



### **Why does the Board have a Register Maintenance fee?**

A large number of practitioners remain on the Register long after retiring, moving overseas, or ceasing practice for some other reason. Maintaining these practitioners on the Register has a cost, which includes (for example);

- Ongoing database maintenance/replacement.
- Routine correspondence, updates to practitioner records.
- Processing of complaints and fitness notifications (Note: all registered practitioners are subject to fitness notifications and complaints, whether or not they hold a current practising certificate).
- Website facility/publication.
- Staff costs (inquiries, reporting, s 144 activities etc).

By law, a regulatory authority must generate sufficient revenue to cover its operating costs. To accomplish this, an authority is empowered by the [HPCA Act](#) to prescribe fees (s 130). All fees charged must, however, be based on cost recovery and costs must be properly assigned and recovered only from those persons who were responsible for them (i.e., there should be no cross subsidisation).

On that basis, in early 2010 the Psychologists Board invited stakeholder comment on a proposal to establish a fee to recover the costs associated with maintaining and communicating with then (approximately) 1600 non-practising psychologists on the Register. A consultation paper was published on the Board's website and a letter was sent to all registrants informing them of their opportunity to comment. The feedback we received was strongly supportive of the proposed fee, and noted that the rationale for it seemed fair and justifiable and that Board communications help non-practising psychologists maintain a good connection to the profession. Understandably, the Board were also encouraged to keep costs to a minimum and to ensure that any fee was set as low as possible.

Late in 2010 the Board announced that it had prescribed a new "Register Maintenance" fee for non-practising psychologists. This annual fee helps us recover a portion of the Board's costs in maintaining the registration database, following up with practitioners to ensure that information on the database remains accurate, and making improvements and/or changes to the database. The fee also recovers the costs of providing non-practising psychologists copies of the Board's publications (e.g., newsletters and the Annual Report), any notices or bulletins affecting them, and (in the future) access to certain otherwise restricted features on the Board's website.

So if a psychologist does not intend to practise, he or she must either make a non-practising declaration and pay the Register Maintenance fee<sup>1</sup>, or ask that his or her entry in the Register of Psychologists be cancelled. The process can be completed online by logging on to the ["Update Your Details on the Register" section](#) of the Board's website. A confirmation letter and (if applicable) receipt will be sent.

The most obvious benefit to prescribing a Register Maintenance fee is a fairer system of allocating and recovering costs, and therefore closer compliance with the Office of the Auditor General's guidelines. Such a fee may also help non practising psychologists stay in touch with the profession and hence be better prepared if/when they return to practise, thereby protecting the public.

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<sup>1</sup> HPCA Act

s 132(5) Every fee set by an authority under section 130, and every levy imposed by an authority under section 131, is payable, and recoverable as a debt due, to the authority.

s 132(6) If any fee is payable to an authority under this Act, the Registrar of the authority may decline to do any act, or to permit any act to be done, or to receive any document in respect of which that fee is payable, until the fee is paid.

s 133(1) All fees, fines, levies, and other money required to be paid under this Act are payable to the relevant authority, and must be paid to the Registrar of the authority.