

Boardtalk

www.vpb.nsw.gov.au

May 2010

Issue 32



President's Report

2010 is a remarkable a year of milestones for the veterinary profession in NSW. We have marked the Centenary of the Faculty of Veterinary Science of the University of Sydney with celebrations in the historic and beautifully appointed MacLaurin Hall and the mingling of staff, students and alumni reminiscing at the fully restored Roundhouse. Further to the west we have seen the opening of Charles Sturt University Veterinary School's new small animal Teaching Hospital in Wagga Wagga. The first CSU graduates will be warmly welcomed as they graduate and join the profession in August this year - another milestone for the profession in NSW.

Both veterinary schools are now exposing students to the provision of 24 hour veterinary services. They will see a different range of clinical problems and the teaching can only be enhanced by this experience. After hours services can be one of the tougher parts of veterinary practice, but it can be a very satisfying part of our job because of the diverse and challenging situations we find ourselves dealing with.

The majority of NSW is not serviced by dedicated "After Hours" veterinary hospitals and most practitioners provide the services themselves. There is no legislative requirement to be available to the community both day and night but there is a requirement to arrange for continuing care should it is needed. So if you have sutured up a dog or castrated a colt and there is a post surgery problem, you must have something in place for the owners should the animal require help after hours. That might be referral to a dedicated after hours service or to an agreeable colleague with whom you might share after hours responsibilities. Of course if you advertise you are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week...and in

fact you are not, then you are most likely guilty of false advertising (unsatisfactory professional conduct) and there is no doubt a complaint will be lodged by either an irate member of the public or the overworked practice down the road who ends up seeing your irate client.

Several complaints received by the Board in recent months have centred on the fact that the clients left animals in veterinary hospitals with limited

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President's report continued

supervision after hours when dedicated after hours facilities were within easy reach but referral had not been offered as a choice. If such a referral is an option, please remember to give your client the choice.

Emails have been sent around veterinary practitioners across Australia, causing distress to some, suggesting that state Boards require practitioners attend all requests for house/farm calls. That is simply not the case. No Board in Australia has that requirement in their legislation or policy.

When relationships between vets and their clients break down, complaints may arrive at the Board. The process of complaint handling has been discussed many times and you will be interested to read the report in this newsletter of current complaints, results of investigations and the results of one extended legal case. The case, which ended up in not one but three courts, was a result of a practitioner taking the Board to the three courts to dispute a Board decision. Of course this is a person's right but an original dispute with a client over \$75 has resulted in legal bills of tens of thousands of dollars. The Board was awarded costs at each stage. If you are interested in knowing all the facts, there are links to court web pages within the article.

In the next newsletter we will be able to update you with how the profession has handled the requirement to participate in Continuing Education/Professional Development. Those figures will be collected at the end of this month with the Annual Return as usual. There are many ways of accessing education these days and in each edition we hope to have some links and contacts for you. If you go to the Board's website, you will find easy links there.



*Ruth Thompson
President*

From the Registrar's Desk

The Board's staff are busier now than ever before – complaints are up (see the complaints section in this edition), more veterinarians are being registered or moving overseas and new hospitals are opening or the existing ownership is being transferred.

Unfortunately, much of my recent time has been taken up by issues pertaining to a very small number of practitioners. What does this say about the vast majority of registered veterinarians in NSW? It says that they are getting on with the business of providing quality veterinary services to their clients within their community!

I know that they deal with client 'issues' on a daily basis and that they resolve those issues in good faith (without the need for Board intervention).

This comment has been made before, but it is worthwhile making again – Mary Lydamore, the Board's Complaints Officer and I regularly take calls from disgruntled clients complaining about this and that.

If it sounds like it is not serious professional misconduct, the Board's standard operating procedure is suggest to the client that they first go back to the hospital Superintendent of the practice to air their grievance. Please take this opportunity to listen to them as most calls we receive sound like legitimate concerns and they need to be taken seriously.

It may avoid a formal complaint – whether we like it or not, it is a fact that complaints are on the rise and although this may be a reflection of societies' willingness to complain and even make a formal complaint, the profession has a duty to recognise this fact. Practices should be prepared and have policies and procedures to deal with dissatisfied clients – does your practice have a complaint handling policy that is understood by all the staff?

Graduation ceremony at Sydney University

I am very privileged each year to attend the veterinary student's graduation ceremony in the Great Hall of the University of Sydney (the cocktail party afterwards is pretty cool as well!). Special guest at the graduation last December was Professor Trevor Heath who was awarded a special university award for his remarkable work within the profession over many years. One thing that Trevor said to the graduates nearing the completion of his acceptance speech really stuck in my mind – he simply said 'never underestimate the loving bond between an animal and their owner'.

The Board's President, Dr Thompson recited the oath which is repeated by the graduates;

'I solemnly swear to practise veterinary science ethically and conscientiously for the benefit of animal welfare, animal and human health, users of veterinary services and the community. I will endeavour to maintain my practice of veterinary science to current professional standards and will strive to improve my skills and knowledge through continuing professional development. I acknowledge that along with the privilege of acceptance into the veterinary profession comes community and professional responsibility. I will maintain these principles throughout my professional life'.

Amendments to the Veterinary Practice Act 2003

As mentioned in the December 2009 Boardtalk, the amendments identified following the statutory review of the Act have progressed through cabinet and are currently with parliamentary council (the architects of legislation who work for the NSW government).

The Board is hopeful that the amendments will pass through parliament some time in 2010.

National Recognition of Veterinary Registration (NRVR) – 'National Registration'

Because the process of NRVR involves all the states and territories, it is somewhat more complex than just amending current NSW legislation, as the legislations need to be harmonised / consistent; however the process in NSW is gaining momentum and the Board hopes to be in a position later this year to announce significant developments.

NRVR has been passed by the Victorian parliament and will officially commence on 1 January 2011.

This means that a veterinarian registered in any state or territory in Australia will be able to practice in Victoria without the need to apply for registration or notify the Victorian Board. NRVR is expected to commence in each jurisdiction at different times over the coming years.

The Australasian Veterinary Boards Council (AVBC) is enhancing their website to show the progress of each state towards NRVR and will also provide state specific information which will assist veterinarians

in what they need to know when working across borders – this website function is ready but waiting for NRVR to commence. The Board will keep you informed about any developments as they come to hand but in the mean time – hats off to Victoria!

The AVBC website is www.avbc.asn.au

CPD

Most NSW registered veterinarians conclude their first 3 year cycle on 31 May 2010.

The next 3 year cycle starts on 1 June and will finish on 31 May 2013. For practitioners who have become registered during the last 3 years, their 3 year cycle starts in the financial year that they were registered. Please note that the individual annual returns posted to practitioners will state on them how many structured and unstructured points that have been reported to date and will also inform the practitioner what year (in the 3 year cycle) they are currently in.


Hospital inspections


I am continuing to perform the hospital inspections, however with important issues taking up my time of late, it has been difficult to get out of the office – but I look forward to revisiting veterinary practices on a more regular basis again soon.

Glenn Lynch
Registrar



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Report from the Veterinary Practitioners Board Complaints Committee

Since the last edition of Boardtalk in December 2009, the Board has determined after investigation by the Board's complaint committee, sixteen complaints made against veterinary practitioners.

The VPB has reprimanded one practitioner, and issued cautions, for unsatisfactory professional conduct, to another two practitioners.

Three complaints were dismissed, but the practitioners cautioned (pursuant to section 46.1a), and ten complaints were dismissed as the VPB could not find evidence to support a finding of unsatisfactory professional conduct or professional misconduct.

The reprimand for unsatisfactory professional conduct was issued to a practitioner under section 35(j) and (l) of the Veterinary Practice Act for the abuse of controlled substances and initially providing false testimony to the VPB by denying this abuse. This practitioner has since admitted that they self-administered drugs of addiction over a long period and is co-operating with the Board. They are undergoing treatment by a psychiatrist who will make a recommendation to the Board when he considers the vet is fit to resume practice. The resumption of practice may initially be with conditions imposed by the VPB.

This case highlights the responsibility we have in our ability to dispense controlled drugs. We must be constantly aware of drug security in our practices, and in these stressful times, to be aware that colleagues too may be tempted to personally use these drugs to help them handle the demands of life and practice. This practitioner's suspected drug addiction was initially brought to the Board's attention by a work colleague.

A finding of unsatisfactory professional conduct and a caution was issued to a practitioner who, prior to spinal surgery, failed to inform the owner of a Doberman that the dog may have a blood clotting defect, von Willebrand's disease, and that this could affect the surgical outcome. The dog did bleed profusely during surgery and required three plasma transfusions. This information may have had an influence on the owner's decision to consent to surgery.

Another caution was issued to a practitioner who, after examining a bitch, came to a presumptive diagnosis of pancreatitis without diagnostic testing. The dog was examined the next day by another practitioner who found two paralysis ticks before transferring her to a specialist practice for successful treatment for her paralysis. No blood testing was performed and the VPB considered that there was minimal evidence on which to base the incorrect diagnosis of pancreatitis. The caution was issued not for a wrong diagnosis, but for the failure to conduct at least one objective test that would indicate that pancreatitis was a possibility.

Three complaints were dismissed as there was no evidence of unsatisfactory professional conduct, however, the practitioners were cautioned to-

1. review the practice's procedures for treating tick paralysis cases,
2. accurately record treatment in client history and not to alter the records and,
3. communicate clearly to clients, the level of overnight monitoring offered by the practice.

Practitioners not informing the client of the **level of overnight monitoring** of hospitalised animals has resulted in a number of complaints to the VPB. Some clients expect or presume a vet to be present at all hours. The VPB does not expect this. However, the VPB does expect that clients will be informed about the level of care provided whilst the animal is in hospital and given the option of taking the hospitalised patient to a 24 hour practice - if one exists within a reasonable distance.

Ten complaints were dismissed.

Many of these complaints may not have reached the VPB if communication with the client had been better. Keep the client informed of the patient's condition, ongoing costs etc. Our communication skills vary but if confronted by a complaining client, listen, stay calm, show empathy and remember it is not an admission of error to say sorry. In many cases a simple expression of regret that the treatment was not successful, and an explanation, may diffuse the complaint.

One of the dismissed complaints involved the debarking of dogs.

Practitioners are reminded that debarking of dogs is only permitted (under the Prevention of Cruelty to

Animals Act) if the veterinary practitioner is provided with-

1. a copy of an order issued under Section 21 of The Companion Animals Act requiring the owner of the dog to prevent it from barking, and
2. a statutory declaration by the owner of the dog to the effect that, unless the operation is performed, the owner would need to have the dog destroyed so as to comply with the order.

Poor record keeping is a continuing problem and obvious in many of the submissions provided by practitioners to the VPB in their responses to client complaints.

The main reason to keep accurate case records is to enable a **succeeding practitioner** to take over a case with full understanding of the reasons for the diagnosis and preceding treatment - not necessarily just to protect the practitioner in the event of a complaint.

In multi-vet practices, with split shifts, part-timers, rosters etc, the issue of **patient -practitioner succession** is particularly important. The vet taking over from the initial practitioner must take 'ownership' of the case and not keep the patient 'on hold' until the first vet returns and resumes treatment. For this sharing of cases situation, accurate and up to date client records are essential.

Case records must be dated, and include details of examination, treatments, medication prescribed and / or supplied, radiographs, the results of diagnostic or laboratory tests, progress of the patient and advice given to the client. It is also prudent to include notes of telephone conversations. Fee estimates, consents given or withheld and full client details are a must do! If written examination notes, cage cards etc are used, this information must be added to the patient history as soon as possible and filed for a minimum of 3 years.

Obviously, written records must be **legible** to all, and if **abbreviations**, initials or symbols are used, they must be in common use in the profession or listed in the standard procedures of the practice.

If computerised, records must be contemporaneous and 'written in sequence' – they can obviously be added to as the case progresses but not 'altered' at a later date.

Disciplinary Proceedings

Kevin Polglaze v Veterinary Practitioners Board of NSW

The proceedings described in this article evolved from a complaint from a member of the public regarding a 'at home' euthanasia of a dog performed by the veterinarian and the subsequent costs of the services. The details of events are taken from the proceedings and judgments of the Board, the NSW Administrative Decisions Tribunal (ADT), the Supreme Court of New South Wales and the full bench of the Supreme Court of New South Wales

Reading the FULL TEXT is recommended to those who wish to have accurate and complete knowledge of the proceedings. The complete written judgments of the Administrative Decisions Tribunal, the Supreme Court of NSW and Full Bench of the Supreme Court of NSW can be found on the website of the Supreme Court of NSW - search 2010 judgments – Polglaze.

A client complained to the Board about the euthanasia of their mature Rottweiler dog which was performed by Dr Kevin Polglaze. Although the complaint contained several allegations, the Board made only one finding of unsatisfactory professional conduct. That finding was that Dr Polglaze failed to provide a realistic estimate for the services provided. Dr Polglaze had quoted the client \$155 but presented an account for \$305

Dr Polglaze provided an estimate for performing the procedure when the client contacted him by phone. Dr Polglaze came to the client's home as agreed, administered a sedative and then planned to give the dog the euthanasia solution. When the dog did not respond to the sedative, a second dose of sedative was given. While drawing up a third dose of sedative, the dog became sedated sufficiently for Dr Polglaze to administer a lethal dose of barbiturate. An employee of a pet cremation business was in attendance throughout this procedure [50-55 minutes] Before any sedation was given to the dog the client attempted to give the veterinarian an envelope containing the agreed \$155. She had to insist three times before the veterinarian took the envelope. After the euthanasia, Dr Polglaze said to the client the process took longer and involved more drugs and the cost was now a further \$150 (totaling

\$305). The client paid the extra money.

Later, the client recalled the events and believed that Dr Polglaze had taken advantage of her and called him to say so. She suggested that to resolve the situation, Dr Polglaze refund her half of the extra cost ie \$75. Dr Polglaze agreed to this and informed her that he would send a cheque. The client however did not receive the cheque and wrote to Dr Polglaze reminding him of his undertaking to refund the \$75. As no refund arrived the client took her complaint to the Office of Fair Trading and also to the Board.

Fair Trading ordered Dr Polglaze to refund the money as agreed less GST and the Board investigated the submitted complaint.

The Board particularized the complaint to Dr Polglaze as 'failed to provide a realistic estimate for the services provided. The final cost was a 97% increase of the estimate'. Dr Polglaze declined to appear before the Complaints Committee, electing to provide written submissions. After careful consideration, the Board resolved to caution Dr Polglaze, fine him \$300 and request the costs of the Board's investigation, \$400.

Dr Polglaze exercised his right of appeal to the NSW Administrative Decisions Tribunal (ADT). Dr Polglaze was represented by a barrister at the ADT and he was not present.

The Administrative Decisions Tribunal put aside the Board's decision and made the following decision;

1. *That Dr Polglaze is guilty of unsatisfactory professional conduct in that he did not advise the client during the course of the procedure that he would be charging an additional amount.*
2. *Dr Polglaze is cautioned.*
3. *Dr Polglaze is fined \$200*
4. *Dr Polglaze is ordered to pay the costs of the Board's investigation \$400*
5. *Dr Polglaze is ordered to pay the costs of the Board in the proceedings.*

The Board incurred significant legal costs.

Dr Polglaze then exercised his right to appeal the ADT decision in the Supreme Court of NSW.

The Board engaged eminent Senior Counsel, Anna Katzmann to handle the Board's case.

On 1 May 2009, Justice Johnson of the Supreme Court of NSW rejected each of the grounds of appeal relied upon by Dr Polglaze and ordered;

1. *The appeal is dismissed*
2. *The decision of the ADT is affirmed in all respects*
3. *Dr Polglaze is to pay the Board's costs of the proceedings in the Supreme Court*

The Board incurred significant legal costs.

Dr Polglaze then sought permission to the full bench of the Supreme Court of NSW to appeal the decision of the Supreme Court.

On 3 February 2010, three court judges heard the arguments from Dr Polglaze's Senior Counsel as to why the court should allow the matter to be appealed again before the full bench of the Supreme Court - Justices Beazley, Basten and Handley.

Justice Handley –.... *“There is no dispute that Dr Polglaze had not given Ms B a revised estimate of his charges when he obtained her consent to administer the second sedating injection to her dog”.*

Justice Beazley – *“I agree with the reasons of Handley and would only add that, in my opinion, the Board complied with the provisions of S 41 (1) of the Act by giving written notice, not only of the making of the complaint, but also the type of complaint that the Board considered was indicated. Thus there was no failure, in any event, to comply with the processes specified by the Act”.*

Justice Basten – *I agree with the reasons which have been given that in this case leave should be refused. The case turned on an assessment of conduct of the veterinary practitioner in estimating the costs of the services. The obligation to do so arose under clause 16 of the Code of Professional Conduct which is found in the Regulations. The substantive issue involves the application of clause 16 of that Code. That provision gives rise to no significant question of law.....Finally, I would note that this would involve a third level of review of the original decision if leave were to be granted. This was a case which ultimately was a matter of practice which could properly be determined by veterinary practitioners. It was the subject of merit review in the ADT and the matter is not one of such significance as would warrant either the expense or the resources which are required when a third level of review is sought. I therefore agree with the Court that leave should be refused”.*

The order of the Court was that the summons for leave to appeal and the appeal are dismissed and the applicant is to pay the Board's costs of the proceedings in the court.

Along with the legal defence, the Board's processes for determining a complaint have now been rigorously 'tested' in the Administrative Decisions Tribunal, the Supreme Court and before the full bench of the Supreme Court – without attracting any censure or criticism. This in itself should provide reassurance to both the users of veterinary services in NSW and the profession that the complaint handling processes (and the decision in this particular case) are legally sound.

Your Questions and our Answers

QUESTION : Do I have to attend the home of a caller who wishes a house call?

ANSWER: No veterinary practitioner is required by our legislation to attend the home of a caller/client. There are many issues the veterinary practitioners must take into account when they make their own decision. Some of the things a vet will consider include

- Location and state of the animal
- Likely treatment needed
- Possibility of the animal being safely conveyed to a veterinary hospital
- Local availability of animal ambulance or similar
- Health status of the animal and the ability of the owner to manage the animal's pain until veterinary attention can be sought during normal hours
- Travelling time for the veterinary practitioner
- Ability of the vet to make the visit with safety
- Possibility of another person attending with the vet
- Local weather conditions.

There is no doubt the public and media have difficulty understanding the reasons why veterinarians choose not to attend. Veterinarians who are unable or unwilling to attend, should offer advice and possible solutions to enable the animal to attend a veterinary practice if that is what was required. Our legislative Code of Professional Conduct requires a primary concern for the welfare of the animals and is written as;

*Schedule 2 Veterinary practitioners code of professional conduct
(Clause 13)
1 Basic principles of professional conduct
The basic principles of professional conduct for a veterinary*

practitioner are:

*(a) a primary concern for the welfare of animals, and
(b) the maintenance of professional standards to the standard expected by:*

- (i) other veterinary practitioners, and*
- (ii) users of veterinary services, and*
- (iii) the public.*

2 Welfare of animals must be considered

A veterinary practitioner must at all times consider the welfare of animals when practising veterinary science.

QUESTION : I constantly am called by members of the public thinking I should attend every injured or abandoned animal despite the location or time of night. Do I have to attend such calls?

ANSWER: No veterinary practitioner is required by our legislation to attend the home of a caller, the scene of a motor vehicle accident or to collect abandoned pets or injured wildlife.

While not being required by law to attend, I think the majority of our profession would attend any scene if called on for assistance by the police, if they felt capable of assisting. While monetary compensation should not be a consideration for such a community service response, practices who are called upon regularly by police or other services, are free to organise such payment.

QUESTION : What are my obligations if someone brings an injured stray to my practice?

ANSWER: The obligations when the animal has been brought to the practice are clear. The veterinary practitioner has a duty to relieve pain and suffering. This might be with first aid or it could mean euthanasia as spelt out in the Code (below).

It is up to the veterinarian to make the decisions in each and every case and to have adequate records to support the decision. The Board will not and can not direct the appropriate treatment in each case as that is up to the professional judgement of the veterinary practitioner.

*Schedule 2 Veterinary practitioners code of professional conduct
(Clause 13)*

1 Basic principles of professional conduct

The basic principles of professional conduct for a veterinary practitioner are:

*(a) a primary concern for the welfare of animals, and
(b) the maintenance of professional standards to the standard expected by:*

- (i) other veterinary practitioners, and*
- (ii) users of veterinary services, and*
- (iii) the public.*

2 Welfare of animals must be considered

A veterinary practitioner must at all times consider the welfare

of animals when practising veterinary science.

3 No refusal of pain relief

(1) A veterinary practitioner must not refuse to provide relief of pain or suffering to an animal that is in his or her presence.

(2) In this clause, relief, in relation to pain or suffering, means:

(a) first aid treatment, or

(b) timely referral to another veterinary practitioner, or

(c) euthanasia, as appropriate.

If, after first aid, the companion animals are well enough to be sent to the RSPCA or the Local Government council pound, then that would be appropriate, as the animals are 'strays'. Injured wildlife that are ready for discharge could be sent to appropriately qualified carers such as wildlife parks, zoos, National Parks and Wildlife WIRES for instance.

If euthanasia was chosen as the appropriate course of action, the veterinary practitioner would be expected to have detailed case records with identification of the animal and explaining why the decision was needed or deemed appropriate

First Aid, pain relief and even euthanasia may be carried out without consent (if it is impracticable to do so) if, it is to relieve pain and suffering to the animal. The records would be very important if the veterinary practitioner needed to defend the decisions.

No two cases are ever alike. If a complaint was lodged against a veterinary practitioner, the Board's investigation would look at all facts presented to it.

Emergency - Animal Disease Watch Hotline

1800 675 888

Report Unusual Disease Signs, Abnormal
Behaviour or Unexplained Deaths

Medicines Update

including use of steroids, use of ACP in rams and new products

Lee G Cook

Veterinary Officer

Biosecurity Business and Legislation

Primary Industries, Industry and Investment NSW

Review of the National Scheme for Assessment, Registration and Control of Use of Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals

Following a Productivity Commission recommendation in 2008 the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) has initiated a review of agricultural and veterinary chemical regulation in Australia.

Principles supporting a new scheme are to be put forward to the Primary Industries Ministerial Council (all state and federal agriculture ministers) in May for subsequent ratification by COAG.

The review has been primarily interested in controls over agricultural chemicals. Veterinary chemical controls have been of much less interest.

There is no suggestion of any change to the current privilege granted to veterinarians to use and supply products off-label or to use unregistered products on companion animals. Positively, some of the remaining minor differences in state use controls should eventually be removed as a result of the process.

New product under permit for endotoxaemia in horses

The APVMA has issued Permit 11774 to allow registered veterinarians to obtain and use CEREMBEN, containing 4.50 mg/mL purified hyperimmune caprine serum, in the treatment and prevention of endotoxaemia in horses. The product is supplied by

DAVAL (AUSTRALIA) PTY LTD

45 Stevedore Street

WILLIAMSTOWN VIC 3016

A copy of the permit is available from: <http://permits.apvma.gov.au/PER11774.PDF>.

Ram sedation with ACP – organophosphate toxicity

Many large animal practitioners provide acepromazine as a sedative for the shearing of rams and other large sheep.

There has been at least one media report suggesting a possible toxicity link between such treatment and the post-shearing use of organophosphate lice dips and sprays (although diazinon dipping is now limited to only a few approved cage systems and use of diazinon or temephos dips is usually only carried out some days after shearing).

Some ACP products advise of the potential risk as follows, but such warnings may not be on the labels of the injectable products registered for use in sheep.

From a registered horse product information sheet

“Tranquillisers are additive to the actions of other depressants, and will potentiate general anaesthesia. Do not use this product in conjunction with organophosphates and/or procaine hydrochloride, as it may enhance activity and potential toxicity.”

General information on this topic is also published in other sources such as the **IDEXX VetConnect website:**
<https://www.vetconnect.com.au/5min/data/08840885.htm>

“Organophosphate and Carbamate Toxicity
Phenothiazine tranquilizers may potentiate organophosphate toxicosis.”

In the media report Professor Kym Abbott of CSU Wagga supported recommendations that sheep should not be treated with any organophosphate the same day they have been tranquilised. Instead owners should be advised to hold such sheep and treat them the next day.

Veterinarians supplying ACP for shearing sedation should be aware of this potential problem.

Steroid controls

A number of veterinarians purchasing larger quantities of anabolic steroids and testosterone have been identified and audits of their records will be conducted over the next few months.


Practitioners are reminded of the need to comply with the I&I NSW controls which prohibit supply of most such products and restrict them to use only by veterinarians. Details of the controls are published on our web site at:
<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/farm/chemicals/general/controls-over-steroid-supply-and-use>.


The Order itself is available with other relevant legislation at:
<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/aboutus/about/legislation-acts/stock-medicines>.

Item submitted by:

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Veterinary Teaching Hospital – Wagga Wagga



Cooperation between Charles Sturt University and Wagga Wagga Veterinary Hospital

The Veterinary Teaching Hospital (VTH) in Urana St Wagga Wagga was opened on the 20th April by Dr Kevin Doyle. The VTH, situated on CSU's South Campus in the city of Wagga Wagga, will provide both first opinion and referral services for owners of animals and veterinarians in Wagga Wagga and the surrounding region.

The building is owned by CSU but will be jointly occupied by the University and Wagga Wagga Veterinary Hospital. The first-opinion practice is to be operated by Wagga Wagga Veterinary Hospital, its principal, Dr David Golland and staff. This practice is in the process of re-locating from its old site in Hammond Avenue. Senior veterinary students from CSU will be trained in this practice and receive exposure to, and experience in the diagnosis and treatment of animals, under the direct supervision of veterinarians who work for the University, as well as from the veterinarians who work for the Wagga Wagga Veterinary Hospital. Up to 10 students will be present at any one time and there will be a continuous presence during normal opening hours. All formal tuition and clinical instruction will be provided by the CSU clinicians. For example, under the supervision of the clinician and with the approval of the Practice students may examine animals, perform non-invasive diagnostic procedures, perform simple therapeutic or diagnostic procedures with animals and assist with surgery and anaesthetics. The practice continues to service its farm animal and equine clients as well as seeing small animals.

CSU currently offers referral services in small animal surgery and this will move to the practice in the VTH

in the near future. CSU has three veterinarians who offer referral services in small animal surgery. We expect to expand the referral services in the future. To support referral services there are options for 24 hour coverage through live-in facilities. Cases are only seen by the CSU veterinarians in the referral practice after they are referred by other practitioners. In the VTH there is clear separation between WWVH and the CSU referral activities.

CSU also operates the Veterinary Clinical Centre on the main campus 5km from town where referral work is currently performed and much of this will move to the VTH in the near future. The Veterinary Clinical Centre provides an equine clinical service and training. The Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, also on campus, is a state of the art diagnostic facility which services the clinics and the region.

In order to share information with the main campus the building is equipped with many electronic devices. The imaging system is digital and can be accessed externally. Students have ready access to computers and a wealth of on line information and the surgery has internet connected cameras for live or recorded remote viewing.

Nick Sangster
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Wagga Wagga NSW 2678

Report on the centenary celebrations of the Faculty of Veterinary Science, The University of Sydney.

The faculty of Veterinary Science of The University of Sydney opened its doors for its first students, on March 22, 1910. Sixteen students were then enrolled in the five year Bachelor in Veterinary Science. A milestone of over 100 enrolled students was reached in 1935. As it is said 'the rest is history'. One hundred years later, and the faculty has continued to grow. In this its centenary year, the faculty has taken in well over 100 undergraduates into the first year alone in the BVSc and another 80 students into the Bachelor of Animal and Veterinary Bioscience degree. Therefore the faculty has currently, close to 1000 undergraduate students, approximately 90 research postgraduate students (the majority enrolled in PhDs) and 70 students enrolled in postgraduate coursework degrees. Many of you also make use of the Centre of Veterinary Education (CVE) for your continuing professional education needs, which is under the 'umbrella' of the faculty, the faculty has a staff of over 250 and four teaching hospitals. So 100 years on the faculty is now a large, complex and diverse enterprise but its primary objectives are still the same: to provide outstanding education experiences in the animal sciences and to be at the forefront of best practices for animal health and welfare.

The faculty is celebrating its centenary milestone by holding many events throughout the year. For many of you that are alumni, hopefully you were able to attend 'Centenary Reunion Dinner', held on Saturday May 1st. On Sunday, 2nd of May, the faculty invited alumni and their families to attend the day-time 'Back to the Roundhouse event'. It was an opportunity for alumni, past and present staff, students and families to meet up and celebrate their own shared history with the faculty. For those of you that are not familiar with the faculty, the Roundhouse is one of the Faculty's most recognised structures. It is quite a small black wooden shingled rotunda with a weather vane of a dog that 'points' with direction of the wind. In 1910, when the horse was a key animal species for the veterinary profession, Professor J D Stewart, the first Professor and Dean of the school, persuaded the university to provide funds for an animal observation box. So that's what the Roundhouse is, an area into which a horse can be taken, with a row of raised seats for the students to observe the animal subject, handler and teacher. The use of the Roundhouse declined with the use of the horse, but the building remains an important part of the Faculty's heritage and tradition. To celebrate the

centenary the Roundhouse has had all its roof shingles replaced, the structure has been reinforced and repaired, and the building looks spectacular.

Another event to celebrate the centenary is a "research showcase" to be held on Wednesday 28th of June, this is an opportunity to celebrate the faculty's contribution of generating knowledge to the animal sciences. The aim of this showcase is for the research staff of the faculty to present their current research projects to the scientific and general community and for the faculty to reflect on their past contributions such as which research paper produced by the faculty has had the greatest number of citations from other scientific papers? I don't know the answer to this question, but am looking forward to hearing the answer on the 28th. The JD Stewart Address will also be held on the evening of the showcase. The JD Stewart Address is an annual event whereby a leader in the animal sciences is invited to address the faculty and veterinary and animal science community. These are just a few of the events that the faculty has planned for 2010. If you would like more information on any of these events don't hesitate to contact the Veterinary Science Foundation vsf@vetsci.usyd.edu.au or phone (02) 9351 8024.

One last item: many of USyd veterinary alumni were taught clinical diagnostic pathology by Professor Paul Canfield. Paul has been a teacher at this faculty for at least 30 years and stood out among lecturers for his quirky and distinctive lecturing style, his concern for the quality of his students' learning and his compassion for all students and colleagues. Paul retired from teaching in April and clinical pathology is now taught by Dr Rachael Gray. Paul has been one of the greatest supporters of the faculty; he is the faculty's historical archivist and has often stepped in to take many vital roles such as Acting Dean when required. The faculty will miss Paul but wish him a very happy retirement with his lovely wife Dr Rhondda Canfield.

Dr Merran Govendir
Senior Lecturer in Veterinary Pharmacology
Faculty of Veterinary Science, The University of
Sydney.

Continuing Professional Development Requirements

Section 33 of the *Veterinary Practice Act 2003* requires NSW registered veterinarians to submit an Annual Return which includes continuing professional development activities. The Annual Return and registration invoices were posted out on 8 April and are due back by 31 May – this is the deadline. 31 May 2010 concludes the three year cycle for CPD points for the majority of practitioners.

You aren't sure how many points you have? Check your Annual Return and you will see the figures on it that you have provided to the Board over the last two years. One of the objects of the *Veterinary Practice Act 2003* is to ensure that veterinary practitioners meet acceptable standards. To achieve this, the Board is required to ensure that registered practitioners remain competent to practice throughout their careers. **Remember the CPD requirement is based on a minimum of 60 points over a consecutive three year period**, of which, **at least 15 points** must be structured points. The remaining 45 points may be unstructured points or more structured points.

The Board will report back to the profession in the next edition of Boardtalk as to how we have all performed in this area. If a veterinary practitioner fails to accrue the minimum number of points over the three year period, the Board will ask the veterinary practitioner for reasons.

The Board will also conduct random audits of CPD recording and validation. There may be various, valid reasons why a practitioner failed to reach the minimum CPD points and each response will be considered independently. However, if the reason is not acceptable, the Board has the responsibility under Section 19 of the Act to place conditions on the practitioner's registration. As the profession in NSW has been informed about since 2006, CPD is no longer an option- it is a legal requirement to maintain registration.

As the Board has previously communicated via Boardtalk, there are three resources available to make recording points less onerous. Members of the AVA can elect to have the AVA's VetEd service record their points or the VPB can supply a CPD diary. A downloadable Excel CPD diary is also available on the VPB website www.vpb.nsw.gov.au. It is entirely up to the practitioner how they record their CPD points; any method is acceptable so long as the activity, designated points and validation are recorded and filed by the practitioner.

There are many ways to gain CPD points including conferences, seminars, reading relevant journals and small group learning.

Below is a list of some of the continuing education opportunities available over the next 6 months. The Board doesn't endorse any particular course, provider or presenter... we simply want to assist you.

If you prefer face to face learning here are some of the opportunities available between JUNE 2010 and DECEMBER 2010

From the Centre of Veterinary Education (CVE) SYDNEY (cve.enquiries@sydney.edu.au or telephone: 02 9351 7979) you can look into

- Surgery Wet Workshop: Hip and Stifle in the Dog; 19 / 20 June; Narracoorte, SA; Speaker: Wing Tip Wong
- Surgery Wet Workshop: Hip and Stifle in the Dog; 17 / 18 July; Bunbury, WA; Speaker: Wing Tip Wong

- Feline Internal Medicine ; 24 July; Hilton Hotel, Adelaide ; Speaker: Julia Beatty
- External Fixators; 6-8 August; Veterinary Science Conference Centre, University of Sydney
Speakers: Jim Toombs, Sarah Webb, Peter Laverty and Hall Griffin
- Surgery Wet Workshop: Hip and Stifle in the Dog; 7 & 8 August; Coffs Harbour NSW; Speaker:
Wing Tip Wong
- Neurology; 20-24 September; Sofitel Resort and Spa, Fiji; Speaker: Rick LeCouteur, Georgina
Child, Sam Long
- Feline Internal Medicine 10 October; Country Comfort Hotel, Port Macquarie; Speaker: Julia
Beatty
- Managing the Cancer Patient: 2010 Updates; 6 November; Brisbane; Speaker: Peter Bennett
- Nurse Ed: Cancer Patient Care & Options; 7 November Brisbane; Speaker: Peter Bennett

Don't forget the your local AVA branch meetings ...Contact the Australian Veterinary Association on avansw@ava.com.au for information on what's on and where. The benefits that you gain when getting together with your colleagues extends far past just points and learning. You can contact the AVA on (02) 9431 5064 or Fax(02) 9437 9068.

Also available

- *Can you squeeze in the annual AVA National Conference ?In Brisbane May 24-28th check www.panpac2010.com
- *Bain Fallon Conference 12-16 July 2010 Hunter Valley Crowne Plaza , Lovedale NSW
- *Australian Reproduction Veterinarians Workshop 6-8th August., CSU Wagga Wagga

Other courses overseas include conferences in almost every country...
here are some websites to look into;

- <http://www.vetagenda.com/en/vetagenda.php>
- <http://www.worldvet.org/event>
- <http://www.ivis.org/home.asp>

Are you looking for something different? Well, if you are looking at more individual attention- Murdoch University in Perth has a program where practitioners can join the clinic and teaching activities for a period of time eg a week. Contact Dr Maryanne Culliver: Manager of Continuing Veterinary Education on (08) 9360 6342 or cve@murdoch.edu.au

There are also the "On line" courses and you can access some of these by contacting

- Centre of Veterinary Education (previously Post Grad Foundation) www.cve.edu.au
- VetScholar [with AVA discounts] <http://vetscholar.setspace.org.nz>
- International Veterinary Information Service. Free access to huge range of courses- online and face to face. Check out IVIS- www.ivs.org/contact
- Royal College Online courses <http://rvc.ac.uk/CPD/Courses>
- Veterinary Information Network has great courses www.vin.com
- www.veteducation.com.au offers live tutor interaction in its on line courses.
- AND as Bayer has free short courses [with AVA points] found at www.bayeraccelerate.com.au you could get all your points and not even spend a dollar.

Legislative changes will impact on health management of pig farms

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There is a progressive move across Australia to change Animal Welfare Codes of Practice from 'guidelines' to enforceable standards.

In NSW an amendment was made in March 2010 to the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (General) Regulation 2006. The change means that the Animal Welfare Code of Practice – Commercial Pig Production (NSW Pig Code) is now enforceable for all commercial pig establishments, i.e. a business in which pigs are kept or used for commercial purposes.

Clause 22 of the Code requires the owner or manager of a commercial pig establishment to have a herd health program in place to manage the risk of disease to a pig. The clause defines a herd health program as a documented management program that identifies potential health and biosecurity risks to pigs and specifies actions to prevent or minimize those risks.

To assist producers and their veterinarians to meet these Regulations, the Australian Pig Veterinarians (APV), the Australian Veterinary Association (AVA), Australian Pork Ltd (APL) and Industry and

Investment NSW have developed a Herd Health Program Checklist.

Pig owners who do not currently have a herd health program can use the check-list to conduct a self-assessment on their herd, with face-to-face or over-the-phone support from their veterinarian. It is recommended that the completed checklist be kept on-file by both the producer and their consultant veterinarian.

The checklist can be downloaded at <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/livestock/pigs/health>.

The regulation is available at: <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/aboutus/about/legislation-acts/prevention-cruelty-animals>

The Code is available at: <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/livestock/animal-welfare/codes>

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1300 366 653

**New telephone number for
Veterinary Practitioners Board**

1300 366 653

*You can use this number to contact the
New South Wales Veterinary
Practitioners Board from ANYWHERE
within Australia for the cost of a local
call.*

If You Suspect an Emergency Animal Disease

You must report it to an inspector by the quickest available means

Ring the Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline
1800 675 888

Emergency Animal Diseases include

- * Serious Zoonotic Diseases
- * Exotic Diseases
- * New and Emerging Diseases
- * Diseases that are NOT normally found in that Species

If you're examining animals on a property and you start to suspect something a bit unusual, pull up and ring the **HOTLINE** straight away

say you are a Veterinarian and ask to be put through to our duty vet
(Duty Vets are also INSPECTORS)

Dont't worry about causing a false alarm

The more calls we get the better

It tells us that new Vets are on the look-out and know exactly what to do if they see something unusual or possibly Zoonotic

and Remember the Basic Rules:

- * Use personal equipment - to keep yourself and other people safe from Zoonotic Diseases
- * Use Biosecurity - to keep other livestock safe from Infectious Diseases

If you don't suspect an emergency disease but just want some advice, contact your:

- * District Veterinarian (at your local Livestock Health and Pest Authority office)
- * Regional Veterinary Officer (through any Industry and Investment NSW office)

These are government vets working for the NSW public animal health system. Their job is to safeguard market access, livestock production, human health and the environment from problems associated with animal diseases.

Note: if you're a vet in the Sydney metropolitan area you are in the Cumberland Authority and your District Vet can be contacted on: 02 4655 9165. Your Regional Veterinary Officer is located at Menangle and can be contacted on 02 46 406 378.

For more information visit www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity or send an email to biosecurity@industry.nsw.gov.au

Contact: Marilyn Evers, Animal Biosecurity, Industry & Investment NSW, ph 4828 6631, mob 0428 268 668, marilyn.evers@industry.nsw.gov.au

Confidential Help for Veterinarians

Doctors Health Advisory Service

Independent and confidential service staffed by specially selected and trained medical practitioners who are able to offer personal and health assistance as well as referral to specialists. Veterinary practitioners / their families / their colleagues are able to make calls to the Help Line. Issues vary and all calls are unique but may involve depression, alcohol abuse, drug use, work related stress or marriage difficulties. This highly respected and leading health care advisory organization aims to assist veterinarians to maintain full personal, professional and social capability

The dedicated telephone service is available 24 hours a day.

(02) 9437 6552

Veterinary Practitioners of NSW Staff



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Boardtalk

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Mrs Christine White

IMPORTANT:

The information contained in this newsletter reflects the policies of the Veterinary Practitioners Board and the current NSW legislation. Any advice on specific issues not relating to Board policy should be obtained from either the AVA or appropriate government department or your own legal advisors