



Introduction

A business name is a name or title under which a person or entity conducts a business and a veterinary practice is a business that provides veterinary services. The Board licenses the premises, including the land, where major surgery may be performed as a veterinary hospital (*Veterinary Practice Act 2003* (s 64)). Names for veterinary businesses are assessed by the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC). The Board does not have legislative authority to approve business names the subject of a licence or for unlicensed premises.

The Board requires that the names for veterinary practices are consistent with all other relevant sections of the *Veterinary Practice Act 2003* and *Veterinary Practice Regulation 2013*. Specifically, the *Veterinary Practice Act 2003* includes the following sections:

- i. Unlicensed premises not to be represented as veterinary hospital (s 66)
- ii. Offence of representing certain corporations and firms to be veterinary practices (s 14)
- iii. Offence to practise as specialist unless registered as specialist (s 13)

The Veterinary practitioners code of professional conduct (*Veterinary Practice Regulation 2013* (sch 2)) states that a veterinary practitioner must not mislead, deceive or behave in such a way as to have an adverse effect on the standing of any veterinary practitioner or the veterinary profession (cl 6).

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that veterinary hospital licence names and names for unlicensed premises and other veterinary practices are compliant with provisions under the *Veterinary Practice Act 2003* (Act) and *Veterinary Practice Regulation 2013* (Regulation).

Policy

Aligned with s 66(2)(a) and (b) of the Act, the Board has determined that the following terms are acceptable for representing licensed premises as a veterinary hospital:

- (a) “veterinary hospital”, “veterinary practice”, “animal hospital”, “animal doctor” or any abbreviation or derivative of these words, either alone or in connection with any other title or description
- (b) “veterinary clinic”, “veterinary surgery”, “animal clinic” or “animal surgery” or any abbreviation or derivative of these words, either alone or in connection with any other title or description

The above terms are considered unacceptable for unlicensed premises.

Aligned with s 13(2)(a) of the Act, the Board has determined that the title or description “specialist” or any derivative of that word in connection with a person’s practice of veterinary science is only acceptable for licensed premises and unlicensed premises if the premises are the principal place of practice of at least one registered specialist.

The term “referral” in connection with a person’s practice of veterinary science is acceptable for licensed premises and unlicensed premises without the requirement for a registered specialist. However, it is the responsibility of individual veterinary practitioners in both licensed and unlicensed veterinary premises to ensure compliance with s 13(1) of the Act.

Procedure

- i. The Board will examine the business names of veterinary practices for the use of unacceptable terms.
- ii. The business name of a veterinary practice should clearly describe and assist the public when choosing a veterinary service hence geographic-based names are preferred by the Board.
- iii. The business name of a veterinary practice must not be considered by the Board to have an adverse effect on the standing of any veterinary practitioner or the veterinary profession hence comparative terms should not be used.



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- iv. If the terms listed under s 66(2)(a) or (b) are used in the business name the Board requires that the veterinary practice is operating from licensed premises.
- v. If the term “specialist” or any derivative of that word is used in connection with the name of licensed or unlicensed premises the Board requires that the applicant provide the name of at least one registered specialist who has or will have his or her primary place of practice as these premises.
- vi. An individual veterinary practitioner working at licensed premises and unlicensed premises with the term “specialist” or “referral” within the business name is required to ensure that he or she does not represent himself or herself to be a specialist in a branch of veterinary science unless he or she is the holder of specialist registration in that branch (s 13(1)).

Monitoring

The Board reviews the names of licensed premises for compliance with this policy during the following:

- a. An application for a veterinary hospital licence
- b. An application to transfer a veterinary hospital licence
- c. An application to change the name of a veterinary hospital licence

The names of unlicensed premises and veterinary practices not complying with this policy may be brought to the attention of the Board by the Hospital Inspector, veterinary practitioners and the public.

Training and Communication

The Registrar is responsible for ensuring that all persons who are involved in making a decision in relation to veterinary hospital names receive training in this policy.

Conflict of Interest

Members of the Board must comply with the Code of Conduct for Board Members in relation to decisions regarding hospital licence names.

Review

This policy shall be reviewed annually or as required to ensure that it remains appropriate to the operations of the Board and compliant with the relevant legislation.