

Veterinary Board of Tasmania

Annual Report
2009 - 2010



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Preamble

The *Veterinary Surgeons Act 1987*, provides for the registration of veterinary surgeons, the regulation of the practice of veterinary surgery and incidental matters.

The Veterinary Board of Tasmania constituted under the Act consists of five members appointed by the Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries. One member is nominated by the Minister, another is a registered veterinary surgeon employed in the Department of Primary Industry, Water and Environment and nominated by the Secretary. The remaining three members are appointed from a panel of five registered veterinary surgeons nominated by the Australian Veterinary Association (Tasmanian Division).

Primary functions of the Board are: -

- to maintain and review standards for registration of veterinary surgeons, veterinary specialists, and veterinary service companies;
- to approve degrees, diplomas, qualifications, and training as qualifications for persons seeking to become registered;
- to approve courses for the training of persons seeking to become registered;
- to arrange, where it thinks necessary and in such manner as it thinks appropriate, for the examination of persons seeking to become registered;
- to ensure that registered veterinary surgeons, registered veterinary specialists and veterinary service companies provide veterinary services in a competent manner;
- to arrange, where it thinks necessary, for the inspection of veterinary establishments; and
- to hear and determine any inquiry under Part VI (Disciplinary Proceedings) of the *Veterinary Surgeons Act 1987*.

The Board is provided with a contracted secretariat service which includes the services of the Registrar appointed by the Board.

The Board

At the commencement of the year the Board consisted of the following members -

Members	
Dr N J Ward (Chairman)	Nominees of the Australian Veterinary Association [Tasmanian Division]
Dr N L Leighton	
Dr S Zichy-Woinarski	
Ms R L Collins	Nominee of the Minister DPIWE
Dr P H Campbell (Deputy Chairman)	Nominee of the Secretary DPIWE
Registrar : Dr R J Gillham	

Following the completion of the Board's term of office a new Board, the 8th under the *Veterinary Surgeons Act 1987*, was appointed with its three year term of office commencing on 2 November 2009 -

Members	
Dr N L Leighton (Chairman)	Nominees of the Australian Veterinary Association [Tasmanian Division]
Dr N J Ward (Deputy Chairman)	
Dr M Waterston	
Ms R L Collins	Nominee of the Minister DPIWE
Dr P H Campbell	Nominee of the Secretary DPIWE
Registrar : Dr R J Gillham	

Meetings

During the year the Board met on the following occasions –

Meeting Number	Date	Meeting Type	Location
82	29 September 2009	General	Campbell Town
83	24 November 2009	General	Launceston
84	12 February 2010	General	Launceston
85	13 May 2010	General	Launceston

Registrations

To practice veterinary surgery in Tasmania duly qualified veterinarians must be registered with the Veterinary Board of Tasmania.

	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Registered at 1 July	199	200	213	205	226 *	237 *	252*	259*	267*	272*
New Registrations	26	22	17	30	31	34	30	25	37	45
De-registrations and deaths	25	9	25	9	20	19	7	17	32	38
Registrations at 30 June	200	213	205	226	237 *	252 *	259*	267*	272*	279*

* Total registrations [Primary + secondary]

De-registrations are made under the following circumstances -

- at the request of the registrant due to retirement from practice, departure from the State, or other reason for non-practice in this state, and
- by the Board due to non-receipt of renewal applications following service of renewal advice notices, or death of the registrant.

Recognised qualifications –

Qualifications recognized by the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council Inc and endorsed after consideration by the Veterinary Board of Tasmania as providing a holder with eligibility to apply for registration as a veterinary surgeon in Australia and New Zealand without further examination,

- **Accreditation Body – Veterinary Schools Accreditation Advisory Committee (VSAAC)**

Degree from University of Sydney; University of Melbourne; Murdoch University; University of Queensland
Degree from Massey University, New Zealand

- **Accreditation Body – Australasian Veterinary Boards Council Inc (AVBC)**

Australian National Veterinary Examination Certificate (ANVE)
New Zealand National Veterinary Examination Certificate (NZNVE)

- **Accreditation Body – Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS)**

Degree from UK – London (RCVS), Bristol, Liverpool, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Cambridge
Degree (BVSc) from University of Pretoria (Onderstepoort)
Membership of RCVS attained by statutory examination

- **Accreditation Body– Educational Commission for Foreign Veterinary Graduates (ECFVG)**

The examination process of the Educational Commission for Foreign Veterinary Graduates Examination conducted in Canada or USA. (Veterinarians who have passed that assessment and who are able to demonstrate satisfactory competency in the English language, and who otherwise would be eligible to sit the ANVE or NZNVE).

- **Accreditation Body – European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) with AVBC**

Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine University College Dublin, graduating class of 2004 onwards.

- **Accreditation Body – American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA)**

Degrees listed below (from date of accreditation) with further requirement of a pass in the North American Veterinary Licensing Examination or its antecedent, the National Board and Clinical Competency Test Examination.

Oregon State University
University of Pennsylvania
Texas A&M University
Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University / University of Maryland
College Park (Virginia Tech, Virginia – Maryland Regional)
University of Prince Edward Island
Washington State University
Universite de Montreal
University of Saskatchewan
University of Tennessee Limited
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Louisiana State University Limited
Tufts University
University of Missouri-Columbia
Cornell University

North Carolina State University	
Michigan State University	
University of Minnesota	
Mississippi State University	
Oklahoma State University	
University of Guelph	
Auburn University	
Tuskegee University	
University of California	
University of Georgia	
University of Illinois	
Colorado State University	
Purdue University	
Iowa State University	
University of Florida	
Kansas State University	
The Ohio State University	
State University of Utrecht	
University of Calgary – Canada	Provisional
University of London – Royal Veterinary College	
University of Glasgow	Approved
University of Edinburgh	Approved
Massey University	Approved
Murdoch University	Approved
University of Sydney	Approved
University of Melbourne	Approved
Western University of Health Sciences	Limited

There is mutual recognition of standards between Australia and the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS), London, as membership of the RCVS by examination is accepted as equivalent to the Australasian National Veterinary Examination (ANVE). Previously, the RCVS did not accept the ANVE for registration in the UK. After negotiations by the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council (AVBC) agreement was reached with the RCVS for their acceptance of veterinarians whose primary veterinary qualification for registration in Australia is the ANVE.

The ANVE is administered by the AVBC. The purpose of the ANVE being an assessment that the Board will accept for those holders of degrees from other schools which offer at least four year courses not otherwise accepted by the AVBC. The ANVE is prepared with the assistance of academics and veterinarians in both private and public sectors and as far as possible is moving towards a cost neutral status in the budget of AVBC. A comparable examination process is also in place in New Zealand for those wishing to register to practice in New Zealand, and not holding registrable qualifications.

Upon successful completion of the ANVE a candidate is issued with a certificate as proof that they have satisfied the examination requirements. All Australian Boards have agreed to accept the certificate as proof of professional competence.

Specialist Registration

The provisions of the *Veterinary Surgeons Act 1987* enable the Board to provide for the registration of veterinary specialists. The branches of veterinary surgery in relation to which a person may be registered on the register of specialists are as follows -

- anaesthesiology and intensive care
- avian medicine
- bovine medicine
- equine medicine
- ophthalmology
- pathobiology
- radiology
- reproduction
- small animal medicine
- animal behaviour
- surgery
- parasitology

All applications for specialist registration are forwarded to the Advisory Committee on Registration of Veterinary Specialists, a standing committee of the AVBC. This committee was established by the Australian Veterinary Boards Conference in 1985 to offer guidance as to which applicants are qualified to be registered as specialists in order to obtain National uniformity. However it is the responsibility of the Board to make the final decision in relation to each applicant.

The Board at 30 June 2010 has registered **8** veterinary specialists, the same as at 30 June 2009. There are no resident specialists in Tasmania, all are visiting specialists. The following are the specialisations held by registered veterinary specialists –

Equine Surgery	2	Veterinary Ophthalmology	1
Surgery Small Animal	1	Veterinary Radiology	2
Pathobiology (Pathology)	1	Dermatology	1

Fees

Since 2003 the only change has been the annual CPI increase made in accordance with the Government's Statutory Fees Policy.

The 2002 amendments in the Act provided a reducing scale of fees for new registration application from 100% in the first quarter of the year to 25% in the last quarter. In addition, provision was made for the granting of secondary registration to those registrants normally resident outside Tasmania and holding primary registration in another State or Territory jurisdiction. The current fee structure allows operation of the secretariat to be self-funding.

Veterinary Service Companies

Changes consequential to the *Veterinary Surgeons Amendment Act 2002* remove the requirements for the approval of Veterinary Service Companies. Companies will only have to advise the Registrar of their intention to provide veterinary services and certain company details for listing by the Registrar.

Exemption from Registration

Following the annual expiry of a Section 13 exemption, an application by an artificial breeding operator was received and granted to enable him to continue to perform laparoscopic artificial insemination of sheep. The exemption under Section 13 of the Act was granted on the grounds that there were insufficient registered veterinary surgeons providing such a service and that it was in the interest of the state that the integrated ovine artificial reproduction service from the applicant be available to Tasmanian sheep breeders. This exemption has been renewed on application annually since 1994-95.

In 2006-07 2 further exemptions were granted to veterinary surgeons hold qualification not recognised in Australia. One exemption was granted to an overseas qualified veterinarian working for a major drug company to allow him to investigate incidents which may be related to the use of company products. The other was granted to an overseas veterinarian to provide the veterinary meat inspection service on King Island for AQIS in the absence of any other available registered veterinarians. Both continued in 2009-10

In 2008-09 2 further exemptions were made to allow 2 overseas veterinarians to practice as veterinary pathologists in the Department's Mount Pleasant Laboratories. Without the exemption provision the Laboratory would not have been able to operate effectively. One exemption remained in place as at 30 June 2010.

Australasian Veterinary Boards Council Inc.

The AVBC Inc is a legal entity which has authority to speak and act on behalf of all veterinary registering authorities in Australia and New Zealand. Although it has no legislative power to impose any decisions made at meetings on any participating boards, it has a valuable advisory function and makes recommendations to the boards in the areas of -

- the accreditation of veterinary schools and courses leading to a degree in veterinary science or medicine,
- assessment of suitability for practice in Australia and New Zealand of persons with foreign qualifications, including the running of the NVE (National Veterinary Examination),
- uniform criteria for recognition of qualifications for registration,
- provision of advice on matters concerning the occupational regulation of veterinarians, including general and specialist registration, and

-
- encouraging harmonisation of the standards, regulations and quality assurance of veterinary services provided to the community in all jurisdictions.

The state and territory Veterinary Boards of Australia, The Veterinary Council of New Zealand and the Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) and the New Zealand Veterinary Association Ltd (NZVA) are members of AVBC Inc..

The AVBC has an office based in Melbourne. It has an executive officer and three office staff, and a management, finance and communications sub-committees, which are responsible for the day to day running of the organization. AVBC members have discussions bimonthly, primarily as a teleconference, and two face-to-face meetings held in November 2009 and May 2010 to consider matters relating to the above issues. The AVA and the NZVA do not contribute to the financial support of AVBC Inc and are not entitled to vote.

The AVBC is financed by a levy on participating jurisdictions, based on the number of veterinarians holding primary registration in, and entitled to practice in that jurisdiction. The Tasmanian registrar and appointed AVBC delegate attended the annual general meeting which was held in Brisbane, Qld. in May. The Tasmanian member of the AVBC is the immediate past chair.

Major items discussed during the year included but were not limited to ;

- The continual evaluation of old and new veterinary schools and the advice given to individual Boards on the suitability of the schools graduates for registration.
- The possible legal ramifications of a school failing to be recommended for a registrable degree.
- The continuing education requirements of current registrants and specialists in association with the Australian College of Registered Veterinary Specialists (ACRVS) and the variation of requirements between states for registration in association with National recognition of veterinary registration (NRVR).
- The increased number of foreign graduates sitting the NVE, and the appointment of a new chair of the Board of Examiners (BoE).
- Discussions with the University Deans and other educators in the areas of tracking and streaming of degrees. The complex issue of regional and metropolitan veterinarian numbers.
- The continual progression to NRVR with Victoria now recognising registration in other States and Territories.
- Sharing of standards, systems and the nature of complaints against registered Veterinarians by the various Boards.
- Continued communication with international councils from Europe and America, as well as some new discussions with Asian veterinary schools and registering bodies.

With moves towards more global accreditation and new graduates from Charles Sturt University and James Cook University for the first time at the end of 2010, the AVBC has provided an increasingly important advice role for it's members in areas they would not otherwise be able to cover.

Communication with Registrants

The main vehicle for communicating with registered veterinary surgeons is through the Board's Newsletter. This is produced annually in December and at other times when considered necessary. During this year one issue was produced. A feature of the newsletter is the publication of the policies of the Board together with the *Standards of Veterinary Practice* by which veterinarians are measured when complaints against them are considered. It is the procedure to publish a draft standard for the consideration of, and comment by registered veterinarians in one year and confirming the standard the following year. During each year amendments to existing standards as well as new standards are developed. Standards developed a previous year joined the published standards. The *Standards* are published on the Board's web site.

Matters currently covered in the *Standards* include -

- Supply of Prescription Animal Remedy [PAR] Veterinary Drugs (S4s)
- Guide for the Dispensing and Supply of Drugs and Poisons by Veterinary Surgeons
- Code of Practice for the Supply and Use of Veterinary Chemical Products
- Record Keeping in Veterinary Practices
- Professional Ethics of the Veterinary Surgeon
- Veterinary Certificates
- *Animal Welfare Act 1993*
- *Animal Health Act 1995*
- Appendix to Standards - Sample Admission / Consent Form : Advice Note (for use when treating food producing animals)
- The Standards for Premises where Major Surgery is Undertaken

The other means of communication is through meetings held in the three regions of the State with veterinarians. Meetings of this type are particularly valuable as they are a means of explaining the role of the Board, its procedures and its policies, together with receiving feedback from practitioners and other veterinarians. This meeting programme is undertaken approximately every two years. A new round of meetings will commence in July 2010 following the scheduled Hobart Meeting, to be followed by meetings in Launceston and on the Northwest Coast before the end of 2010.

In addition the Board maintains a website established within the website of DPIPWE. The site provides a ready access for the members of the profession and the public. The following are provided –

- Membership of the Veterinary Board
- The Board's *Standards of Veterinary Practice*
- Instruction on making complaints
- The Board's newsletters and news items
- Details of services provided by the Board
- Details regarding Veterinary Service Companies
- Registration application forms
- A list of registered veterinary surgeons

Legislation

The last changes to the Act occurred as a consequence of the regulation review process introduced into the Parliament and passed as the *Veterinary Surgeons Amendment Act 2002* receiving Royal Assent on 25 June 2002. As a result of an action sought by the Board with respect to the provision of veterinary services without registration it became apparent that there are some deficiencies in the Act which need to be addressed. Such deficiencies relate to the definition of veterinary services. The Board therefore undertook a review of this aspect of the Act. It also took the opportunity to review the whole of the Act with the view to enhancing its operation and bringing it up to contemporary standards. Several matters that were discussed for inclusion in the 2002 amendments did not appear in the final legislation and have also been part of the review.

After a detailed review of the Act, and discussion with the veterinary profession, a suite of recommendations was submitted to the Department for appropriate consideration and action. These changes, together with some others developed under a further review in 2008, were submitted to the Department to accompany the changes required to permit the operation of the National Recognition of Veterinary Registration as approved by all state governments. These matters have been progressed to the stage of first legislation draft by June 2008 and are continuing.

Complaints

During the year the Board considered a number of written complaints concerning the activities of veterinary surgeons. The complaints received for which final determinations reached during the year are summarised below –

Summary of Complaint	Determination Synopsis
Complaints considered and determined in 2009-10	
Failure to treat appropriately considering the age and condition of the patient. (56)	Treatment and clinical procedures were found not to be up to contemporary standards. CAUTION issued.
Failure to make a home visit. (57)	No case to answer.
Failure in duty of care. (59)	Complaint dismissed.

Veterinary Practice Inspection

In January 2006 The Board commenced a 3-year programme of inspections of all veterinary practice establishments. The object was twofold : firstly to evaluate compliance with the Board's *Standards of Veterinary Practice*, and secondly to provide advice and guidance to practitioners where improvements in compliance were considered necessary.

As a consequence of these inspections the Board has gained a better understanding of the standard of practice exercised in the State. This resulted in a review of the current published standards and the development of standards for premises.

While there was not an inspection of all practices in any region in 2009-10 a significant number of practices received random unannounced inspections. These inspections were targeted towards the handling of restricted veterinary drugs. It was pleasing to note a high compliance rate with respect to the Board's standards on the handling of such drugs.

Demographics of the Profession

As part of the registration process registrants are requested to provide information on their practice for the preceding year. The 2010 renewing registrants provide the following information relating to the year 2009 -

Survey forms received	250	[197 Primary and 52 Secondary Registrants]
Survey forms completed	235	
Survey respondents	94.0%	

The following classifications are quoted as a percentage (%) of survey respondents -

Demographic Survey									
Year of Renewal	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Work Status									
Full time	74	74	74	70	72	67	67	67	65
Part time	21	20	19	24	21	24	23	21	23
Retired	5	6	8	6	7	9	10	12	12
Work Location									
Tasmania	74	73	73	71	70	67	67	67	68
Tasmania & Interstate/overseas	15	15	16	18	19	20	23	26	24
Interstate/Overseas	11	12	11	11	11	13	10	7	8
Type of Employment									
Private Practice	76	73	76	76	81	82	82	80	83
University	3	2	3	3	1	1	1	2	1
Government Service	12	13	14	11	9	7	10	9	8
Industry	5	5	2	4	5	3	2	4	3
Other	4	7	5	6	4	7	5	5	5
Type of Practice / Work (major activity)									
Large Animal	7	9	6	8	7	9	7	9	7
Small Animal	36	33	37	32	35	38	37	40	41
Mixed Practice	26	26	26	31	30	27	27	27	25
Equine	4	5	6	5	6	6	7	6	9
Aquaculture	4	3	3	2	3	2	3	3	3
Regulatory/Advisory	7	7	6	5	4	5	5	4	4
Consultancy	2	4	2	2	3	3	2	2	1
Research/Laboratory	1	4	5	6	3	2	3	3	3
Industry	4	2	1	4	3	2	1	2	2
Avian/Poultry	1	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	1
Other/Specialist	4	3	3	3	4	3	4	2	3
Non-Veterinary	4	2	3	1	1	2	2	1	1
Average weekly hours worked *	38.9	39.4	40.9	37.1	37.4	36.0	37.9	37.5	38.2

* Note only 54% of 2010 respondents provided an hours worked / week estimation.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "N. Leighton".

N L Leighton, BVSc
Chairman

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. J. Gillham".

R J Gillham, BVSc
Registrar