Introduction

A veterinary practitioner must only perform major surgery (a procedure which according to current standards requires either a general or spinal anaesthetic), in premises that are licensed as a veterinary hospital for the type of major surgery being performed.

Exceptions to this requirement exist if the procedure performed was an emergency, if it was impractical due to the size or type of the animal, or if it was dangerous to the health of the animal to move it to a veterinary hospital. The Board must refuse to grant a licence unless the applicant is a veterinary practitioner or is a corporation or firm in which one or more veterinary practitioners has or have a controlling interest, or is a corporation or firm exempted from this requirement in the Veterinary Practice Act 2003.

All premises that are licensed by the Board are referred to as veterinary hospitals.

Types of Licences

The Board issues three main types of licences:

1. Small animal hospital licence
2. Large animal hospital licence
3. Small and large (mixed) animal hospital licence

The Board considers small animals to include dogs, cats, avairy birds, aquarium fish, ferrets, rabbits, mice, rats, snakes, lizards and most Australian wildlife.

The Board considers large animals to include equidae, pigs, ruminants, deer, camelids and their young.

General Requirements

1. Licensed premises must be fit for purpose and specifically for the type of major surgery to be performed. The Board may impose conditions on a licence limiting the types of major surgery that can be performed to ensure fitness for purpose.

2. All hospitals must be managed by a superintendent who is a veterinary practitioner.

3. All hospital equipment must be suitable for purpose, adequate for the needs of the hospital and anyone using this equipment must be adequately trained. All equipment must be appropriately maintained and in accordance with the advice of the manufacturer.

4. A sign specifying the type of licence is issued by the Board and this must be displayed in a location that would reasonably be expected to be seen by customers entering the premises.
Specific Requirements

1. General physical facilities
   i. The premises must be in good condition with the immediate surrounding areas and the interior of the premises maintained in a clean, orderly and sanitary condition
   ii. The premises must be designed and constructed so as to prevent the escape of an animal brought into the premises and to ensure the effective confinement of that animal at all times
   iii. The premises must have internal walls and floors that can be easily cleaned and disinfected, adequate ventilation and must be free from offensive odours
   iv. The premises must have a supply of potable water available at a pressure and in a quantity sufficient for the needs of the hospital
   v. The premises must be supplied with electricity sufficient for the needs of the hospital
   vi. The premises must have lighting in all rooms that is adequate for the purposes for which the room is to be used
   vii. The premises must have facilities and equipment for adequately heating and cooling the interior of the hospital if required
   viii. The premises must have facilities and equipment for the hygienic disposal of soiled dressings, animal tissue, animal bedding, animal excreta, dead animals and any other contaminated or unwholesome matter arising from the operation of the hospital, except in so far as other arrangements have been made for the matter to be removed from the hospital in a hygienic manner.

2. Reception area
   i. The premises must include a reception area of a size and design, and with a seating capacity appropriate for the size and type of hospital.

3. Examination room
   i. The premises for a small animal licence must include a separate room for carrying out examinations of animals which must be equipped with:
      a. an examination table that is capable of being easily cleaned and disinfected
      b. a suitable hand wash basin supplied with hot and cold water
      c. instruments and equipment necessary to conduct thorough clinical examinations of animals.

4. Operating room
   i. The premises must have a separate surgical room, or enclosed area for large animals, that is not a general thoroughfare equipped with items necessary for carrying out surgical procedures to an acceptable outcome with regard to current standards
   ii. All surgical instruments used at the hospital must be properly sterilised
   iii. Veterinarians must be provided with an area for personal pre-surgical preparation
   iv. Where required, there must be equipment available for performing intubation, providing oxygen, provision and monitoring of gaseous anaesthesia, including a pulse oximeter, and administering fluid therapy.
5. Pharmacy
   i. The premises must have a pharmacy for storage of restricted substances (S4 and S8 medications) which is in an area of the hospital that is not accessible to the public
   ii. The premises must be capable of providing a standard of security for restricted substances as required by the relevant legislation
   iii. There must be a supply of drugs adequate for appropriate veterinary treatment of animals, including pain relief.

6. Laboratory
   i. The premises must have adequate laboratory facilities and equipment to enable routine diagnostic testing to be carried out.

7. Imaging
   i. The premises must have radiographic facilities for the taking, processing and viewing of radiographs
   ii. Radiographic equipment must be suitable for the needs of the hospital as specified in the type of licence.

8. Animal accommodation
   i. The premises must have animal accommodation facilities adequate for the number and species of animals to be accommodated at the hospital
   ii. Small animal accommodation areas must be constructed with walls and floors of non-permeable materials and have cages which can be easily cleaned and disinfected
   iii. The premises must have accommodation for isolating animals that are suffering from suspected infectious diseases separate to all other areas of the hospital so as to prevent the spread of disease to those other areas
   iv. The premises must have equipment for adequately heating and cooling the interior of all animal accommodation areas
   v. The premises must have facilities for the storage and preparation of food for consumption by animals and this area must be separated from other areas of the hospital, be free of vermin, and be capable of being easily cleaned and disinfected.