



CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Welcome to the 2016 end of year newsletter. The new Board, appointed in July this year has now met twice and I am very pleased to comment that the transition has been very smooth and the 4 new members are all proving to be great contributors. In 2017, we will hold 3 meetings with the profession to enable veterinarians to meet the Board members and registrar, be brought up-to-date on current issues and ask any questions. You will be notified of these meetings well in advance.

After a lengthy drafting and review process, the Standard of Professional Conduct was gazetted and declared midyear. You should all have received a hard copy in the mail, and of course, it also appears on the Board website. For anyone who hasn't checked the website in the last 6 months, I would recommend a visit to reacquaint yourself with the content and useful links etc.

The Board inspectors are continuing practice inspections in 2016/17. For more background information on the inspection process please feel free to look at the Board website under the Standards and Publications sections or speak to the Registrar. The current inspectors are Geoff Baxter, Graham Harrison, Malcolm Waterston and Rick Campbell. It is pleasing to note that most practices are well aware of their responsibilities and the standard of premises is generally very high, so congratulations.

Pleasingly, the number of complaints received by the Board in the last 6 to 8 months has been quite low. Ineffective communication has been a significant factor in most complaints and the Board has also noted the high incidence of poor clinical notes accompanying some of these. Please keep detailed notes on all aspects of the case including things like recommendations and options discussed with the owner. These can be very useful in assisting the vet's defence. If information does not appear in the

records kept, it is difficult for the Board to know what actually occurred, in spite of what the vet might recall and relate to the Board some months after the event. Detailed notes made at the time of consultation or hospitalisation are the order of the day

It recently came to the Board's attention that a survey of veterinary charges was carried out by the office of Senator Lisa Singh, and that apparently this type of survey has been carried out by politicians in the past. Apart from being very surprised that my taxes are being spent this way and that this falls within the scope of the Senator's responsibilities, I have serious concerns that one of the questions specifically asked was *'what kind of anaesthetic and pain relief was offered'* to dogs and cats during de-sexing procedures. Unfortunately, some vets made specific mention of the types of drugs used including S8s and this information has been published by the Senator's office.

The concern here is the fact that S8's have been 'advertised' as being used and therefore held by named veterinary practices in a public document. The Board advises all vets not to provide this sort of specific information when asked to participate in these sorts of surveys and will be writing a letter to Lisa Singh outlining our concerns. Hopefully, none of the named vet practices will be targeted by those seeking illegal access to S8s. If you ever have any doubts or queries in this sort of a situation please feel free to contact the Board.

The Board wishes all Tasmanian vets and their families a very merry Christmas and prosperous New Year.

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

Neil Leighton
Chair

Review of S8 Approved Safe specifications for Veterinary Practices

Regulation 25 of the *Poisons Regulations 2008* provides that a veterinary surgeon who is authorised to possess S8s must keep them stored separately in an approved secure enclosure (in most cases, a safe at the veterinary practice surgery).

The approved Minimum Standards for S8 safes (issued by the Chief Pharmacist Pharmaceutical Services Branch (PSB) DHHS) set out the different levels of safe (i.e. size, construction and installation) depending on the quantity of S8s held. The quantity is determined with reference to 'human doses'. The Minimum Standards apply across a range of professions, and there have been difficulties at times equating human doses for S8 PARS.

PSB and the Board are reviewing the Minimum Standards to see if there is a better way of ensuring that veterinary practices have the appropriate safe for the storage of their S8s.

The Board will send out a survey to all practices in early 2017 seeking information about their safe types, practice sizes and S8 holdings. Practice principals are encouraged to respond to the survey!

VBT Annual Report 2015-2016

The Board Annual Report was tabled in Parliament by the Minister for Primary Industries and Water on 25 October 2016. A copy is available on the Board website

<http://dpiw.tas.gov.au/biosecurity/animal-biosecurity/veterinary-board-of-tasmania/veterinary-board-publications>

Veterinary Surveys

The Board periodically approves the distribution of research type surveys to vets on the Board's email list. Advance notice is given of University of Sydney survey which will be emailed out in January 2017.

A World-First Project to Help Reduce or even Eradicate Canine Parvovirus

Veterinarians around Australia are being asked to help with a bold new research project looking to bring a 'disruptive technology' approach to the issue of canine parvovirus (CPV) in Australia. The disease is the biggest viral threat to the health of dogs in Australia, though it can be endemic in some areas while being absent in other (even adjacent) areas. Nearly five thousand cases of CPV have been reported in Australia alone in the last five years¹ and the true number of cases may significantly higher.

Researchers from University of Sydney will be sending a survey to the whole veterinary profession in January 2017, seeking every veterinarian to answer, in an attempt to gauge the true national distribution and prevalence of CPV and then to start measures to try and bring the disease fully under control, and potentially even eradicate it. Look out for the survey in January and please fill it in when you get it. To contact the research team, you can email Dr Mark Kelman at kelmanscientific@gmail.com.

1 E. Zourkas, M. P. Ward, and M. Kelman, "Canine parvovirus in Australia: A comparative study of reported rural and urban cases," *Vet. Microbiol.*, vol. 181, no. 3-4, pp. 198-203, Dec. 2015.

Meet the Board/Meet the Profession 2017

HOBART Thursday 2nd March 2017

SAVE THE DATE!

The Board is planning to hold a *Meet the Board/Meet the Profession* evening forum in Hobart on Thursday 2 March 2017 7pm -9pm.

Time and venue to be advised.

Forums will also be held in the north and northwest later in the year.