



## Report of the President of the Board Activities of the Board

This has been a year of stability for the Board with no changes in personnel. As the new Board was only installed in August 2015, and introduced four new members, it has been a good opportunity to provide the new members with experience of the processes and procedures that allow the Board to carry out its work. The period of relative stability has also allowed the administrative office to work to streamline, formalise, and document many of the Board's protocols, as well as refine the Board's website.

The Board maintains and continues to develop a number of programs to improve regulation of the veterinary profession in NSW:

1. The hospital inspection program continues to provide the best mechanism for maintaining appropriate standards in the state's licensed veterinary hospitals and the Hospital Inspector Glenn Lynch also inspects veterinarians working from unlicensed premises to ensure their compliance with the legislation
2. This year marked the completion of the fourth CPD audit and the Board has now completed audits of 20% of the veterinary profession in NSW
3. Boardtalk and the improved News section on the Board's website remain valuable resources for enabling veterinarians working in NSW to maintain knowledge of current practice and legislation
4. The complaint investigation process and complaint investigation reports are continuously being revised, within the limits of the legislation, to ensure fulfilment of the Board's role in regulating the profession and protecting the public

Mental health continues to be an area of focus for both the profession and the Board. 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 with health concerns through this program and its contribution to the Doctors' Health Advisory Service (DHAS). Veterinarians are able to call the DHAS service helpline (02) 9437 6552 anytime.

The Board's financial position continues to be sound and the Board is gradually re-building its financial reserves to the real value of levels held prior to some significant cases prosecuted in 2010. While the work of the Board involves regulation and legislation, and therefore by definition the cost of lawyers, these have not been an overwhelming impost on the budget of the Board in recent years.

There are, however, currently some cases in the sunrise phase which may involve an increased spend on legal fees for the Board over the next few years. The Board operates its budget on the principle of achieving a small profit each year to allow continued investment in Board activities and maintenance of the real value of its financial reserves for such cases.



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The Board continues to make a leading contribution to the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council (AVBC). The AVBC accredits Australian veterinary schools, and thereby plays a fundamental role in maintaining standards of veterinary science across Australia. The AVBC also provides a forum in which movement toward smoother and more consistent administration of veterinary regulation between different jurisdictions across Australia and New Zealand can develop.

Finally, I would like to sincerely thank all the Board members and Board staff for their considerable contributions and good judgement, which are really the driving forces that ensure the effective delivery of the Board's regulatory functions.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Mark Simpson".

Dr John Mark Simpson  
**President**