churches of New Zealand, Catholic Social Services, Presbyterian Support and the Methodist and Salvation Army Churches.

Through this membership, NZCCSS represents over 100 organisations providing a range of social support services across Aotearoa. Our mission is to call forth a just and compassionate society for Aotearoa, through our commitment to our faith and Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Further details on NZCCSS can be found on our website - www.nzccss.org.nz.

Ingoa whakapā | Contact Name

Alicia Sudden ceo@nzccss.org.nz
Melanie Wilson