



Report of the President of the Board Activities of the Board 2015

The term of the Board ended on 30 June 2015 and the new Board was appointed by the Governor of NSW on 5 August 2015. The first meeting of the new Board was held on 18 August 2015 and I was honoured to accept the role of President.

Four members of the Board either did not seek or were not eligible for appointment to the Board: Mrs Bronnie Taylor consumer representative (s 77(2)(c)); Dr Jacob Michelsen Ministerial selection (s 77(2)(b)); Dr Geoffrey Gibbons representing Charles Sturt University (s 77(a)(iv)); and Dr Ruth Thompson representing rural veterinarians (s 77(a)(iii)).

It was a privilege to serve on the Board with Bronnie, Jacob, Geoff and Ruth. All made significant and valuable contributions to the Board over the previous term. The retirement from the Board of Dr Ruth Thompson however represents a particularly significant event in the history of the Board.

Ruth was a member of the Board (both the Veterinary Surgeons Board and the Veterinary Practitioners Board) for 19 years including her service as President from 2006 to 2015. Her knowledge of Board functions and processes and her dedicated service to the Board and our profession provide an outstanding example of public service. The Board will miss her leadership, wisdom and attention to detail and we wish her well for the future.

It was with profound sadness that the Board noted the passing of Dr Andrew Hansen in June. Andrew was first registered as a veterinary surgeon in NSW on 1 January 1968 and over a long and distinguished career made significant contributions to the profession and the local community of Orange. Andrew was appointed to the first Veterinary Practitioners Board in 2006 and resigned due to ill health during his third term in June 2014. On a personal level, Andrew became a friend and mentor during my time on the Board, and I continue to miss his insight and wisdom.

During the year the Board focused on implementing its program of inspections of unlicensed veterinary premises, improvements to its website and refinement of its health program for veterinarians.

The cycle of inspection of licensed premises (hospitals) will begin again in the 2016 financial year and will now integrate with inspections of unlicensed premises (on-site and house call veterinary services and consulting rooms). Most unlicensed premises in NSW have now been inspected thanks to the efforts of our Hospital Inspector Glenn Lynch.

The Board's website remains an important method for communication with the profession and the public and underwent a significant re-development in 2015. In addition to improved functionality, including becoming mobile friendly, the website now allows veterinarians to login and change their details, pay their renewal fees and submit their annual returns. Forms have been re-designed to be more user-friendly and there is more detailed information available to the profession and the public including guidelines, policies and statistics.



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Research continues to highlight a higher rate of suicide in the veterinary profession than in the general population and other professions. The Board adopted the framework of the Doctors' Health Program developed by the Medical Council of NSW in 2010 and has been refining the implementation of a Health Program for Veterinarians.

The Health Program is designed to assist veterinarians with physical and mental conditions which may detrimentally affect their ability to practice. The goal of this program is to support veterinarians to safely continue to contribute to the profession where possible. The Board continues to provide support to veterinarians through its contribution to the Doctors' Health Advisory Service.

The Board remains in a strong financial position and believes it has adequate financial reserves. Whilst expenses may vary significantly, mostly due to legal fees, the Board's aim is to achieve a small positive outcome on the books each year.

Finally, I would like to thank all the Board members and staff for their valued contributions which continue to ensure the effective and efficient performance of Board functions.

Dr John Mark Simpson
President