



Veterinary Board of Tasmania

Winter Newsletter 2018

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CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Welcome to the 2018 mid-year newsletter.

Well, at long last after 12 months of trying, the Board finally managed to coax a few vets out to a north-west 'Meet the Profession' session in Burnie in late June. Many thanks to the 11 vets, representing 4 clinics who made the effort to come along to meet the new Board (almost 2 years old now), hear about our activities and ask a question or two.

A highly commended award goes to the irrepressible Ian Anderson who made a return trip from Trial Harbour (about 2.5 hours each way) and ex DPIPWE vet, George Downing who has retired to Penguin. It is great to see experienced statesmen of the profession still taking such an active interest in what many regard as mundane and peripheral Board matters.

The reality is (whether you know it or not) that much of what the Board deals with is highly relevant to day-to-day clinical practice so I encourage everyone to read all up-dates, advice, emails, newsletters etc that you receive from the Board, and perhaps, even visit our website to see what might be helpful.

I also throw out the challenge to the north-westerners to try to regain number one status as far as attendance at these meetings goes. It costs a few of your registration dollars to hold these regional meetings every 3 years and if numbers do not justify the expense, the Board may pull the pin. It is interesting to note that while north-west numbers have declined dramatically, Hobart (southern) and Launceston (northern) numbers have increased significantly.

Veterinary Service Standards

After a 4-5 year process the Board has finalised the last of the Veterinary Service Standards (*Supply and Use of Drugs in Veterinary Practice*) and an associated guideline (*Veterinary Surgeons' Rights, Duties and*

Responsibilities under the Poisons Act and Regulations). All vets or practices should have received a hard copy of the Standard and both documents are available on the website. Thanks to those of you who provided feedback on the Standard.

Inspections

There have been on-going inspections of veterinary premises this year, with some common deficiencies being vaporizers overdue for servicing; incorrect labelling of medications; failure to issue advice notes to farmers; and once again, the storage, handling and record keeping of S8's. Please refer to the website for information on these or ask the registrar if you cannot find the answers to any questions you may have.

Some practices have also found themselves having to make changes to their premises to comply with the 2014 *Standard of Veterinary Premises*. Examples for clinics where medical and surgical services are provided include ensuring the surgery room is separate from other rooms, is not used for non-sterile procedures like dentals and is not a thoroughfare; providing a radiography service; and providing hot and cold running water with fixed drainage in consult or examination areas.

Noting that it does take some time to carry out any renovations, the Board is generally happy to allow an appropriate period of time for any necessary modifications. It should be stated however, that the premises standard was declared in mid 2014 and ignorance of its existence is no excuse.

Fortunately, most practices exceed the minimum requirements of the Board standard and are to be commended for this. In addition, all practices need to be confident under which definition of premises type(s) they fall and operate accordingly. There have been a number of new vet service entities established over the last 6 months and it is particularly important that these owners are aware of their obligations under

the Board standards. If you are in this category do not just forge ahead without clarifying the minimum requirements across all of the standards – better to check at the outset and get it right, rather than be found wanting and having to do the job again.

Finally, the inspectors have commented that clinics are usually very helpful and co-operative during inspections and this makes their job so much easier and more pleasant. They, and the Board are very appreciative of this. Remember, our major aim is to help keep you up-to-date and complaint free.

Complaints

The Board has been dealing with a typical number of complaints this year. Many of these centre around vet-client communication so please make this aspect of vet practice a high priority. This doesn't guarantee you will be safe from complaints but if you can clearly demonstrate good communication through practice documentation and record keeping, it certainly helps greatly in your defence if the need arises. Unfortunately, a paucity of contemporarily-made clinical notes/records has been a feature of some of the recent complaints. This never looks good.

Social media

Facebook and social media are rife these days. I would ask you all to consider very carefully the content of any posts you make to ensure it does not breach client confidentiality and professional standards. Section 4.1 of the *Standard of Professional Conduct* states that '*a veterinary surgeon must not behave in such a way as to have an adverse effect on the professional standing of any veterinary surgeon or the veterinary profession.*' Section 5.1 follows on to say '*..... must interact with clients..... in a way that creates effective communication and trust.*' As the practice owner or senior vet in charge you are ultimately responsible for any social media content that appears on the practice Facebook page so you need to be either censoring and/or have very clear protocols around this issue. If there is a problem, it will be the vet who has to face the music.

Board

Time flies and it is now only 12 months until the term of the current Board expires. Nominations will be

called for some time in the first half of 2019 so if you are interested feel free to speak to any of the Board members or the Registrar if you would like to know what's involved.

Wishing you all a stress and complaint free second half of 2018.

Neil Leighton
Chair

DPIPWE Wildlife Guidelines

We are advised by DPIPWE that their Wildlife Guidelines will be distributed soon. Please keep an eye out for them.

Congratulations

Congratulations to Dr Susan ZICHY-WOINARSKI AM whose service to the community of Tasmania through a range of conservation and animal welfare organisations, and to women, was recognised in the 2018 Queen's Birthday Honours List.

Registration Renewals

Thank you to all the vets who paid their registration renewal in a timely manner. The process went very smoothly, with a high number surveys returned. Your renewal certificates (including tax receipts as applicable) have been posted out so please make sure you keep them, not only for your tax returns, but for your radiation licences and the like.

2017-18 ended with 301 vets listed on the register, with 26 being removed overnight on 30th June, as it were, by voluntary cancellation. Most cancellations were due to vets relocating interstate or overseas.

Animal Health Surveillance Survey

(This survey was emailed to vets on 24/7/18)

Vets are invited to complete a survey on the veterinary profession's contribution to animal health surveillance in Australia (Charles Sturt Uni)

The work aims to examine the contribution of the veterinary profession to surveillance systems and to estimate the value this provides in upholding Australia's export trade.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VetSurveillance>

S8 Narcotics register: recording S8 components of a premix 'cocktail'

The Board recently received advice from Pharmaceutical Services Branch (PSB) about the recording of S8s when prepared into a premix "cocktail". The example relates to a premix of S4 and S8s: ACP/butorphanol/ketamine.

The advice is as follows:

- a) The S8 narcotics (butorphanol and ketamine) would be written out of their respective narcotics register pages with entries recording the amount used to make the premix formulation.
- b) A new entry page would be created in the narcotic register for the premix. The drug would be recorded in the register as the premix mixture with a specified formula (i.e. acepromazine / butorphanol XX% or mg / ketamine XX% or mg), as long as the S8 content can be identified.
- c) The amount of premix formulation made would be then be written in to the narcotics register as a total volume of that premix formulation strength.
- d) The amount used (or destroyed if expired) would then be written out as a volume of the premix formulation.
- e) There would need to be individual recording of the volume of the premixed formulation given per animal along with the animal's details, as per standard narcotics register entries.
- f) The premix formulation would need to be stored in the safe.

Compounded PARS

There appears to be some confusion about requirements for compounded PARS – noting that the laws do vary from State to State. Advice from PSB confirms:

- 1) A vet can legally order compounded PARS from a pharmacist for use in their practice, whether for use within the practice as necessary or for direct supply to a client.
- 2) The pharmacist would prepare (including compounding) a medication for wholesale supply to the vet. The vet then dispenses the compound to the patient/client.
- 3) The vet may split the compound and dispense the medication in smaller quantities or supply it as received.
- 4) The vet may label the containers with their own labels (both the smaller quantities and the container as received).
- 5) If relabelled and/or split into smaller doses, the labels and containers must comply with normal requirements for the supply of PARS - see the Labelling and Containers sections of the Guidelines: *Veterinary Surgeons' Rights, Duties and Responsibilities under the Poisons Act and Regulations*.*
- 6) A vet may charge a mark-up on a compounded medication as they see fit. Charges for the dispensing/supply of medications are not a matter for either PSB or the Board.

Please pass the newsletter on to your colleagues if it is received at a general practice email address.

**<http://dpi.pwe.tas.gov.au/biosecurity-tasmania/animal-biosecurity/veterinary-board-of-tasmania>*