



## CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Welcome to the December newsletter.

The last 6-12 months have been very busy for the Board with on-going review of the existing Standards of Veterinary Practice and the writing of some new standards, namely the Standard of Veterinary Premises.

**Standards:** A new standard dealing with professional conduct and ethics has been drafted and will be circulated for comment and feedback hopefully within the next month or so. Remember, these standards directly affect all registered vets working in Tasmania so it is in your best interests to be familiar with their contents and provide feedback on any new standards.

A very important point to be aware of in relation to the standards, is that it is not up to the individual vet to interpret the standards and there may be times when you are not sure of what a particular point may actually mean in your circumstance. The Board ultimately interprets the standards, so you should seek clarification from the Board whenever you are unclear of anything that a standard may contain.

A recent complaint before the Board highlighted this point very starkly when parts of a standard were selectively interpreted to suit the desires of the veterinary premises concerned. Much angst and valuable time could have been saved if advice and input had been sought from the Board up front. The Board is here to help. We would much prefer to prevent complaints than deal with them.

**Complaints:** Unfortunately, there have been a considerable number of complaints before the Board since the mid year newsletter. As always, some have been dismissed and some have had to go to an inquiry with the finding of misconduct in a professional sense. A very good lesson to be learnt for everyone comes

from one such complaint, and for those who attended the Tas Division AVA conference last year and heard Mark Glyde speak about contra-indicated methods of fracture repair, this will bring back memories.

A cat with a mildly comminuted mid shaft short oblique femoral fracture was presented and the surgical procedure performed was the insertion of an intra-medullary pin and application of a splint. A complaint arose and the Board sought an expert opinion which stated that the chosen procedure was 'contra-indicated in this case'. It should be noted that handling of the case otherwise was fine and that the real issue boiled down to the fact that money was an issue, a cheaper but contra-indicated procedure was offered and performed, there were complications, another practice became involved and a complaint ensued.

This is not the first time this sort of thing has happened in veterinary practice and sometimes contra-indicated procedures may work, but if you choose to take this course and a client complains you will not come out the other side smelling of roses.

While the Board understands the extenuating circumstances that often surround these sorts of cases (three of us are vets in private practice), it is difficult to come up with anything other than a finding of misconduct in a professional sense.

Take home message: don't offer contra-indicated procedures in this day and age, seek the opinion of specialists to assist the decision-making process as deemed appropriate or necessary, and be aware of, and maintain contemporary standards. Like it or not, many of the things we thought acceptable 15 to 20 years ago, no longer are.

So, what would have been better treatment options in this case? Plating, amputation or euthanasia, with no mention of IM pinning and splint application.

**Amendments to the Act:** I have mentioned in a number of previous newsletters that the Board had submitted a request to the Minister for a number of minor administrative amendments to the Vet Act. With the change of government in March these have still not been addressed so amongst other things, the Board still does not have the option to run informal proceedings as an option for investigating complaints. This is causing some degree of frustration for us but will hopefully be resolved by the time you receive the next newsletter in mid 2015.

**Inspections:** Inspections of some veterinary premises have continued in the last half of 2014 courtesy of Graham Harrison, Geoff Baxter and Barrie Wells. The Board caught up with the inspectors in November to discuss any issues arising from inspections, the application of the Standard for Veterinary Premises and to revise the inspection checklist to align more closely with this standard.

**Board appointments:** A reminder that the current Board is entering the final year of this term and in mid 2015, nominations will be called for the next term. Please give this serious consideration and feel free to speak to any of the Board members or the Registrar if you would like to know what's involved.

The Board wishes all vets and their families a happy Christmas and prosperous New Year.



Neil Leighton  
Chair  
December 2014



## **Veterinary Board of Tasmania Annual Report 2013-2014**

The Board's Annual Report was tabled in parliament on 28 October 2014. A copy is available on the Board website.

### **Approved Fees**

The Board approved an increase in the registration fees (including the annual renewal fee) for 2015 of 2.8% in line with CPI.

### **Registration Renewals 2015**

Registration renewal notices were posted out to all vets in mid November. The renewal fee (\$364) is payable by 31 December. Payment may be made by cheque payable to the Veterinary Board of Tasmania or by direct deposit to BSB 067 008 A/C 2800 0964 with your surname or registration number as reference.

If you have changed address and haven't received your notice, please contact the registrar [vbt@netspace.net.au](mailto:vbt@netspace.net.au) for a replacement notice.

Please ensure you keep your 2015 renewal certificate safe as you may need the certificate for your radiation/firearm licence renewals later in 2015, and the certificate is also your receipt for taxation purposes.

If you are not renewing, please let the registrar know (an email is sufficient) so the Register may be updated.

### **Letters of Good Standing (LOGS)**

To organise a LOGS, please email or phone the registrar, advise which State/Territory/country you are moving to and pay the fee (\$44 in December and \$49.50 from 1 January 2015).

### **Members of the Board**

Dr N Leighton (Chair) AVA nominee  
Dr N Ward (Deputy Chair) AVA nominee  
Dr K Ellard DPIPWE nominee  
Ms J Bradley Ministerial appointment (community)  
Dr T Frazer-Oakley AVA nominee