

# Veterinary Board of Tasmania

Annual Report  
2011-12



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The Annual Report of the Veterinary Board of Tasmania submitted in accordance with section 6 of the *Veterinary Surgeons Act 1987*.

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## Contents

Preamble.....	2
The Board .....	3
Meetings .....	3
Registrar .....	3
Registrations .....	4
Recognised qualifications.....	4
Specialist Registration.....	5
Australasian Veterinary Boards Council Inc.....	6
Fees.....	7
Veterinary Services Companies .....	7
Exemption from Registration – section 13 .....	7
Communication with Registrants .....	8
The <i>Veterinary Surgeons Act 1987 and Regulations</i> .....	9
Veterinary Practice Inspections .....	9
Complaints .....	10
Other Statutory Requirements.....	10
Demographics of the Profession.....	11

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# Veterinary Board of Tasmania

## Annual Report 2011-12

### 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 Industries and Water. One member is nominated by the Minister, another is a registered veterinary surgeon employed in the Department Of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE) 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*.

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## The Board

During 2011-12 the Board consisted of the following members -

Dr Neil L Leighton (Chairman)	Nominees of the Australian Veterinary Association (Tasmanian Division)
Dr Neale J Ward (Deputy Chairman)	
Dr Malcolm Waterston	
Dr Kevin Ellard	Nominee of the Secretary DPIPWE
Ms Josephine Bradley	Nominee of the Minister

Ms Bradley was appointed in July 2011 to fill a vacancy arising from the resignation of Ms Rosemary Collins in March 2011.

All members' terms of office will expire in November 2012.

## Meetings

During the year the Board met on the following occasions –

<b>Meeting Number</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting Type</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>No. members</b>
90	14 July 2011	General	Launceston	3
91	3 November 2011	General	Launceston	5
92	23 February 2012	General	Launceston	5
93	19 April 2012	General	Campbell Town	5

## Registrar

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

On 31 July 2011 Dr R Gillham retired from the position of Registrar which he had held for 17 years. Mrs A Horner commenced as Registrar on 1 August 2011.

## Registrations

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

As at 30 June 2012 there were 240 veterinary surgeons holding primary registration and 60 veterinary surgeons from other states and territories holding secondary registration.

In addition 11 short term specific purpose registrations were approved under s17 of the Act for interstate veterinary surgeons, nine being for the 2012 Tom Quilty Endurance Event held over three days at St Helens in June 2012.

	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	<b>2011-12</b>
Registered at 1 July	213	205	226 *	237 *	252*	259*	267*	272*	279*	<b>283</b>
New Registration	17	30	31	34	30	25	37	45	38	<b>47</b>
Cancellation and deaths	25	9	20	19	7	17	32	38	34	<b>30</b>
Registration at 30 June	205	226	237 *	252 *	259*	267*	272*	279*	283*	<b>300</b> 240 P 60 S

\* Total registrations [Primary + Secondary]

Cancellations of registrations are made under the following circumstances:

- where the Board becomes aware that the registrant has died; or
- at the request of the registrant due to retirement from practice, departure from the state, or other reason for non-practice in this state; or
- by the Board due to non-receipt of renewal applications following service of renewal advice notices.

## Recognised qualifications

The Act provides that a person is qualified to be registered as a veterinary surgeon if the person has completed a course of veterinary study of at least 4 years' duration at an approved institution and, if necessary, has passed such examinations as the Board may determine.

The Board has approved the qualifications recognized by the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council Inc. (AVBC) as providing a holder with eligibility to apply for registration as a veterinary surgeon in Australia and New Zealand without further examination. The full list of qualifications is set out on the AVBC website, but in summary, all Australian and New Zealand veterinary degrees are approved:

- University of Sydney
- Murdoch University (WA)
- Charles Sturt University (NSW)
- Massey University, New Zealand.
- University of Melbourne
- University of Queensland
- James Cook University (Qld)

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Overseas trained veterinarians who have been awarded the Australian National Veterinary Examination Certificate (ANVE) or the New Zealand National Veterinary Examination Certificate (NZNVE) are also recognized. The ANVE is administered by the AVBC. 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.

Degrees and qualifications recognized by the following accreditation bodies are also recognized:

- Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) United Kingdom
- Educational Commission for Foreign Veterinary Graduates (ECFVG)
- European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE)
- American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA).

## 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 & 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.

As at 30 June 2012, the Board has 8 registered veterinary specialists, the same as at 30 June 2011. All are visiting specialists registered in other states and holding secondary registration in Tasmania. The following specialisations are held:

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

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## Australasian Veterinary Boards Council Inc.

The Australasian Veterinary Boards Council Inc. (AVBC) 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. The AVA and the NZVA do not contribute to the financial support of AVBC and are not entitled to vote.

The AVBC has an office based in Melbourne. It has an executive officer and three office staff, and management, finance and communications sub-committees, which are responsible for the day to day running of the organization. AVBC members have discussions bimonthly, primarily by teleconference, with a face to face meeting for the AVBC AGM. The AVBC delegate, Dr Neale Ward, and the registrar attended a meeting in Melbourne in October 2011 to discuss the AVBC's 2012-2017 strategic plan and both also attended the AGM which was held in Canberra ACT in May 2012.

The AVBC is financed by a levy on participating jurisdictions, based on the number of veterinarians holding primary registration in that jurisdiction. .

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

- AVBC Strategic Plan (adopted in February 2012);
- National Recognition of Veterinary Registration
- Confidentiality Policy;
- Status of the North American Veterinary Licensing Examination;
- Specialist titles;
- the continual evaluation of old and new veterinary schools;
- registration of veterinary specialists and the assessment and evaluation of training programs;
- the National Veterinary Examination;
- discussions with the University Deans and other educators in the areas of tracking and streaming of degrees;
- 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.

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## Fees

Registration fees and registration renewal fees as set by the *Veterinary Surgeons Regulations 2004*. Since 2003 the only change in fees has been the annual CPI increase applied under the *Fee Units Act 1997*.

Since 2002 the Act has provided for a reducing scale of fees for new registration application from 100% in the first quarter of the year to 25% in the last quarter. When the *Veterinary Surgeons Amendment Act 2011* commences, the Board will be able to approve the registration and registration renewal fees. It is expected that fees will be increased to meet the increased operational costs of the Board.

## Veterinary Services Companies

Veterinary services companies are required by section 26 of the Act to notify the Board of their intention to provide veterinary services; and the Board keeps a list of those companies. When the *Veterinary Surgeons Amendment Act 2011* commences, veterinary services partnerships will also be required to provide a notification and will be included in the list of veterinary services entities.

## Exemption from Registration – section 13

Section 11 of the Act makes it an offence for a person to engage in the practice of veterinary surgery or render a veterinary service unless that person is a registered veterinary surgeon. There are some exceptions to the offence provision, including veterinary students acting under the direct supervision of a registered veterinary surgeon. The penalty for breach of section 11 is a fine not exceeding 50 penalty units (\$6,500).

Section 13 provides that an individual may apply to the Board for exemption from the operation of section 11 in relation to a specific veterinary service. As at 30 June 2012, there are three exemptions in place, the same number as at 30 June 2011<sup>1</sup>.

An exemption under s13 has been granted annually since 1994-95 to an artificial breeding operator to enable him to perform laparoscopic artificial insemination of sheep. The exemption 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.

An exemption under s13 has also been granted annually since 2006-07 to an overseas trained veterinarian to provide the veterinary meat inspection service on King Island for the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) in the absence of any other available registered veterinarians.

An exemption under s13 has been granted annually since 2007 to an overseas trained veterinarian employed by an interstate pharmaceutical company. The exemption is limited to the diagnosis of pig and poultry conditions and is conditional upon the person holding limited registration with the NSW Veterinary Practitioners Board.

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<sup>1</sup> Correction: the 2010-11 Report stated there were two exemptions as at 30 June 2011, in fact three were current.

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## Communication with Registrants

### Website

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 information is 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 (updated quarterly or as required).

Matters currently covered in the *Standards of Veterinary Practice* 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
- 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.

### Newsletter

The Board issued a Newsletter in December 2011.

### Information Sheets and news items

The Board periodically circulates Information Sheets and news items including approved survey requests via email and the website. The email list was updated as part of the 2012 registration renewal process and emails are now sent to most veterinary surgeons as necessary. Only 6% of registrants either do not have an email address or have advised that they do not wish to receive emails from the Board.

The following Information Sheets were circulated to veterinary surgeons during 2011-12, some being prepared in collaboration with the Pharmaceutical Services Branch Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) following requests from veterinary surgeons in relation to their obligations under the *Poisons Act 1971*:

- Veterinary Practice Inspection Circular July 2011
- Chief Pharmacist's Circular 1663 - *Drugs subject to misuse* August 2011
- Addendum to Chief Pharmacist's Circular 1663 November 2011
- Radiation Protection Unit DHHS- Requirements for Veterinary Radiography Practices December 2011
- Storage of S8s in vet's vehicles February 2012
- Storage of Schedule 8 substances in a "Day Safe" May 2012.

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## The *Veterinary Surgeons Act 1987 and Regulations*

The *Veterinary Surgeons Amendment Act 2011* received Royal Assent in December 2011 and is expected to commence by proclamation later in 2012.

The amendments to the *Veterinary Surgeons Act 1987* will include:

- changes to the definition of ‘veterinary services’;
- applying National Recognition of Veterinary Registration in Tasmania;
- providing that the Board may declare veterinary service standards, including rules of conduct; and
- providing that the Board may approve fees under the Act.

In February 2012 DPIPWE released a Discussion Paper on amendments to the *Veterinary Surgeons Regulations 2004*. The Discussion Paper particularly focussed on the new definition of ‘veterinary services’ as contained in the *Veterinary Surgeons Amendment Act 2011* and sought comment on the services that are prescribed under the Regulations as services *not included in veterinary services*. The Board made a submission to the Department in April 2012. It is expected that the new regulations will commence at the same time as the Amendment Act.

## National Recognition of Veterinary Registration

To date only Victoria and New South Wales have implemented National Recognition of Veterinary Registration legislation. The effect is that Tasmanian registered veterinary surgeons who hold primary registration in Tasmania and intend to maintain their residency in Tasmania but travel to work in New South Wales and Victoria on a part-time or locum basis do not require secondary registration in those two states.

The changes effected by the *Veterinary Surgeons Amendment Act 2011* will mean that interstate registered veterinary surgeons who undertake short term visits or locum placements in Tasmania will no longer be required to hold secondary or short term specific purpose registration for their practice in Tasmania.

## Veterinary Practice Inspections

Drs B B Wells, G C Harrison and G R Baxter were empowered to act as inspectors under s10 of the Act in March 2011.

The Board is undertaking routine regional practice inspections on a triennial basis.

During 2011-12 the majority of southern practices were inspected with 23 practice inspections, including mobile clinics. Another five were inspected in the north west, and two in the north.

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## Complaints

During the year the Board considered a number of written complaints concerning the activities of veterinary surgeons. The complaints which were finalised during the year are summarised below:

Complaints considered and determined in 2011-12	
Summary of Complaint	Determination Synopsis
Aggressive handling of dog Ref: 7.64	The Board determined that there was inadequate communication with the client with respect to the obvious difficulty being experienced with restraint for the procedure. The Board recommended that careful consideration be given to the client's and animal's feelings through clear communication of the restraint options available.
Non-diagnosis of complaint and lack of response and communication Ref: 2011-12-01	Informal Proceedings s48 Caution issued. Poor communication noted. Concern at delay
Inadequate assessment of injuries received by dog Ref: 2011-12-02	No case to answer - dismissed
Misdiagnosis. Acted in improper and negligent manner. Ref: 2011-12-03	No case to answer - dismissed.
Not advised of disposal options and costs when euthanasia quote given Ref: 2011-12-04	No case to answer - dismissed. Recommended that the practice follow its consent protocols.
Failed to perform diagnostic test for pancreatitis Ref: 2011-12-05	Informal Proceedings s48 Caution issued. Advised to improve record keeping.
Aggressive handling of dog Ref: 2011-12-06	Informal Proceedings s48 Caution issued. Advised on methods of dog handling.
Malpractice and negligent treatment Ref: 2011-12-08A & 2011-12-08B	No case to answer - dismissed.

Three complaints received during the year remained open on 30 June 2012.

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## Other Statutory Requirements

No requests for information or related matters were received under either the *Right to Information Act 2009* or the *Personal Information Protection Act 2004*.

## Demographics of the Profession

As part of the registration process registrants are requested to provide information on their practice for the preceding year. The 2012 renewing registrants provided the following information on their practice for the preceding year.

Survey forms received	<b>257</b>
Survey forms completed	<b>257</b>
Survey respondents	<b>86%</b>

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

Year of Renewal	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
<b>Work Status</b>										
Full time	74	74	70	72	67	67	67	65	63.3	63.0
Part time	20	19	24	21	24	23	21	23	25.8	28.0
Retired	6	8	6	7	9	10	12	12	10.9	8.9
<b>Work Location</b>										
Tasmania	73	73	71	70	67	67	67	68	70.6	68.4
Tasmania & Interstate/overseas	15	16	18	19	20	23	26	24	21.3	24.6
Interstate/Overseas	12	11	11	11	13	10	7	8	8.1	6.9
<b>Type of Employment</b>										
Private Practice	73	76	76	81	82	82	80	83	80.2	83.1
University	2	3	3	1	1	1	2	1	.09	0.4
Government Service	13	14	11	9	7	10	9	8	8.1	7.1
Industry	5	2	4	5	3	2	4	3	4.1	3.1
Other	7	5	6	4	7	5	5	5	6.8	6.7
<b>Type of Practice/Work (Major Activity)</b>										
Large Animal	9	6	8	7	9	7	9	7	9.6	6.8
Small Animal	33	37	32	35	38	37	40	41	40.2	37.4
Mixed Practice	26	26	31	30	27	27	27	25	27.4	28.1
Equine	5	6	5	6	6	7	6	9	6.8	6.8
Aquaculture	3	3	2	3	2	3	3	3	3.7	2.1
Regulatory/Advisory	7	6	5	4	5	5	4	4	3.2	3.8
Consultancy	4	2	2	3	3	2	2	1	1.8	3.4
Research/Laboratory	4	5	6	3	2	3	3	3	2.3	2.1
Industry	2	1	4	3	2	1	2	2	0.9	0.8
Avian/Poultry	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	0.9	0.8
Other/Specialist	3	3	3	4	3	4	2	3	1.8	4.3
Non-Veterinary	2	3	1	1	2	2	1	1	1.4	0.8
Wildlife										2.1
Teaching										0.4
Average weekly hours worked *	39.4	40.9	37.1	37.4	36.0	37.9	37.5	38.2	34.8	30.9

\* Note only 40% of 2012 respondents provided an hours worked / week estimation



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

N L Leighton BVSc MACVSc  
Chairman

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "A P Horner".

A P Horner LLB BA  
Registrar

20 September 2012