

Boardtalk

December 2013

Issue 39



President's Report

The topic dominating the thinking of many veterinarians at the moment is the ongoing intention by Racing NSW to license veterinarians. As I write the licensing is expected to take place in mid January of 2014 but discussions continue between the Board, Racing NSW and the professional bodies of AVA / EVA.

The government has given the Board the legislation to regulate the provision of veterinary services and therefore the profession...the Veterinary Practice Act 2003 and the Veterinary Practice Regulation 2013. The Code of Conduct, which is part of the Regulation, requires veterinarians to comply with codes or rules of animal sporting organisations (sch 2, clause 14). Historically Racing NSW expressed frustration on a couple of occasions with the lack of cooperation by veterinarians. Previous Boards included clause 14 to assist the racing and other industries.

The word integrity is being used a great deal. Well, where is the evidence the veterinary profession lacks integrity or that the Board is unable to discipline those few individuals who are out of step with the high standards expected of professionals?

Like the AVA/EVA, we are seeking legal advice in areas of Board function and animal welfare to see what conflicts may arise if a licence as is being proposed were to be introduced. Racing NSW has at this minute quite considerable power over veterinarians using their own Rules of Racing. Further regulation would result in racing representatives initiating a complaint, investigating

a complaint and determining the result of such a complaint. In addition to the resulting perceived lack of due process, any decision would be devoid of veterinary input. Regulation of veterinarians by an external body without specialised knowledge in the area of veterinary medicine and surgery would set a significant precedent for all professions.

Inside This Issue

President's Report.....	1
From the Registrar's Desk.....	3
Complaints Committee Report - November 2013.....	4
From the Hospital Inspector's Car.....	6
Ticks Wanted!.....	6
Faculty of Veterinary Science - The University of Sydney ...	7
Veterinary School at Charles Sturt University.....	8
Alprazolam Fact Sheet for Veterinary Practitioners.....	9
Updates from the Department of Primary Industries NSW (DPI).....	11
Laboratory Submissions to the State Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory at EMAI.....	11
Laboratory opening days over Christmas and New Year.....	11
Fraudulent certificates.....	12
A Class Hospital is misleading.....	12
Bats and companion animals.....	12
Honorary Registration with and without Conditions.....	13
Validation of your CPD points.....	13
Specialist Veterinarians in NSW.....	13
Do you have a Mobile or House call practice?.....	14
The Veterinary Practice Regulation 2013 (NSW) - 10 September 2013.....	14
Wildlife Care.....	15
National Recognition of Veterinary Registration is getting closer to actually being National.....	15
A Little of the History of Registered Veterinary Surgeons in NSW.....	16
Code of professional conduct 2013.....	17
Veterinarians Treating Thoroughbred Horses.....	19
Board Staff.....	20

President's report continued

How does the present Board investigation system work? The Board must investigate each complaint (s 42) lodged. Each complaint is investigated in detail by the Complaints Committee comprising two veterinarians and one consumer representative. If additional veterinary, legal or other professional expertise is required it is sought (in the case of racing complaints we might seek input from a highly respected equine veterinarian). Recommendations from these investigations are then brought before the entire Board (the four remaining veterinarians and one remaining consumer representative) for a decision.

After discussion with the AVA/EVA a slightly altered process to handle complaints from Racing NSW was proposed and accepted by the Board. This was presented to Racing NSW earlier this year but was rejected.

The Board recognises the importance of any complaint from a sporting body and the Board will now have tighter response times and less flexibility around delays for racing veterinarians. The Board has the capacity and the will to ensure the integrity of veterinarians who treat racehorses and will investigate complaints in a timely manner with natural justice.

Are the penalties severe enough? If the Board is satisfied that the veterinarian is guilty of professional misconduct, the Board may apply to the Administrative Decisions Tribunal (ADT) for the veterinarian's registration to be cancelled (s 47(3)). The Board may also reprimand and fine veterinarians up to \$5,000, impose conditions on a veterinarian's registration or suspend a veterinarian's registration pending a decision by the ADT (s 47 ss 2(b) and s 47 ss 5(A)). If we find these penalties are not adequate then we will approach the government to have them increased.

While the fines are not as high as we see handed out to owners and trainers on occasions, adverse findings may have a serious effect on the professional standing of the veterinarian both in the profession and in the eyes of the public. This may be more significant as a penalty to a veterinarian than a financial one.

In summary

1. The object of the Veterinary Practice Act 2003 is to regulate the provision of veterinary services and one of the functions of the Board is to enforce the provisions of this Act.

2. The Board is of the opinion that the independence of veterinarians as professionals and regulation by peers is vital to the achievement of the purposes of the Act - to promote animal welfare, ensure consumers are well informed of the competencies of veterinarians, ensure acceptable standards of the profession and to provide public health protection

3. The Board is not aware of any significant issues regarding the veterinary profession and the integrity of racing in NSW. Only 2 complaints about veterinary practitioners involved in provision of services to race horses have been presented to the Board since 2006.

4. As of 2006, veterinary practitioners are required to obey any code or rules of an animal sporting organisation

5. The Board has concerns that investigations about veterinarians by Racing NSW may affect any subsequent investigation by the Board and limit the ability of the Board to achieve the objectives of the Act

6. The Board is happy to work with Racing NSW and the profession to address any concerns about the current system of regulation

The Board invites Racing NSW to work with us. I appreciate Racing NSW feel they have legitimate concerns and invite them to send us their investigation findings so that we can take action under the legislation created by the government of NSW. There is no need for a licence scheme for veterinarians and we will continue to work against its formation.

We have just held the AGM at Wagga Wagga and hosted a record number of veterinarians. Thank you so much for your great hospitality, and a special thanks to those CSU staff and local practitioners (some of whom drove 200 kms for the meeting) who participated. While we presented the usual formal reports (available on our website) the hot

topic was the Racing NSW proposal for licensing of veterinarians and it was great to see the Board and the profession working in the same direction.

Glenn Lynch has now completed the task of inspecting all licensed veterinary hospitals in NSW. This has taken under 2 years and the Board is very happy with the general high standards. Some hospitals haven't come up to par and have been given appropriate time intervals to fix deficiencies. Glenn has been far too valuable for the Board to let him slip away from us. While he dreams of golfing days and red wine nights without dust on surgery lights and rusty spots at the base of surgery tables, Glenn will be working for the Board on an "as needs basis" inspecting new hospitals, checking those with issues and assisting us with on going projects and complaint investigations.

The big project for the coming year is to start inspecting those businesses that don't operate from licensed premises which includes the mobile/house call vets and equine or cattle vets who work from their vehicles. Our legislation is equally applicable and we will be checking records, drug keeping facilities, S8 books etc. While Glenn's role recently has been one of education, Glenn is also a qualified investigator and his skills may be used by Complaints Committee work also in the coming year.

I hope you are getting value out of the inserts included in Boardtalk in recent editions. We have withdrawn funding of the University Practitioners in Residence programs as our budget simply didn't allow that level of spending but are keen to continue with some education assistance to the profession. Feedback is welcome.

While many industries and departments close down over Christmas, the 70% of the profession who are practitioners tend to work longer and harder. I hope you are able to catch your breath and have some quiet time doing whatever it is you love with the people you love most.

From all the Board members and staff we wish you a Merry Christmas.

Ruth Thompson
President

From the Registrar's Desk

The Board has dealt with a number of controversial issues in the last 12 months and the President has reported on the proposed scheme by Racing NSW to license veterinary practitioners in NSW. Recently I was invited to take part in an AVA NSW Division open forum on the future of the veterinary profession and in particular the 5 point advocacy plan the AVA has developed based on member feedback. I was pleased to be able to provide some data and comments from the Board around these points.

1. Planning an effective veterinary workforce

- There were just over 3300 registered vets in NSW in June 2013 (an increase from around 2800 in 2007)
- The number of new registrants each year is on average 250 (peak of 300 in 2011) and this is fairly consistent each year over the period from 2007
- The average number of vets removed from the register over this period each year is around 260
- There are constant changes to the register with new registrations (new graduates and experienced vets from Australia and overseas); removals; deaths; and restorations
- There are just over 400 vets with honorary registration and many of these would be non practising
- Specialist registrations have fluctuated but overall have increased from 113 in 2007 to 129 in 2013
- Around 8% of vets on the Register are either retired or not practising
- The number of vet hospitals (licensed premises) has increased from 616 in 2007 to 639 in 2013
- The Board has not tracked data on unlicensed premises such as consulting rooms and ambulatory only practices but will be looking to do so in the future.

2. Ensuring economic sustainability

- Whilst the issue of economic sustainability of the profession is not a function of the Board, fees derived from the provision of veterinary services do indirectly impact upon the objectives of the Act and functions of the Board
- The number of new formal complaints

received each year has steadily risen from 25 in 2007 to 50 in 2013 and many calls received by the Board relate to fees

- Some complainants call believing that vets don't care about the animal, just the money, and to ask is there, or why isn't there, a list of scheduled fees?
- Whilst complaints about money are referred to the Department of Fair Trading we may still be asked to investigate (we are required to if there is a formal complaint) and it is possible for a complainant to pursue civil action against a vet for compensation after an investigation by the Board
- An area of concern from the profession has been the movement to online supply of drugs by vets and pharmacists leading to increased competition from businesses with lower fixed costs.

3. Filling the gap in government veterinary services

- The number of vets self-reporting as working for government has remained fairly stable over 2007-2013 at around 150
- National Recognition of Veterinary Registration (NRVR) is now legislated in Victoria, NSW, Tasmania and Queensland with other States and Territories to follow and this will greatly assist the mobility of the profession and facilitate a coordinated response in the event of a disease outbreak.

4. Better regulation

- Whilst there are some significant differences among the States and Territories the basic principles and main features of the legislation are fairly similar
- There is a myriad of state based legislation that vets need to be familiar with and this may create difficulties for an increasingly mobile workforce under NRVR so an essential role for each Board is education
- The Boards working together and with the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council (AVBC) have been happy to work towards greater harmonisation; qualifications for full registration, specialist registration and NRVR are the best examples.

5. Fighting antimicrobial resistance

- The supply of restricted substances is a very important issue for the Board. Vets must only supply after examination of the animal or if the vet has that animal under his or her direct care (they can also supply on written authority of another vet who has examined the animal)
- The supply of antibiotics to animals in breach of the legislation may promote resistance, create risks for public health, is inconsistent with promoting animal welfare and does not comply with current standards. As such, it is at odds with the main objects of our legislation.

The Board has collected a great deal of information about the profession over many years and this is a good time to remind you all that data collected about the demographics of the profession are available in each of our annual reports.

Finally I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mary, Des, Clare and Glenn for their on-going hard work and support over the last year. Glenn has completed inspections of over 600 veterinary hospitals in NSW in under 2 years. He has been a great asset to the Board and the profession for more than a decade and I am delighted that he has agreed to assist the Board with inspections and investigations as needed into the future.

John Baguley
Registrar

Complaints Committee Report - November 2013

Since the last report from the Complaints Committee in Boardtalk April 2013, the Board has made decisions on 29 complaints after investigations by the Complaints Committee. This has resulted in 10 cautions being issued for unsatisfactory professional conduct, one dismissal with a recommendation and 18 complaints being dismissed. Twenty one complaints are currently being investigated by the Complaints Committee.

Ten practitioners were found guilty of unsatisfactory professional conduct and cautioned:

- For using unnecessary and excessive force when handling a dog and not performing surgery to current standards
- For failing to provide validation for 6 reported CPD points in the 2010-2011 period, and not recording clinical history in sufficient detail to enable another veterinary practitioner to continue treatment of the animal
- For using mineral turpentine to remove coloured decking oil from a cat’s fur when the use of mineral turpentine is not recommended for cats
- For not treating a dog appropriately for the clinical conditions suggested by the clinical signs
- For failing to carry out an adequate physical examination, as indicated by the owner’s presenting history, prior to administering an anaesthetic thus missing an abdominal mass
- For failing to consider other causes of wound breakdown, post-surgery, after the removal of a mammary mass
- For administering inappropriately high doses of flunixin and hyoscine/dipyrone to a 6 month old miniature horse
- For failing to ensure that an animal under the practitioner’s care was under adequate control whilst an anaesthetic was being administered resulting in the dog falling from the table, and failing to record this fall in the dog’s clinical history as soon as practicable
- For failing to perform a tooth extraction to current standards by leaving a necrotic tooth root in situ
- For failing to have records in sufficient detail to enable another practitioner to continue treatment of the animal. Drug dose rates, duration of drug treatment and body temperatures were not recorded.

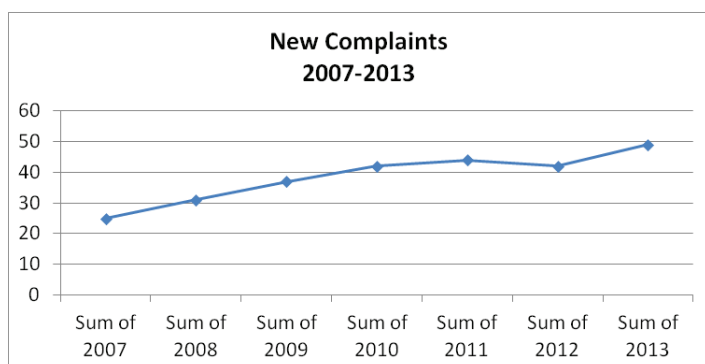
The Board does not have the legislative authority to investigate complaints regarding fees. The Board staff advises the public to contact the Department of Fair Trading in relation to these types of disputes. However, accurate estimates accepted by an informed client are essential.

Each year the Board receives about 150 complaints from the public. Our Complaints Officer, Mary Lydamore, initially tries to re-establish communication between the complainant and the veterinarian by encouraging the complainant to contact the practice and discuss their dissatisfaction with the treating practitioner or hospital superintendent. Nevertheless, the number of formal complaints investigated by the Board each year has been increasing.

If you have a disgruntled client, your reaction to their complaint can greatly influence the course of their response and, if handled correctly, can avoid the stress of a complaint coming before the Board.

- Be interested in their complaint, listen and give full attention
- Be confident, not defensive
- Be aware of your body language, make appropriate eye contact
- Be honest, no obfuscation
- Don’t use “vet speak” and avoid unthinking responses
- Focus on what the client is saying and put aside your views
- Paraphrase what the client has said and clarify
- State your point of view when the client has finished
- Show empathy, express regret and apologise for an adverse outcome – this does not imply guilt
- Ask the client what is their preferred outcome. Suggest options to manage the issues, and try to reach a suitably agreeable outcome.

Lastly, if a complaint proceeds to the Board, carefully consider your responses and language used in the knowledge that the complainant has full access to your responses. An ill-considered response can inflame, whereas a well-considered response, without criticism of the client, may result in the complaint being withdrawn. The Board’s complaint handling process is designed to assist communication and understanding of the issues presented by each party.



From the Hospital Inspector's Car

By the time you read this article, I would have inspected all the licensed veterinary hospitals in NSW – approximately 640 of them.

As most of you are aware, this project started in March 2012 and I have conveyed the major issues found during the inspections in previous Boardtalk publications.

Inside this edition, I have compiled a self-assessment checklist including comments to assist in the identification of areas that should be closely monitored. The checklist will also be available from the Board's website under the 'Board guides' tab.

I suggest that a senior staff member, self-inspect the veterinary practice that they work in on an annual basis using a very critical eye and look for areas that may be improved.

I hope that this checklist will be of benefit to veterinary hospitals.

One area that could be improved is evidence of estimates provided to clients. The majority of practices have improved this area so well done to those that document estimates on their consent form or at least give an indicative range.

The reason why I have been hammering this point is because the Board receives a constant stream of phone calls related to this subject and from my experience, complaints regarding costs for treatment arise from genuine confusion, where communication has not been entirely clear.

This communication breakdown can be overcome when the estimate or range is documented on the consent form. If a diagnosis and treatment plan has not been arrived at until the test results are in, the client should be informed about the work up costs (estimate documented). The documented history must show subsequent client communications, e.g. phone calls, treatment options and the costs of those options and the client's decision.

My future

So that completes my full time obligation to the Board and the profession, however I believe it is likely that I shall continue working for the Board on a casual basis; the function of inspecting veterinary hospitals and conducting investigations shall remain.

In my first Boardtalk article 13 years ago, I wrote that I will endeavour to make a worthwhile contribution to the profession in NSW and I hope that I've done that.

I've certainly been involved in considerable change during that time and I would sincerely like to thank veterinary practitioners, Board members past and present, the staff of the Board and the NSW AVA for your very strong support.

I have always been and will remain a very passionate advocate for the veterinary profession and that has at times meant making insightful enquiries and firm decisions in order to maintain the very strong reputation that the profession rightfully enjoys within our community.

Glenn Lynch

Ticks Wanted!

With tick season upon us in eastern Australia, and with an all-year round tick season in the north, a team of researchers at Murdoch University is investigating potentially pathogenic microorganisms in the ticks that bite companion animals. Whilst some pathogens like *Babesia* and *Anaplasma* are well documented in certain regions of Australia, our research aims to investigate the diversity and distribution of a wider range of bacterial and protozoal organisms including *Bartonella* spp., *Borrelia* spp., *Coxiella* spp., *Ehrlichia* spp., *Francisella* spp., *Rickettsia* spp. and *Theileria* spp., using the latest molecular diagnostic tools.

The researchers would welcome your assistance with this research by collecting ticks for them off your patients. If you would like to be involved, please contact Associate Professor Peter Irwin by email at P.Irwin@murdoch.edu.au or by phone on (08) 9360 2590. The researchers will send you a tick collection kit together with instructions on how to remove, preserve and transport the little critters to Murdoch!

Faculty of Veterinary Science - The University of Sydney

As a result of our wonderful staff and students the Faculty has seen many highlights and achievements in what has been another busy and sometimes challenging year.

Teaching

Student evaluations of teaching have been very positive again, with some outstanding student citations for the contributions staff (academic, clinical and general staff) and our Partner Practices make to teaching. The Faculty is enthusiastically embracing the launch of our new four year post graduate Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree and combined BVetBio/DVM (launched in 2014). This new course will immerse students in clinical learning from their first day. The focus is on developing skills in professional problem solving and evidence based medicine and staff are creating fresh and innovative ways of developing students autonomy, competence and confidence. The program builds on assumed scientific knowledge and is designed to equip students with the full range of skills to become the graduates our profession needs for a brighter future, including business readiness. As well trained veterinarians, they will start their careers in clinical practice; however their superior knowledge of animal biosciences and skills in leadership and research will open up a wide range of careers in business, government, animal industries, food safety, animal welfare, laboratory animal medicine and biomedical research. This shift in graduate capability addresses the concerns currently being voiced about the size of the Australian veterinary workforce.

A combined Clinical Masters program for clinical trainees commenced in 2013 and attracted an outstanding cohort of four residents in semester one and a further three in semester two. A further three new residents will commence in semester one 2014. One of the strengths of this program are its dedicated time, funding and support for research, which will enable residents to pursue a far greater breadth and depth of research projects, equipping them for future academic, research as well as specialist practice. The new Wildlife Health and Management postgraduate coursework masters will commence in semester two, 2014.

Graduation this year will be held on Friday 13 December. There will be two ceremonies this year; one at 2:00pm for Animal & Vet Bioscience,

Postgraduate Research and Postgraduate Coursework and another commencing at 4:00pm for BVSc and BSc(Vet) with a special reception for graduates, families and our wonderful final year mentors to follow.

Research

The Faculty recently held its Postgraduate Student Conference, showcasing some of the research achievements that earned our Faculty a 5/5 in veterinary science through the Government's Excellence in Research Assessment (ERA) in 2012- the only veterinary school to achieve this, the highest ranking for world class research. The diversity of the research currently undertaken at the faculty is vast with subjects ranging from "Challenges of reproduction on commercial dairy farms utilising robotic milking systems; Population health approach to infectious disease management in Australian shelter cats: and Low major histocompatibility complex class I diversity in the Australian invasive cane toad, *Rhinella Marina*." The quality of presentations was excellent highlighting new and intriguing innovations, compelling stories a definite highlight to our research calendar. We are looking forward to our largest intake of postgraduate research students in 2014 ever, with a number of veterinarians taking up projects, thanks to additional funds available from industry funding sources and Faculty bequests, such as the Jean Walker, Hughes, Loxton and Mitchell bequests.

A collaborative study between Dr Peter Bennett of the Veterinary Teaching Hospital and Dr Chris Weir the Bill Walsh Cancer Research Laboratory in the Kolling Institute at the University of Sydney has received funding from the Cancer Research Foundation for a cancer vaccine trial. This is a trial of a personalised cancer vaccine in dogs with haemangiosarcoma. This prospective, randomised, placebo-controlled study will be used to show the efficacy of the vaccine. In this study the researchers will compare the standard of care for this disease (surgery combined with chemotherapy) to the same care with the addition of the tumour vaccine. The vaccine has been used in a number of canine patients already without signs of toxicity. The data from the safety trials, along with preclinical work in rodent models done by Dr Chris Weir, have promising results. Further work with other tumour types is planned for the near future.

The Beveridge lecture this year was by Dr Mike Nunn, Research Program Manager for Animal Health at the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research. The topic was 'Breaking down the Barrier – 'Steep' Learnings in One Health' which focused on the links between animal health, human health and environmental health, aiming to improve all health through multidisciplinary collaborations. The Lecture was followed by a development focused dinner with industry leaders and researchers. The Faculty has a large program of international development and capacity building research underway, taking staff and students across Indonesia, Laos, Cambodia, Africa and beyond to address animal health and food security challenges.

Hospitals

Our Veterinary Teaching Hospitals had an excellent year, with investment in new equipment and a full complement of staff. They provide our students with an excellent clinical learning experience to complement their clinical extramural studies program. Through a generous donation the Sydney Teaching Hospital took possession of a portable ultrasound machine which is used in collaboration with the Taronga Zoo and the RSPCA.

Events

In September 2013 we hosted the 2013 Alumni Awards Cocktail Reception and were proud to present awards to some of our remarkable alumni who have been not only been successful in their chosen career path, but instrumental in elevating the profession to new heights. Associate Professor David Hutchins OAM (BVSc'47) was awarded

the alumni award for professional achievement, Dr Harry Cooper (BVsc'66) was awarded the alumni award for community achievement and Dr Russell Dickens OAM (MVetSc '75 BVSc '54) also awarded the alumni award for Community achievement. Our alumni have been instrumental in also mentoring our further leaders.

Animalia, the Veterinary Science Foundation's gala event was a magical evening in Doltone House in the city, celebrating and supporting the important work of the Faculty. Celebrity vets Dr Chris Brown (MC) and our own Dr Chris Tan both spoke with passion and conviction about the remarkable contributions of our Faculty and its graduates to the well-being and care of animals. Funds from this event will support a major refurbishment of the surgery in the Sydney Teaching Hospital.

In 2014 the University will launch the \$500m Charles Perkins Centre for health, food and nutrition related disease. Our staff, including Professor David Raubenheimer (Nutritional Ecology), and Associate Professor Robyn Alders (International One health) will lead major components of this program in a facility designed to foster cross disciplinary, integrative thinking, research and problem solving. This wonderful research hub is next door to the Faculty, and will welcome visitors.

Professor Rosanne Taylor
Dean
Faculty of Veterinary Science
The University of Sydney

Veterinary School at Charles Sturt University

The veterinary program at CSU commenced in 2005 with the aim of training rural veterinarians. This Aim has clearly been achieved with our graduates being in high demand in rural practice. They work in nearly every State and mainland Territory as well as in the UK and the USA. In establishing a new course we were keen to make it distinctive and offer diversity to the profession. In that way we see CSU complements the other veterinary courses in Australia. The distinctive nature can be found in our student selection process, the way we teach, including Problem Based Learning and the range of other skills we impart. Of course the campus is rural and there is excellent access to animals and clinical cases.

Over the years we have collected a great deal of information about the students and the course and have commenced publishing this material in veterinary journals. As we are currently selecting the 10th cohort of students to enter the course it is a good time to update the profession on what we do and how we measure our success. Over the next few Boardtalk issues we'll discuss the various components including student selection (this article), approaches to learning and teaching, the nature of workplace learning and our graduates.

Student selection

The approach to student selection has changed little from the first cohort that started study in 2005. It is designed to attract students with good experience with

animals and good communication skills. It is a three stage process.

- The application process requires submission of a form that can be found on the School website. It asks for academic details, documented farm and veterinary experience and a written component. All eligible applications are scored independently by 2 staff and a third is included to resolve divergent views. These are ranked and the top 150 selected for interview.
- The structured interview is held in person in Wagga in November/December (there may be a mop up in January). Each interview panel is comprised of a chair (experienced staff member), an additional staff member (who may not be a vet) and an external vet. The interviewees are rated by each panel against a set of criteria and ranked.
- Once the high school marks become available we remove applicants with an ATAR <90% (< 85% for a country high school) and below a particular grade point average for university students. We work down the ranking list as we make offers until we have 64 acceptances.

A number of features are worth emphasising. More than 100 external veterinarians have interviewed for us. They are trained before the event, give their time for free and most are repeat interviewers. The overwhelming feedback is that they enjoy the role of working with us in selecting the next generation of veterinarians. For the School this input is critical in maintaining objectivity and relevance. We also recognise the time and effort vets give to this process and sincerely thank those that have contributed. We encourage others to join us in selecting future professionals.

The format has remained consistent over the years. We now have sufficient data to measure if the process is effective. The challenge with any analysis of this sort is that we need to decide on a measurable output. For example, if we want to know how well it selects for success in practice we have to define success and be able to measure it. We receive a lot for positive feedback from practitioners about CSU students and graduates, but success is hard to quantify. Further, achieving success is significantly confounded by issues other than selection. We also train students in a wide range of skills and veterinary practice is not the only destination. Therefore we have approached the issue by correlating the interview ranking with marks in the most challenging subjects in years 1, 2 and 3 of the veterinary degree. The positive predictive value of the ranking for high school leavers on University marks on University marks is good, but not so good when we rank previous university students on their previous university marks.

We continue to examine these data. Of course we can never calculate the negative predictive value because we do not select those students and cannot track them.

For the 2014 student entry we are introducing some other aptitude tests. This initiative arises from reviews of student performance that show potential skills gaps. One example, is a test to conceptualise 3 dimensional objects. Results of these tests will be used as tie-breakers.

Typically we select a class of about 25% males, a majority of people with rural background, most are school leavers and they have a range of ATARs between 85 and 100. They come from every State and Territory and some are international. While there is an emphasis on farm animal engagement among the successful applicants we are interested in commitment in students. Several students with a sustained and abiding interest in non-farm species have been admitted.

Student selection at CSU is a costly and time consuming process. However, it works for our purposes and will select different students to those selected by processes in other veterinary programs. In that way, selection, along with our course, contributes to diversity in the profession. I think that puts the veterinary profession in a good position to face the future.

Professor Nick Sangster
Head of School
Charles Sturt University

Alprazolam Fact Sheet for Veterinary Practitioners

In response to the increasing illicit use of alprazolam and evidence of physical and psychological symptoms of alprazolam dependence, alprazolam is to be up-scheduled from Schedule 4 to Schedule 8 of the Standard for the Uniform Scheduling of Medicines and Poisons on 1 February 2014.



Consequently alprazolam will become a Schedule 8 drug (drug of addiction) in the NSW Poisons List as of 1 February 2014.

The up-scheduling of alprazolam to Schedule 8 will apply to all forms and preparations of alprazolam. Currently available alprazolam products include: Alprax, Alprazolam Sandoz, Alprazolam-GA, Chemmart Alprazolam, GenRx Alprazolam, Kalma,

Ralozam, Terry White Chemists Alprazolam, and Xanax tablets.

From 1 February 2014, as a result of this scheduling amendment, veterinary practitioners registered in NSW will need to store, handle and record all alprazolam products as a Schedule 8 preparation, noting the following:

1. Unauthorised possession of alprazolam is an offence. A veterinary practitioner must issue a signed order to their wholesaler before they can be supplied with any drug of addiction. The signed order is cancelled and retained by the supplier. If a drug of addiction is ordered by telephone the signed order must be forwarded to the supplier within 24 hours.
2. Alprazolam, as is the case with all drugs of addiction, must be stored apart from all other goods in a separate room, safe, cupboard, or drawer that is securely fixed to the premises and kept locked when not in immediate use. The intention is that this room, safe, drawer or cupboard should be accessed only to obtain drugs of addiction.
3. An entry must be made in a drug register to record the receipt, supply or use of alprazolam on the day that such a transaction takes place. The register must be kept on the premises on which the drugs of addiction are stored and must be retained for a period of two years from the date of the last entry.
4. If stock of alprazolam becomes unwanted or is out of date, it may be destroyed under the supervision of a police officer; by an authorised officer of the Ministry of Health (phone Pharmaceutical Services Unit on (02) 9391-9944); or by a retail pharmacist in the presence of the veterinary practitioner either at the latter's premises or at the pharmacy. In all cases the destruction must be recorded in the practitioner's drug register, signed and dated by the person carrying out the destruction and co-signed by the practitioner.
5. Prescriptions issued for alprazolam must be endorsed with the words: "FOR ANIMAL TREATMENT ONLY". Prescriptions for Schedule 8 drugs are valid for 6 months only and must bear the name, address and telephone number of the veterinary practitioner (this may be pre-printed), and must include in ink, in the veterinary practitioner's legible handwriting, the following particulars:

- (i) the date on which it is written;
- (ii) the name and address of the animal's owner, and the species of animal;
- (iii) the name, strength and quantity of the drug of addiction to be dispensed. The quantity must be written in both words and figures;
- (iv) adequate directions for use;
- (v) the number of repeats, if the prescription is to be dispensed more than once;
- (vi) in the case of a prescription to be dispensed more than once, the time interval between repeat dispensing; and
- (vii) the actual signature of the veterinary practitioner.

All details other than (i) and (ii) on a computer-generated prescription for a drug of addiction must also be handwritten by the veterinary practitioner.

A separate prescription form is required for each preparation containing a drug of addiction. No other item may be written on the same form (including no other preparation containing a drug of addiction).

6. If any drug of addiction is lost or stolen, the veterinary practitioner must immediately notify Pharmaceutical Services by using the online form found at:

http://www0.health.nsw.gov.au/resources/publichealth/pharmaceutical/loststolen_pdf.asp

and, in the case of robbery, a police officer and enter the relevant details in the drug register.

7. A veterinary practitioner may supply a drug of addiction for use in the course of animal treatment ONLY. A veterinary practitioner must not prescribe or supply any drug of addiction in a quantity, or for a purpose, that does not accord with the recognised therapeutic standard of what is appropriate in the circumstances.

Information about the up-scheduling of alprazolam (as well as other relevant information for veterinary practitioners) is available on the Ministry's web site:

www.health.nsw.gov.au/PublicHealth/Pharmaceutical/resources.asp

For further information, clarification or advice please do not hesitate to contact the Duty Senior Pharmaceutical Officer at the Pharmaceutical Services Unit, Ministry of Health on (02) 9391-9944.

Updates from the Department of Primary Industries NSW (DPI)

Laboratory Submissions to the State Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory at EMAI

The Veterinary Laboratory Manual (“Vet Lab Manual”) has lots of helpful information on laboratory testing. A recent addition is the “reasons for test” [check boxes] on the laboratory submission form (see <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/vetmanual/submission/specimen-submission-form>). Laboratory records are used for many purposes including passive surveillance for endemic and emerging diseases. The “reason for test” is a critical filter in this process where diagnostic submissions only are searched. For the “reason to test” to be “diagnostic”, there must be a history of disease and/or clinical signs of disease. If the owners have not reported a problem and the animals sampled appear normal, the “reason for test” will be something other than diagnostic. While the duty pathologist will attempt to select the appropriate “reason for test”, selection of the correct “reason for test” by submitting veterinarians will improve the quality of data in the laboratory’s information management system.

Veterinarians are also reminded that the Property Identification Code (PIC) is required for all submissions where the owner is required to have a PIC. Some smaller landholders with few livestock may not realise they require a PIC even if they only run one animal (sheep, pig, cow, horse etc) on their land. Your contact with these landholders is an opportunity to remind them of the requirements of this important biosecurity information under the Stock Diseases Act 1923 (see <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/livestock/nlis/pic>).

If veterinarians have an NLIS database account they can search the PIC register or the QuickPIC database to obtain a PIC for submissions when the owner has failed to supply their PIC. The NLIS database now allows a veterinarian to open their own NLIS account even when the veterinary clinic is not required to have a PIC (see www.nlis.mla.com.au. OR http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/405200/Clause-14-exemption-from-PIC.pdf)

Laboratory opening days over Christmas and New Year

Over the upcoming holiday period, the State Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory will operate on the following days

DECEMBER 2013						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
22 Closed	23 Open ⁴	24 Open	25 Closed	26 Closed	27 Open	28 Open (am only)
29 Closed	30 Open	31 Open				
JANUARY 2014						
			1 Closed	2 Open	3 Open	

Please ensure that couriers are contacted to confirm their operation during this time period, and remember that pick ups just prior to public holidays may be held over in courier holding facilities in which the storage conditions can not be accounted for. Please discuss this with couriers prior to sending.

Duty pathologist and duty virologist out of hours contact numbers will be made available to the Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline – 1800 675 888 - during this holiday period.

Contact: State Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (SVDL) at EMAI
Phone: 02 4640 6327 or 1800 675623 during office hours

Bats and companion animals

Bats can pose significant health risks to both humans and animals in Australia.

A number of bats and flying fox species in Australia can be natural reservoirs for potentially zoonotic viral diseases such as Hendra virus, Australian Bat Lyssavirus (ABLV) and Menangle virus. Veterinarians are getting an increasing number of general enquires about bats and more specific enquires about what to do when clients and their animals are exposed to bats.

Only experienced and trained bat handlers who have been vaccinated for rabies should capture, handle and care for sick or injured bats. Handling of dead bats is also a potential risk. Gloves should be used and bats submitted for sampling should be triple bagged and refrigerated. If companion animals have been potentially exposed to bats, any wounds should be rinsed thoroughly with soap and water for 5 minutes, and a virucidal antiseptic (such as iodine) applied. If possible the bat should then be tested for ABLV, and if the bat is confirmed positive for ABLV, the animal should be vaccinated with rabies vaccine. Also, if the ABLV status of the bat is unknown, the owner may elect to have their companion animal vaccinated.

The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) has the following resources available for veterinarians on its website at <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/animal/humans/bat-health-risks>:

- Post exposure vaccination for animals in contact with suspect Australian bat lyssavirus (ABLV) infected bats
- Application for authorisation to use Nobivac rabies inactivated rabies vaccine (in companion animals which may have had exposure to bats)

The following information is also available for veterinarians and the general public:

- DPI policy and procedure on Australian bat lyssavirus
- Primefacts including Bats and health risks; Hendra virus and Australian Bat Lyssavirus

Any enquires regarding human health and human exposure to bats should be directed to NSW Health on 1300 066 055. Further contact details for NSW Health are also available at: <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/Pages/phis.aspx>

Contact: Geoffrey Campbell
Veterinary Officer Animal Biosecurity
geoff.campbell@dpi.nsw.gov.au
Phone: 02 6391 3534

Fraudulent certificates

A veterinarian has contacted the Board after seeing a vaccination certificate with his signature in a situation where he had not ever examined the dog. Occasionally the Board becomes aware of possible falsified or fraudulent documents.

Often the document details are incorrect or incomplete. A closer look may show the wrong age at vaccination or the full name and address of the hospital is not provided. The document may have used a photocopy of your letterhead or may not have your letterhead at all.

These activities should be reported to the police. Whilst outside the legislative authority of the Board, the Board is interested in hearing about such matters.

A Class Hospital is misleading

If you are still advertising your practice or making reference to your practice being licensed as an A or B or C Class Hospital you must stop.

Either you haven't kept abreast of the legislative changes or you are using terminology which is false, misleading and inappropriate.

Changes to licensing of hospitals since the introduction of the Veterinary Practice Act 2006 include:

1. The defined classes of hospitals (A, B and C) in the previous legislation were removed as were the tightly controlled terms surgery, clinic and hospital. All licensed premises are referred to as hospitals under the Veterinary Practice Act 2006.
2. The Board relinquished the role of approving Distinguishing Names. Prior to 2006 the Board had strict policies concerning the approval of names prior to any registration with Fair Trading. The Board has not controlled distinguishing names for more than 6 years. When you register your business name you now contact ASIC on <http://www.asic.gov.au/business-names> or the ASIC Client Contact Centre on 1300 300 630.

Honorary Registration with and without Conditions

The Board has recently reviewed and changed its policy on Honorary Registration.

Honorary Registration without Conditions

A person who is a registered veterinary practitioner may be granted honorary registration if the Board is satisfied the person:

- a) has been registered for at least 40 years, OR
- b) has been registered for a substantial time and is 65 years or above, OR
- c) the person's standing in the profession of veterinary science is such to justify the person being granted honorary registration.

Honorary registration is the same as full registration except these veterinary practitioners are not required to pay the annual registration fee in recognition of meeting the above criteria. So vets with honorary registration can still perform acts of veterinary science on animals other than their own; own practices; work on ACEC committees as veterinarians; sign veterinary certificates; and purchase, supply or prescribe restricted medications. They must also comply with the legislation including continuing professional development requirements

Honorary Registration with Conditions

If a veterinarian qualifies for honorary registration and feels continuing education is not achievable they must not practice as a veterinarian. To maintain their registration without meeting their continuing education requirement they may be granted honorary registration with the following conditions:

- i. they must not provide veterinary services regardless of whether they are remunerated or not
- ii. they must not exercise authority requiring registration as a veterinary practitioner such as certification and committee membership as a veterinarian
- iii. they must not prescribe or supply restricted substances (Schedules Four and Eight of the Poisons List proclaimed under the Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 1966)

Honorary registration with the above conditions means that the veterinary practitioner will:

- i. no longer be required to participate in Continuing Professional Development
- ii. continue to receive communication from the Board including the publication 'Boardtalk'
- iii. be required to apply to the Board and receive written permission for the above conditions to be varied or removed

Validation of your CPD points

The Board is presently conducting an audit of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) points. The audit will be completed by contacting a random sample of members of the profession with a request to provide validation of structured CPD points reported during the most recently completed 3 year CPD cycle. The Board has selected a percentage of veterinarians of mixed ages and gender from all spheres of work: industry, universities, government departments, small animal practice, mixed practices, large animal practices and specialist practice.

The Board has resolved to focus on structured CPD points only during the audit and those selected will only be required to provide validation for the minimum 15 structured points. Methods of validation for structured points are available from our website under Annual Payments (Annual Return/CPD), CPD Points Allocation Table.

The Board has previously issued guidelines stating that a minimum of 60 CPD points must be attained during a 3 year CPD cycle including a minimum of 15 structured points. CPD points attained during the year from 1 April to 31 March must be reported in your Annual Return so the Board is able to track fulfilment of this requirement for ongoing registration. Section 35 (e1) provides that failure without reasonable excuse to comply with CPD requirements is defined as unsatisfactory professional conduct.

Specialist Veterinarians in NSW

There are 134 registered specialists covering 35 areas of veterinary practice in NSW. Vets and the public can use the search button on the Board's website to find a specialist in any one of these areas.

So, if you are not sure about the latest developments in the treatment of cancer you can find 5 specialists in veterinary oncology from our website. If you have a dog with a heart problem that is difficult to diagnose or treat there are 2 specialists in veterinary cardiology.

Vets are required to use the skills of colleagues by consultation or referral where appropriate and clients must be made aware of this option.

Do you have a Mobile or House call practice?


Over the last 2 years there has been a concentrated effort by Glenn Lynch to inspect all veterinary hospitals (licensed premises) in NSW. This mammoth job will be all wrapped up before Christmas. Whilst Glenn will be leaving the full time employment of the Board, the inspection of all licensed premises will continue at regular intervals.


Next year the Board will focus on inspecting premises performing restricted acts of veterinary science which currently do not require a licence. No major surgery (as defined in the Act), general or spinal anaesthesia can be administered at these premises. These premises include *consulting rooms* and *house call practices*.

While the inspection of these unlicensed premises will take place, there will also be checks made on any other businesses which are generally conducted from vehicles. These include house call practices for large and small animals and may be advertised as mobile vet practices or services.

Veterinary practitioners working in all these areas must ensure their medical records, supply of medication, storage of medication, labelling of medication, records for any use of S8 drugs and other requirements common to veterinary practitioners working within licensed premises are fulfilled. The Board will be checking veterinary practitioners who are operating these businesses comply with veterinary practice legislation. As with Glenn's visits to hospitals, the objectives of this task will be to educate and ensure compliance.

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Veterinary Practitioners Board

 Phone : +61 2 8338 1177

 Fax : +61 2 8338 1077

Free Call: 1300 366 653

PO Box 6391, Alexandria NSW 2015

Suite 7.09
247 Coward Street
Mascot, 2020

The Veterinary Practice Regulation 2013 (NSW) - 10 September 2013

The Veterinary Practice Regulation 2006 (NSW) has been repealed and replaced with the Veterinary Practice Regulation 2013 (NSW) The full regulation can be viewed at the NSW Legislation website. [<http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/maintop/scanact/inforce/NONE/0>]

Here is a brief outline of the major changes:

1. Restricted Acts of Veterinary Science

- i. The castrating of camels, deer, American bison, water buffalo and blackbuck that are 6 months of age or older is now a restricted act of veterinary science
- ii. The insertion of a microchip into a horse is now a restricted act of veterinary science
- iii. Any treatment, procedure or test that involves the insertion of anything into the urethra of any animal is now a restricted act of veterinary science
- iv. An insertion in to the left flank of cattle or sheep to puncture the rumen for the purpose of relieving acute bloat is NOT a restricted act of veterinary science

2. Veterinary Practitioners Code of Professional Conduct

- i. If a record of a consultation, procedure or treatment is altered, the alteration must be clearly identified in the record
- ii. Authority for another veterinary practitioner to supply a restricted substance to a client must be provided in writing by a veterinary practitioner who has physically examined the animal concerned or has the animal under his or her direct care, and only in respect of that animal

If you have any questions in relation to these or other changes please contact the staff at the Board.

Wildlife Care

Veterinarians are often called upon to examine sick, injured or orphaned native animals. A veterinarian must not refuse to provide relief of pain or suffering to an animal in his or her presence. As outlined in clause 3 of the Veterinary practitioner's code of professional conduct (Code), relief of pain includes:

- a) First aid treatment
- b) Timely referral to another veterinarian
- c) Euthanasia

Veterinarians can provide further treatment but, where appropriate, they must also utilise the skills of colleagues by consultation or referral (clause 5 of the Code).

Veterinarians should not try to rehabilitate native animals unless they have a licence issued by the Office of Environment and Heritage NSW (OEH) for this purpose. Under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974, OEH grants licences to groups and some individuals to rehabilitate native animals.

So, if a member of the public finds sick, injured or orphaned wildlife they should be advised to not try to catch or rescue the animal but to contact a licensed rehabilitation group or individual. The OEH has contact details for all licensed groups on its website (see below).

A Code of practice for injured, sick and orphaned protected fauna has been developed by OEH in consultation with the NSW Wildlife Council (the peak body for wildlife rescue and rehabilitation in NSW), Taronga Conservation Society and the RSPCA NSW and is supported by the NSW Animal Welfare Advisory Council. The Code of practice requires that if the animal is sick, injured, likely to have been injured or an orphan arrangements must be made for an assessment by a veterinarian or experienced rehabilitator; if death is considered to be imminent or highly likely arrangements must be made for humane euthanasia.

This Code of practice and other guidelines can also be downloaded from the OEH website <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/wildlifelicences/RehabFauna.htm>

National Recognition of Veterinary Registration is getting closer to actually being National

National Recognition of Veterinary Registration (NRVR) is now in place in NSW, Victoria, Tasmania and Queensland. Each of these States now recognises the registration of a veterinarian in any other State or Territory of Australia with 'deemed registration'.

Under NRVR veterinarians should register in the State or Territory in which they reside. For those States and Territories yet to implement NRVR veterinarians should register in the State or Territory in which they practise.

So in practical terms a practitioner with **full registration who resides in NSW** will be deemed as registered should they wish to visit Victoria, Tasmania and Queensland. As State laws do vary, the obligation is on the veterinarian to know the Acts and Regulations of the State they are visiting and, if in any doubt, they should contact the Veterinary Board of that State. Registration fees will be payable only in one State for States participating in NRVR.

A Little of the History of Registered Veterinary Surgeons in NSW

When the *Veterinary Surgeons Act 1923* was proclaimed there were two ways you could become a veterinary surgeon in NSW:

1. Graduate with a diploma, degree or licence from a recognised Australian veterinary school or the Royal College London
2. Satisfy the first NSW Veterinary Surgeons Board that you were a fit and proper person, suitably qualified (for example passed the certificate of the Stock Board of Examiners) and could demonstrate the majority of your income came from veterinary practice work.

The History of the Veterinary Surgeons Board NSW 1924-1975 compiled by veterinarian John Beardwood and the minutes of Board meetings give us an insight into the early days of the profession in NSW.

The first Board was chaired by the Chief Veterinary Surgeon Mr Max Henry. Other Board members included veterinary surgeons Professor J.D Stewart and Colonel A.P Gribben, two non-graduates who were eligible to be registered Messers Edgar Hamilton and M.P Dunlop and two members of the stockowners' organisations. The first year saw 37 meetings of the whole Board and many visits to country towns. In all 130 applicants were interviewed, some more than once, and at the end of the first year there were 279 approvals for registration and 86 refusals.

Some things don't change. Back in 1924 the Board was confronted with unlawful use of the word veterinary by non-veterinarians including grooms and farriers. At the same time the Solicitor General allowed unregistered persons to use the term Canine Specialist and Equine Dentist.

Mr Edgar Alexander Hamilton, a member of the first Board, was given Registration Number 2 and this file is luckily still in the hands of the Veterinary Practitioners Board.

Edgar was born at Guntawang (near Mudgee) NSW on 31 October 1877. Guntawang has its own place in NSW colonial history as the home

of the Rouse family from 1825. The lush and fertile 10,000 acres was grazed by 60 head of cattle, 8,000 head of sheep (Broombies) and 120 mainly draught and hackney horses. Perhaps it's not surprising that Edgar Hamilton went on work to with animals and became a stock inspector based at Moss Vale. He was in this position for 10 years. He became a registered veterinary surgeon, satisfying the 1923 Act (section 13 2(f)), by holding the Certificate of the Stock Board of Examiners issued under the Pastures Protection Act 1912. The Board records show in later life Edgar lived in the Chatswood area of Sydney and died on 25 February 1955.

From registration number 2, this year the Register reached over 10,000. In September 2013, Trent Stephen McCarthy was registered as a veterinary practitioner with the number N10000. Trent was raised on the northern beaches of Sydney although spent many teenage years living in Fiji where he was involved with the SPCA. Before entering Charles Sturt University (CSU) Trent also worked as a volunteer with Assistance Dogs and Riding for the Disabled. Following graduation from CSU in August this year, Trent has moved to Dungog where he is working as a mixed animal practitioner at the Dungog Veterinary Hospital.

1300 366 653

Telephone number for
Veterinary Practitioners Board

*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.*

Code of professional conduct 2013

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.

4 Knowledge of current standards of practice

- (1) A veterinary practitioner:
 - (a) must maintain knowledge to the current standards of the practice of veterinary science in the areas of veterinary science relevant to his or her practice, and
 - (b) must always carry out professional procedures in accordance with those current standards.
- (2) A veterinary practitioner must base professional decisions on evidence-based science or well-recognised current knowledge and practice, or both.

5 Utilisation of skills of colleagues

A veterinary practitioner must utilise the skills of colleagues, by consultation or referral, where appropriate.

6 Professional conduct

A veterinary practitioner must not mislead, deceive or behave in such a way as to have an adverse effect on the standing of any veterinary practitioner or the veterinary profession.

7 Informed consent

A veterinary practitioner must, where it is practicable to do so, obtain the informed consent of the person responsible for the care of an animal before providing veterinary services to the animal.

8 Availability to care for animal

A veterinary practitioner must, when accepting an animal for diagnosis or treatment:

- (a) ensure that he or she is available for the ongoing care of the animal, or
- (b) if he or she will not be so available, make arrangements for another veterinary practitioner to take over the care of the animal.

9 Referrals and second opinions

A veterinary practitioner must not refuse a request by a person responsible for the care of an animal for a referral or second opinion.

10 Provision of records

A veterinary practitioner who has previously treated an animal must, when requested to do so, and with the consent of the person responsible for the care of the animal, provide copies or originals of all relevant case history records directly to another veterinary practitioner who has taken over the treatment of the animal.

11 Return of records

A veterinary practitioner to whom another veterinary practitioner has referred an animal for treatment or a second opinion must return records provided by the referring veterinary practitioner as soon as practicable.

12 Confidentiality

Except as otherwise required by this code of conduct, a veterinary practitioner must maintain the confidentiality of information obtained in the course of professional practice.

13 Skills, knowledge and equipment of assistants

A veterinary practitioner must ensure that all persons assisting in the provision of veterinary services to animals in his or her care have the skills, knowledge and available equipment to enable them to perform their duties according to current standards of the practice of veterinary science, except in the case of an emergency.

14 Compliance with codes or rules of animal sporting organisations

A veterinary practitioner 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 (unless the code or rules are contrary to the Act, this Regulation or any other legislation).

15 Records

- (1) A veterinary practitioner must ensure that a detailed record of any consultation, procedure or treatment is made as soon as is practicable.
- (2) The record:
 - (a) must be legible and in sufficient detail to enable another veterinary practitioner to continue the treatment of the animal, and
 - (b) must include the results of any diagnostic tests, analysis and treatments.
- (3) If a record is altered, the alteration must be clearly identified in the record as such.
- (4) A veterinary practitioner must ensure that all records of any consultation, procedure or treatment are retained for at least 3 years after they are made.

16 Fees for veterinary services

A veterinary practitioner must, where it is practicable to do so and before providing veterinary services in relation to an animal, inform the person responsible for the care of the animal of:

- (a) the likely extent and outcome of the veterinary services, and
- (b) the estimated cost of those services.

17 Certification by veterinary practitioners

- (1) A veterinary practitioner must not certify to any fact within his or her professional expertise or knowledge, or that a veterinary service has been provided, unless the veterinary practitioner has personal knowledge of the fact or has personally provided, or supervised the provision of, the veterinary service concerned.
- (2) Any certification by a veterinary practitioner must contain such detail as is necessary to ensure that it is complete and accurate and that the meaning is clear.

18 Correction of genetic defects

A veterinary practitioner must not perform a surgical operation for the correction of an inheritable defect, or provide medical treatment for an inheritable disease, unless the primary purpose of the operation or treatment is to relieve or prevent pain or discomfort to the animal concerned.

19 Special interest areas

Before undertaking practice in a particular area of veterinary science, a veterinary practitioner must ensure that he or she has the knowledge and competence necessary to practise in that area.

20 Supply of restricted substances

- (1) A veterinary practitioner may supply restricted substances only:
 - (a) to a person responsible for the care of an animal that the veterinary practitioner has physically examined or has under his or her direct care, and only in respect of that animal, or
 - (b) to a person responsible for the care of

the animal, with the written authority of another veterinary practitioner who has physically examined the animal concerned or has it under his or her direct care, and only in respect of that animal.

- (2) A veterinary practitioner must not obtain any restricted substance medications in order to take that substance himself or herself.
- (3) In this clause:
restricted substance means a substance that is specified in Schedule Four or Schedule Eight to the Poisons List proclaimed under the Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 1966.

21 Inducements

A veterinary practitioner must not provide a referral or recommendation the request for which is accompanied by an inducement to the veterinary practitioner.

Veterinarians Treating Thoroughbred Horses

As noted on several occasions in Boardtalk in past years, veterinarians have a particularly important role when dispensing medications for racing animals.

Veterinarians in this field have an obligation to know the Rules of Racing. An important example is Australian Rule of Racing 80E which became effective from 1 December 2005 and was in Boardtalk in 2006 in an article written by Dr Craig Suann.....

AR.80E.

- (1) *Any person commits an offence if he has in his possession or on his premises any substance or preparation that has not been registered or labelled, or prescribed, dispensed or obtained, in compliance with the relevant State and Commonwealth legislation.*
- (2) *The Stewards may take possession of any substance or preparation mentioned in sub rule (1), and may use it as evidence in any relevant proceedings."*

In essence, this Rule makes it an offence for a trainer (or anyone else in charge of racehorses in training) to have in their possession veterinary chemical products or restricted prescription medicines (whether

veterinary or human medicines) that have not been legally supplied and labelled.

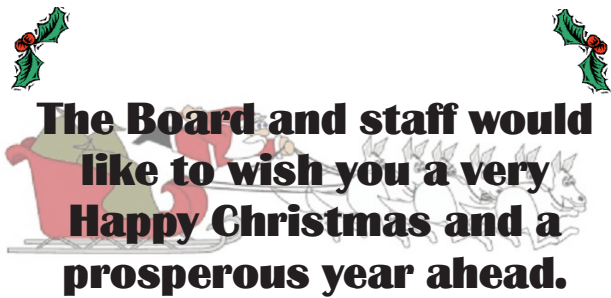
Veterinarians therefore have an obligation to their trainer clients to ensure that any drugs dispensed for racing animals are clearly and properly labelled, and quantities supplied should be limited to that required to meet the treatment requirements.

The label supplied with S4 prescription animal remedies dispensed by a veterinarian for the treatment of racehorses should contain as a minimum the following information:

- the name of the owner or person having custody of the animal,
- the horse's name or an accurate description of the animal to be treated,
- the date of supply,
- the name, address and telephone number of the dispensing/ prescribing veterinarian,
- the approved and proprietary names of the drug dispensed,
- clear directions for use,
- the words 'KEEP OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN' in capital RED letters,
- the words 'For animal treatment only' if the product is a human "Prescription Only Medicine".
- if the substance is intended for external use only the word "POISON" or the words "FOR EXTERNAL USE ONLY" in red on a white background

According to the requirements of the relevant legislation, the veterinarian's label must be attached to the actual immediate container in which the preparation is supplied. For example, the vials of some brands of injectable prescription animal remedies, or oral dosing syringes of Schedule 4 ulcer medications are packaged in cardboard boxes. For these products, the label must be attached to the bottle/syringe rather than the cardboard package. In situations where multiple bottles or containers of the same product are dispensed to the trainer, each bottle or container must have a label affixed to it. Since the introduction of AR.80E, checks of medications held at racing stables are routinely undertaken by racing Stewards and regulatory veterinarians to ensure compliance not only by horse trainers but also by the dispensing veterinarians.

The supply and labelling requirements above are consistent with Poisons and Therapeutic Goods legislation and Veterinary Practice legislation.



The Board office will close at midday on 24th December and will reopen on 2nd January



And the Grinch, with his Grinch-feet ice cold in the snow, stood puzzling and puzzling, how could it be so? It came without ribbons. It came without tags. It came without packages, boxes or bags. And he puzzled and puzzled 'till his puzzler was sore. Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before. What if Christmas, he thought, doesn't come from a store. What if Christmas, perhaps, means a little bit more.

- Dr. Seuss

Board Staff



John Baguley is Registrar

Mary Lydamore is Deputy Registrar and Complaints Officer



Glenn Lynch is Hospital Inspector and Investigator



Clare Nathan is Administrative Support and IT Officer



Des Lyttle is Registrations and Financial Officer

Boardtalk

A publication of the Veterinary Practitioners Board of NSW

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Dr John Alexander
Dr Georgina Child
Dr Andrew Hansen
Dr Jacob Michelsen
Mrs Lisa Minogue
Dr Mark Simpson
Mrs Bronnie Taylor

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.