Amendments to the Veterinary Practice Act 2003

A statutory review of the Veterinary Practice Act 2003 was made through 2009-2010. How was this done? Well, the Minister’s office assembled a review panel to steer the process. The Department of Primary Industries sent emails to 2,898 NSW registered veterinarians (while there are 3,055 registered vets, 2,898 had supplied the Board office with email contacts) and the review panel received nine responses.

The Board itself sought to have several amendments. We have inserted in this edition of Boardtalk the Veterinary Practice Amendment Act 2010 so you can read in full the changes which made their way through the lower and then upper house in of parliament in October. The changes will assist the Board to carry out its legislative functions.

Did you know that in the 2003 Act there was no time limit for the making of a complaint against a veterinarian?

A new amendment brings in a three year time limit for the making of a complaint. The amendments also bring in protection against defamation, for any person who makes a complaint to the Board, in good faith, against a veterinarian. This provision is designed to encourage members of the public, veterinarians and staff who work with veterinarians to report legitimate concerns they have about the conduct of a veterinarian without any legal repercussions against them.

Investigations could also be impeded by the refusal of a veterinarian to cooperate due to the fear of exposure to civil or criminal proceedings. Veterinarians will now be protected against self incrimination and evidence they provide cannot be used in any proceedings against them. This encourages the honest, open and frank co operation the Board seeks and brings our Act into line with the Health Practitioners Regulation Act 2009 and Health Care Complaints Act 1993.

Veterinary practitioners are human beings and unfortunately suffer from the same pressures and problems seen throughout our society. If a veterinarian is affected by drug or alcohol misuse or serious mental illnesses to the point where their abilities to perform in a professional manner may be...
President’s report continued

affected, the amendments provide the Board with the authority to require a medical examination from a Board appointed medical practitioner with the cost provided by the Board. The Board is fortunate to have a solid relationship with the NSW Medical Board who has been dealing with these health issues for many years and the Board will seek to use medical practitioners referred by the Medical Board for these examinations. Refusal to comply with a requirement to undergo an examination, without reasonable excuse is evidence that the practitioner does not have sufficient physical or mental capacity to practise veterinary science.

The Board agreed to remove one proposed amendment from the Amendment Act before it reached final parliamentary debate. This was the area concerning incorporation. At present the Act allows a corporation to carry on the business of veterinary practice if the controlling interest is held by one or more registered veterinarians. To bring NSW into line with all the other jurisdictions in Australia, it was proposed that vets not necessarily be required to be the controllers of the ‘financial policies’ of the corporation but continue to control the ‘operating policies’ of the corporation. The more flexible approach was thought to allow more capital inflows and more business opportunities. The NSW Division of the AVA requested this section to be removed and it was… but the Board has made a commitment to the Minister’s Office to revisit this through 2011. Anecdotal comments need to be backed up with facts and somehow we need to engage the bulk of the profession with an articulated and balanced pros and cons discussion to determine the best outcome concerning practice ownership for the future. The Board members have no vested interest in any change and is primarily concerned with the process and to this end the Board proposes to revisit this issue with education and consultations in 2011.

Consumers of our services expect us to maintain and enhance our professional skills and knowledge. Accountants do, doctors do, dentists do, lawyers do, engineers do and so on. In the veterinary profession a minimum level of continuing professional development is nationally accepted and I note that the Registrar Mr Glenn Lynch has written about CPD in his report and I concur with every word.

Supply of restricted substances – Clause 20 of the Code of Professional Conduct
The Board works with facts and evidence and not hearsay but we get very concerned when we hear of registered veterinary practitioners selling horse anaesthetics and tranquillisers to lay operators. Be warned! The Board views very seriously any vet who is found guilty of this behaviour. You are likely to be found guilty of a breach of clause 20(1) of the Code ‘Supply of restricted substances’ which allows a NSW registered veterinarian to ‘supply restricted substances only to a person responsible for the care of an animal that the veterinary practitioner has physically examined which is under his or her direct care and only in respect of that animal’ and any breach of the Code provides grounds for disciplinary action and potentially a fine of up to $5,000. In addition a practitioner guilty under this section would also be aiding and abetting a lay person to breach the Regulations, by the lay person performing a restricted act of veterinary science in administering an anaesthetic agent – Clause 4(1) (c) of the Regulation.

Annual General Meeting
Our thanks to the practitioners of Newcastle who joined the Board for the fourth Annual General Meeting at Noahs on 9 November. The 2010 Lonely Planet Guide lists Newcastle in the world’s top 10 cities to visit and cites “excitement, topicality, value for money and the special X factor”. We really didn’t have the opportunity to look for the X factor but the setting overlooking the beautiful beach made it a very memorable night. Those present heard we are keeping the hospital licence fees and the registration fees the same this financial year as in 2006/2007; 2007/2008; 2008/2009; 2009/2010.

National Recognition of Veterinary Registration (NRVR)
After all these years of discussing National Registration where are we now? As of January 1st 2011 veterinarians that reside from outside Victoria who intend to perform acts of veterinary science in Victoria will not need to register there but will need to ensure they make themselves familiar with Victorian law that relate to veterinarians. Areas such as drug dispensing and labelling, the code of conduct in the Victorian legislation and others may have clauses that are particular to Victoria – a very good idea to check the Victorian Board’s website for these nuances before working there. The legislation for NSW and other states has not progressed as quickly as we had expected but we will continue to keep you up to date.
For the Board’s office staff the Christmas period is a slightly quieter time - budgets and audits and annual reports are all over and the rush of new graduates registering is just about to get underway in earnest. Many businesses are winding down, families are off on holidays but the vets in practice are often entering their busiest time of the year. The Board members join with me to wish you a Joyous Christmas with family and friends and hope 2011 is prosperous and happy.

Ruth Thompson
President

From the Registrar’s Desk

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

2010 marks the end of the first 3 year cycle for reporting of CPD points for the majority of practitioners. Veterinarians who have registered in the last few years are in a different cycle and every annual return posted out indicates which year in the cycle the practitioner is currently in, as well as the points reported to the Board to date.

As communicated in the last edition of Boardtalk, the number of practitioners who have accrued the points is very encouraging indeed.

Of more than 3,000 registered practitioners in NSW only 145 did not fully satisfy the minimum requirements of 15 structured points over the 3 year cycle and many of these fell just short of the required points.

I wrote to the 145 practitioners and most replied with valid reasons why they did not achieve the minimum points and the Board is working co operatively with these practitioners to see them achieve the target in the coming months; in fact many of them have now already achieved the points.

One of the several amendments recently made to the Veterinary Practice Act, includes in the definitions of ‘unsatisfactory professional conduct’;

any failure by a veterinary practitioner, without reasonable excuse, to comply with any continuing professional development requirements determined by the Board that are applicable to the veterinary practitioner’.

Reasons such as ‘I can’t get to a conference’ or ‘it’s too expensive to do CPD’ etc are simply not acceptable in this day and age of electronic learning opportunities. There are numerous structured learning activities available on the internet and the Board is constantly adding links to websites that we are aware of. If you know of other good websites for on line learning, could you please send me an email with the link and we will add it to all the others on our website.

It would be a very sad day for the profession if the Board was forced to use the provisions under ‘unsatisfactory professional conduct’ because a veterinarian refused to participate in CPD without a reasonable excuse.

Having said that, the Board has a statutory responsibility under the legislation to administer the Act – lets all hope that the Board is not forced to place conditions on a practitioner’s registration to make them comply with what other practitioners do as a routine matter of professional development.

Change of address

The Board’s office often receive mail returned to us and stamped ‘return to sender’ and this is how we deduce that the practitioner has moved address! The staff then embark on an annoying process of ‘track the vet down’ using an e mail address or mobile telephone if we have one.

The Board is under no obligation to do this, however the practitioner does have a legal obligation to notify the Board of a change of address pursuant to S 31 of the Act.

In accordance with this section, the practitioner has 14 days to notify the Board – failure to do so could result in a fine ($1,100). The Board has not issued any fines yet.

As with the CPD matter, I really hope that we don’t need to enforce this section, however, there are obviously costs associated with finding practitioners who have failed to contact the Board regarding their change of address and if a practitioner is a serial offender, I think it’s fair enough to make them pay for our time in chasing them up.

The Board has a form on the home page of our website aptly headed ‘changed address lately’? – Please keep this matter in mind if you do happen to change address.
**Hospital licensing**

I researched a statistic relating the veterinary hospital licensing recently and thought I would share this with the profession.

This year, the Board has issued 14 new hospital licenses – of these, 9 are current practices that have relocated into new premises within their local area. This is obviously a positive for users of veterinary services and the animals as these premises provide improved facilities and equipment.

Finally, as the year draws to a close, I wish all the readers of Boardtalk a safe and happy Christmas and a prosperous 2011.

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**Report from the Veterinary Practitioner’s Board Complaints Committee**

Since May, twenty five complaints made against veterinary practitioners by their clients or stakeholders have been investigated by the Complaints Committee and recommendations made to the Board.

The Board reprimanded one practitioner, issued four cautions, dismissed six complaints with a caution, and dismissed the remaining fifteen complaints - two under section 46(1)(a) as they were considered to be “frivolous or vexatious or otherwise lacking in merit”.

The complete table of complaints investigated and finalised in the financial year 2009 / 2010 as depicted in the Board’s Annual Report follows this article.

- The reprimand for unsatisfactory professional conduct was issued to a practitioner for failing to comply with the Australian Rules of Racing. This practitioner failed to follow directions of Racing NSW stewards, left unlabelled medications at a racing stable and failed to keep adequate records of drugs supplied and animal treatments.

- A fine of $2,000 accompanied the reprimand. Section 14 of the code of professional conduct demands that ‘practitioners must maintain knowledge of, and obey any code or rules of an animal sporting organisation when attending on that organisation or working within the industry to which it relates’.

- Three practitioners received cautions for unsatisfactory professional conduct where the Board considered their actions, assessments and treatment of an animal demonstrated a lack of judgement and care in the practice of veterinary science.

- A caution was issued to a practitioner who left the practice to do an outside call and failed, before leaving, to provide treatment to a dog that was described by the vet as being ‘very flat’. The dog died shortly afterwards.

- A caution was issued to a practitioner who failed to adequately assess the clinical condition of a dog who appeared to collapse after recovery from routine surgery. The dog was later discharged by a nurse without further examination by the veterinary practitioner and died at home shortly afterwards.

- A caution was issued to a practitioner who assessed the healing process of a corneal ulcer in the practice waiting room. There was no objective measurement of healing or regression of the ulcer and the eye ruptured the next day. The Board did not consider the examination in the reception area to be adequate.

- A caution was issued to a practitioner who dispensed two non steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs to be administered concurrently to a dog. The Board recognised that this was a dispensing error but that the practitioner demonstrated a lack of appropriate care when discharging his patient.

- The Board also noted that drug labels used in this practice did not comply with the Poisons and Therapeutic Goods legislation. This may be an opportune time to check your labels to make sure that they comply.

It is inevitable that practices will occasionally have clients that feel dissatisfied with the service they have received. It may be the way they felt they were treated...
at reception, the cost of drugs or the cost of treatment or an adverse outcome.
Reading through complaints received by the Board one can see how some complainants are inflamed by ill chosen words at the outset. A minor issue that may be defused by an explanation and apology can become a full blown complaint when met with perceived aggression, perceived obfuscation or a perceived lack of empathy.

An explanation of events should be delivered at the level of the client’s understanding. Remember also that many clients are students at the University of Google and that a world of information (and misinformation) is available at their fingertips.

It is in the best interests of the practitioner to ensure that treatment consent / estimate forms are filled out fully and that the client does understand what they are signing - the consent must be informed. These forms can be very important in the complaint investigation process and some are received by the Board un-dated, un-signed and with boxes un-ticked.

Investigated and finalised complaints 2009 / 2010 financial year taken from the Board’s recent Annual Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPLAINTS</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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</table>

Amendment to Section 46 (5)
As you can see from the table above, the Board ‘dismissed some complaints with a caution’ and issued outright ‘cautions’ in some others.
The Board felt that there was some confusion with the use of two different types of ‘caution’, so amongst the recent amendments to the Act, the Board can now issue a caution (no change) and dismiss a complaint with a ‘recommendation’. This would typically be used when the Board dismissed a complaint but the investigation may have revealed for example, the Board recommends that some part of the veterinarian’s practise of veterinary science be reviewed (but would not have had any negative bearing on the outcome of the patient care the subject of the complaint).

Veterinary practitioners and lay operators

What are the responsibilities of the veterinarian when sedating animals for treatment by non veterinarians such as chiropractors, equine dental technicians or farriers?

Our clients don’t always call a veterinarian to attend to their animals but some services require veterinary involvement. For example, an equine dental procedure may require sedation and analgesia in order to be performed effectively and safely. If veterinarians are approached to provide such services for a non veterinarian they need to be aware of their obligations and rights.

- Firstly, and importantly, there is no compulsion to supply such services, particularly if the owner is not an existing client or if it is requested by the non-veterinarian, not the owner.
- Secondly, if veterinarians do supply any such services, they must be aware of the limitations non veterinarians may have in regard to their varied level of skills and what they are legally permitted to do. If the supervised lay person is incompetent or negligent, it is the veterinary practitioner who may be subject to professional misconduct allegations and proceedings.
- Thirdly, veterinarians must be aware that, in providing such a service, they are not only responsible for the sedation and analgesia, but also for the welfare of the animal. That is to say, they are responsible for the physical assessment of each animal’s health status prior to administration of appropriate doses of the drug and may also be held responsible for the outcome of the procedure (as above). They certainly are responsible for follow up of the animal.

Therefore, it is important that they are familiar with the expected outcomes and associated risks (for example, the incorrect use of power tools can result in over-heating of teeth, which can cause the death of blood vessels and nerves and an over-aggressive technique or excessive rasping can change the grinding dynamics and
expose nerves, resulting in pain when eating, loss of appetite and weight loss).

• Fourthly, veterinarians providing this service need to keep records consistent with contemporary veterinary standards including findings of a clinical examination, procedures carried out, doses of drugs used, and any follow up veterinary services (for which they may also be responsible)

There is a different but related scenario...
the provision of sedation to the lay operator to use themselves!

The Board would look very seriously on any cases where evidence is provided to the Board of a veterinarian providing sedation to a lay operator to be used to allow that person to carry out procedures.

As a profession we are entrusted with the control and use of anaesthetics and sedation as we are trained in pharmacology, anaesthesia, surgery, anatomy, how to deal with side effects and complications which can arise etc. We have a veterinary degree and along with that come privileges and responsibilities - enforced by our professional registration body - the Board.

The Veterinary Practice Regulation 2006 includes in Schedule 2 the Veterinary practitioner’s code of professional conduct. If a practitioner supplies restricted substances to non veterinarians eg ketamine and xylazine, they are potentially in breach of the first clause of the Code 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.

Practitioners are undoubtedly in breach of clause 20(1) of the Code - Supply of restricted substances - which allows them to supply restricted substances only to a person responsible for the care of an animal which is under the practitioner’s direct care and only in respect of that animal.

CLEARLY Supplying anyone other than the owner is NOT PERMITTED

Breaching the Code provides grounds for disciplinary action under the Act. In addition the veterinarian would also be assisting the lay person in the breaching the Regulations because they would be performing ‘a restricted act of veterinary science’ by administering an anaesthetic agent (Clause 4(1) (c) of the Regulation).

Veterinary Practice Regulation 2006
4 Restricted acts of veterinary science
Include
1(b) treatments, procedures or tests that require anaesthesia etc
the carrying out of any treatment, procedure or test on an animal that, according to current standards of the practice of veterinary science, to avoid harm or suffering to the animal, should not be undertaken without anaesthetising the animal (otherwise than by a topical anaesthetic) or without sedating or tranquillising the animal,

1(c) administration of an anaesthetic agent
the administration of an anaesthetic agent (other than a topical anaesthetic) to an animal otherwise than under the immediate and direct supervision of a veterinary practitioner,

However, the Act does allow an owner (Section 9(2) (a)), or an employee of an owner (Section 9(2) (b), to carry out any restricted act, which includes the use of anaesthetics and tranquillisers – so long as they do not contravene the Protection of Cruelty to Animals Act.

This is why practitioners can supply such products but only to owners.

The supply of acepromazine to the owners of rams who are to be shorn does not contravene any legislation as the owners of the sheep are being supplied and using the drug, not the contract shearers. The supplying veterinarian needs to clearly explain the use, side effects, storage etc. as with the dispensing of all prescription drugs.

In the same way, a veterinarian could legally supply tranquillisers to a horse owner, but they may be held liable for any adverse consequences in any civil proceedings, and possibly also by the Board if their actions in supplying the drug were not professional.
In relation to an adverse consequence which may follow from the use of a drug (particularly a tranquilliser) on a valuable animal, the insurer of the animal could possibly seek damages from the veterinarian as the supplier. The veterinarian may also have no assurance that the product supplied will be used on the animal for which it was supplied! There may be no assurance that the owner will follow instructions and, unless the instructions are in writing and the veterinarian can demonstrate that they are satisfied about the owner’s ability to use the drug (even ram sedatives), the vet could again be held liable for damages.

Emergency - Animal Disease Watch Hotline
1800 675 888
Report Unusual Disease Signs, Abnormal Behaviour or Unexplained Deaths

Information on NRVR in Victoria

The Veterinary Practitioners Registration Board of Victoria (the Board) has great pleasure in advising that National Recognition of Veterinary Registration will be implemented in Victoria from 1 January 2011.

What does this mean for you?
As of the 1 January 2011, you will be deemed to be registered to practise in Victoria if you hold current unencumbered general or specialist registration in another Australian jurisdiction (interstate right to practise). This recognition will not apply to holders of any other registration category.

Where should I maintain registration?
You must hold registration in the state/territory of your “principal place of residence”. This is considered to be the address which is maintained on the electoral role.

If I hold secondary registration in Victoria, do I need to renew my registration in Victoria in 2011?
No – from 1 January 2011, secondary registration will cease to exist in Victoria and if you hold current registration and reside in another Australian jurisdiction, you will not be required to apply for or pay an additional fee for registration in Victoria.

Who is eligible for National Recognition of Registration in Victoria?
If you hold general or specialist registration in another Australian jurisdiction, you are deemed to be registered to practise in Victoria therefore no longer required too maintain a separate registration status in Victoria.

If I have move to Victoria and I am registered in another jurisdiction, what should I do? From 1 January 2011, you will not be required to register in Victoria until your interstate registration expires; however you must ensure that you make application for registration in Victoria PRIOR to the expiration of your registration.

What do I need to do to practice in Victoria?
The introduction of National Recognition of Veterinary Registration does not diminish the legal obligation of every registered veterinary practitioner practising in Victoria to ensure they are familiar with and understand the relevant Victorian Acts of Parliament and associated regulations including:
- The Veterinary Practice Act 1997 (Victoria) as amended
- Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Control of Use) Act 1992
- Domestic (Feral and Nuisance Animals) Act 1994
- Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981
- Radiation Act 2005
- Evidence Act 2008
- Livestock Disease Control Act 1994
- Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986
- Stock (Seller Liability and Declarations) Act 1993
- Therapeutic Goods (Victoria) Act 2010

along with the Board’s published Guidelines and quarterly “Board Update”. These are available on the Board’s website http://www.vetboard.vic.gov.au.

If I hold Secondary Registration in Victoria, will my name remain on the Victorian public register?
No – your name will be removed from the Victorian public register unless you maintain general registration in Victoria.

How do I receive future Board publications and newsletters?
The Board’s newsletter and publications are available freely on the website http://www.vetboard.vic.gov.au. Hardcopies of the Handbook, Vetlist and Guidelines are available for an additional fee. Please contact the Board’s office to obtain hard copies.

If you require further information or clarification regarding the above, please contact the Board’s office during business hours on (03) 9620 7444.
2009-10 Gender Trend

Age Group

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2009-10 Employment Types - Not in Private Practice

Government Officer Commonwealth 29 19 48
Government Officer R.L.P.B. 27 12 39
Government Officer NSW 32 23 55
Government Research 9 8 17
Specialist Small Animal 27 13 40
Specialist Large Animal 25 12 37
Specialist Other 51 20 70
Pharmaceutical Industry 33 53 107
Research & Development 61 74 129
University Teaching 11 74 132
TAFE Teaching 17 28
Other Veterinary Pursuit 28 72 81
Currently Not Practising 21 19 28
Non-Veterinary Pursuit 3 159
Retired 3 13
UnKnown 6

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City vets are determined from a list of post codes provided by Australia Post, which groups postal codes into the following city areas:

- Sydney and Suburbs
- Newcastle and Central Coast
- Wollongong

2009-10 Practising Vets - NSW Metro vs Rural Spread

2009-10 Rural vs Metro NSW Practising Vets Trend
Report from the Faculty of Veterinary Science, The University of Sydney.

The Faculty continues to celebrate its centenary. Centenary celebrations included a very successful evening dinner for alumni, staff and persons connected with the faculty to celebrate the Faculty’s achievements on May 1st. It was a night of speeches, some of which were delivered by song, a trivia contest based on the history of the faculty and very fine dining with excellent wine. The night was very well attended by alumni and it was interesting that the decade of alumni most represented were graduates from the 1970’s, most of whom would now be in their late fifties and early sixties. It was a general topic of discussion by the staff why the 1970 graduates were in the greatest numbers at the dinner? Many reasons were put forward that ranged from maybe the academic years in those days were smaller and consequently those students bonded particularly well or perhaps as we get older we all become more nostalgic and want to revisit past experiences, or perhaps they are more likely to be ‘empty nesters’ and have more disposable income to go to functions than their younger colleagues? On the following day the faculty hosted an equally successful ‘Return to the Roundhouse’ function where alumni were invited to a lunchtime barbeque and could catch up with colleagues and past and present staff, and were taken for tours through the faculty.

Another centenary celebration was the Faculty Research Showcase that took place on the 28th of July. Many of the faculty academics presented their research to alumni, industry partners and to postgraduate and undergraduate students. For those of you that are interested, the research presentations can be found at [http://sydney.edu.au/vetscience/research/events/program.shtml](http://sydney.edu.au/vetscience/research/events/program.shtml)

This showcase was concluded by The JD Stewart Address given by another faculty alumni; Professor Christopher Goodnow of the John Curtin School of Medical Research at the Australian National University. It was very inspiring to hear what Professor Goodnow has achieved so far in the field of immunology. He also spent time with our postgraduate students to give them his advice about undertaking careers in research.

While these centenary celebrations have taken much organisation and implementation by dedicated faculty staff, our Vice Chancellor has wanted to restructure the university. The Vice Chancellor has many plans for the university. Initially he wanted the university to become even more research focused. He thought the university was too big by virtue of the fact the university offered too many courses and had too undergraduate students that was impinging on the university’s research activities. Although it is important that the University of Sydney remains a research intensive university, the Vice Chancellor has recognised that the university does many things very well and one of those ‘things’ is educating a large student population. The previous Labor Government had also been placing pressure on all universities to increase their intake of economically disadvantaged undergraduate students and indigenous students. However with the structure of the current government, it has been suggested that the rural universities may now receive preferential funding than those non-rural tertiary institutions. You may have read about the Vice Chancellors plans to restructure the university in newspapers and he has released a ‘White Paper’ on his vision on the future direction of the university which is available at [http://www.usyd.edu.au/strategy/white_paper/index.shtml](http://www.usyd.edu.au/strategy/white_paper/index.shtml). What does this White Paper mean for the Faculty of Veterinary Science? It is probably too early to know the full implications of the Vice Chancellor’s plans but has meant that although the Vet Sci faculty will maintain its faculty status it will need to form a governance structure with the Faculties of Science and Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources. The Vice Chancellor wants our three faculties to work close together with respect to teaching, research collaborations and to minimise duplication of administrative functions. So far this is not a great ask, our faculties have been working together for several years already. It will be interesting to see what other implications the White Paper will have on the faculty over the next five years.

Merran Govendir
The Faculty of Veterinary Science,
The University of Sydney.
In early 1997 Dr Frank Doughty facilitated an arrangement with the Doctors’ Health Advisory Service (NSW) Inc. to provide confidential, personal and health assistance to all members of the veterinary profession in NSW. The Veterinary Practitioners Board of NSW fully supports this service and is contributing towards the funding on behalf of the veterinary profession.

The DHAS (NSW) was formed in 1981 and is an independent and confidential service offering advice to doctors, dentists and veterinarians and to medical, dental and veterinary students in need of help.

A dedicated telephone service is available 24 hours a day: (02) 9437 6552.

Calls come from practitioners themselves, their families, staff and professional colleagues.

Incoming calls are referred to one of the first call panel of senior medical practitioners, experienced in handling the health problems of colleagues and other health professionals. The caller might receive advice directly from this doctor or might be referred to one of our panel of specialists.

Extreme care is taken to maintain confidentiality. Once the caller enters into a formal doctor/patient relationship, whether with a first call panel doctor, a member of our specialist panel, or another medical practitioner, then the advisory role of the DHAS is completed – we are not a treatment service.

Calls generally relate to substance abuse (alcohol and other drugs), psychological or physical issues, financial difficulties, or a combination of these problems. Each caller’s problems are unique.

The DHAS (NSW) continues to be well-respected amongst professional colleagues and takes its rightful place as one of the leading health care advisory organisations in this state, if not Australia.

We aim to assist veterinarians to maintain full personal, professional and social capability. If this is possible, alternatives can be explored which enable veterinarians, with appropriate support and dignity, to function in their profession.

“Every doctor, dentist and vet should have their own GP.”

Helpline: (02) 9437 6552
- 24 hours -

Summary of Helpline usage by veterinarians over the past ten years is shown in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
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<td>2009-10</td>
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At the annual meeting of DHAS in August 2010, Dr Frank Doughty was re-elected to DHAS NSW Management Committee.

Dr Frank Doughty BVSc PhD
DHAS Management Committee
Stock Medicines News and Updates

Horses - Endotoxaemia treatment
The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) has issued a permit, PER12341, to allow the supply of purified hyper-immune caprine serum as an adjunct treatment for endotoxaemia in horses. The permit, which provides supplier details, is available on the APVMA web site at www.apvma.gov.au/permits/search.php.

Sheep - Copper poisoning treatment
The APVMA has also issued a permit, PER10752, which allows the supply and treatment of sheep with a mixture of sodium molybdate dihydrate and sodium sulfate, for copper poisoning treatment and prevention. It is supplied by Provet Wagga Wagga (see the permit).

The permit allows supply to veterinarians and requires specific labelling and a copy of an MSDS for the molybdenum. The molybdenum salt has been assessed by Health authorities and determined to be a hazardous substance. This has implications for veterinarians who want staff to decant the material, and for farmers who want staff to use it, under OHS legislation. All users should receive a copy of the permit and the MSDS.

Veterinarians may not on-supply product except to clients. A copy of the permit may be obtained as above.

Possible illegal supply of anabolic steroids
A couple of reports have been received of a Queensland business supplying mail-order steroids (and other prescription products) to NSW horse trainers. It is illegal for anyone in NSW to be in possession of such products. All supply of anabolic steroids (other than testosterone for sheep treatment under strict conditions) is banned in NSW.

Veterinarians are asked to provide me with information in relation to any cases of which they may become aware.

New Chief Veterinary Officer in NSW.
This is a short note to advise you that as of 22 October 2010, I no longer hold the office of NSW Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO) and that the new NSW CVO is Ian Roth, Director Animal Biosecurity.

On 18 September 2009, I was appointed to the position of Principal Director Biosecurity. This position leads the Biosecurity Branch within Industry and Investment NSW.

In taking on the broader roles and responsibilities of the Principal Director Biosecurity I have determined that it is in the best interests of the NSW Biosecurity system and the animal health system in particular that I relinquish the role of NSW CVO to allow me to concentrate on the strategic and policy direction of the entire NSW biosecurity system. Let me assure you that I have not taken this decision lightly.

I’d like to thank the veterinarians of NSW for your assistance and cooperation during the last eight years that I have held the CVO’s title and assure you that I will continue to emphasise the importance of having a well developed animal health system in place to protect Australia and NSWs’ biosecurity.

I’d like to congratulate Ian and ask that you give him, and his supporting Deputy CVOs, the support that you have given me. I’m sure Ian along with newly appointed Deputy’s Marilyn Evers, Therese Wright and Sally Spence will serve the State well in these roles.

I would also like to congratulate Sally Spence who has been appointed to the position of Manager Field Veterinary Services. This is the position previously occupied by Stephen Dunn.

Bruce M Christie
Principal Director Biosecurity
I&I NSW

As the incoming NSW Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO), I would like to thank Bruce Christie, outgoing NSW Chief Veterinary Officer for the outstanding leadership that he has provided in this role for the last eight years.

It is a privilege to be the new NSW CVO and I look forward to this opportunity.

Animal biosecurity in NSW is extremely important and it mainly means dealing with animal disease and residue problems that might affect market access, production, human health and native wildlife.

Items submitted by:
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e-mail: lee.cook@industry.nsw.gov.au
The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) has written to the Board to advise that it has recently published its revised Position Statement on Vaccination of Dogs and Cats on its website at http://www.apvma.gov.au/use_safely/vaccination.php.

The Position Statement, together with a number of associated links, provides useful guidance and background to veterinarians on the controversial issue of re-vaccination intervals and how they are considered by the registration authority.

For further information please contact the APVMA direct on 02 6210 4700.

Ian Roth Chief Veterinary Officer NSW
Director Animal Biosecurity, Industry & Investment NSW
ph 63913577, mob 0427013474, email ian.roth@industry.nsw.gov.au
The Current Board

Dr Merran Govendir  Dr Andrew Hansen

Dr James (Jim) Rodger  Dr Debbie Neutze

Mrs Angela Haynes  Mrs Christine White

Dr Mark Simpson  Dr Ruth Thompson

The members of the Board and the Board’s staff would like to wish all veterinarians and their families a wonderful Christmas and a Healthy and Prosperous New Year.

Veterinary Practitioners Board Staff

Mary Lydamore  Des Lyttle  Clare Nathan

Boardtalk

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Dr. Andrew Hansen
Mrs Angela Haynes
Dr Debbie Neutze
Dr Jim Rodger
Dr Mark Simpson
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.