



Veterinary Board of Tasmania

July Newsletter 2019

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CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Welcome to the 2019 mid-year newsletter. By the time you read this a new Board and registrar will have been appointed. Anne Horner is stepping down from the registrar position after 8 years, and in that time, she has proven to be an outstanding asset to the Board. Her commitment, common sense and knowledge will be sorely missed. Personally, I very much enjoyed working with Anne and she certainly made my job as chairperson much easier than it may otherwise have been. Many thanks and best wishes in your retirement Anne.

On the subject of departure, after 16 years on the Board I have not re-nominated so ending an interesting and sometimes eye-opening time. There have been many changes in that period including proclamation of amendments to the Veterinary Surgeons Act, the drafting and declaration of up-dated standards of veterinary practice, an increase in the number of inspectors and consequently practice inspections, an increase in the number of registered vets (just over 300 now) and pleasingly, a significant improvement in the standard of vet services provided in Tasmania. Congratulations to all vets and their staff. I am left in no doubt as to your dedication to the vet profession and to the welfare of animals and their owners. Many thanks also for your co-operation with the Board when required over the time.

In early 2019 the Board sent a consultation paper out to all vets in relation to a review of Standards of Veterinary Premises: the requirement to provide radiography equipment. A number of responses were received from practitioners and were discussed at the last Board meeting in late May. The review has not been finalized so will be one of the responsibilities of the new Board. In the meantime, it is still a requirement that a veterinary clinic, centre or hospital must provide facilities and equipment for the taking,

processing and viewing of radiographs. In other words, nothing has changed at this stage.

Since the last newsletter in December 2018, practice inspections have continued with control of S8s and failure to use Advice Notes when supplying veterinary drugs to food producing animals being on-going issues. So, please ensure you are compliant in these areas and as always, if in any doubt seek advice from the Board.

In finishing, I would like to express my thanks to all Board members and inspectors I have worked with over the years and wish the new Board all the best over their 3 year term.

Neil Leighton
Chair

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Pregnancy Diagnosis by Non-Veterinarians

Pregnancy diagnosis in animals using internal rectal oarexamination by hand and/or internal ultrasound examination is a veterinary service in Tasmania. Despite this, there have been some non-vets providing

this service to cattle producers in Tasmania. In the past, where the Board has had knowledge of this, these non-vets have been informed in writing of their illegal actions. Unfortunately, from information provided to the Board some cows have now died as a result of rectal perforation at the hands of a non-vet carrying out this procedure. If proven, the Veterinary Surgeons Act will have been breached but also there are very serious animal welfare ramifications associated with this situation. Investigations by the DPIPWE and Board are under way. The Board reminds cattle vets in particular to contact the DPIPWE in a timely manner and report any instances of non-vets providing veterinary services such as pregnancy diagnosis by internal examination so they can be investigated and dealt with as soon as possible. It is a responsibility all vets have.

Advice Notes – Food species animals

Vets are required to comply with the *AgVet Code of Practice which states:

If you treat an animal of a food species with a veterinary chemical product, you must provide the person in charge of the animal with an advice note.

The Code goes on to specify the content of the Advice Note which must include–

- a) name of the chemical product,
- b) name of the person prescribing or dispensing the product,
- c) particulars of the animal(s) to be treated, including their location, number, description and identification,
- d) amount of product to be administered to each animal,
- e) date of treatment, or the proposed treatment date,
- f) re-treatment interval and
- g) **withholding period.**

The Code and a sample Advice Note are available on the Board website under Standards of Practice; and a word template version of the Advice Note is available from the registrar so that practices can insert their practice details etc into the Note.

Crayfish and other invertebrates!

A recent query related to a vet's responsibilities when requested to provide scheduled drugs for crayfish. The short answer is that the *AgVet Code applies as the crayfish is an animal of a food species. Off label products may be used, and other requirements apply such as the use of Advice Notes and the identification/location of the animal.

A more detailed information sheet will be distributed shortly.

*AgVet Code:

<https://dPIPWE.tas.gov.au/Documents/CODE-OF-PRACTICE-FOR-THE-SUPPLY-AND-USE-OF-VET-CHEMICALS.pdf>

Registration renewals 2019-20

Thank you everyone for your prompt responses to the renewal notices. Only a few stragglers left. As at 30 June, there were 304 vets listed on the register, with 13 voluntary cancellations at the stroke of midnight on the 30th. The voluntary cancellations included 2 retirements, 6 vets had moved interstate during the year and 4 are working overseas.

Overseas trained vets

A common query, both from practices seeking staff, and overseas trained vets (OTVs) seeking work, is whether OTVs can be registered in Tasmania; and if not eligible, can they have limited registration or similar pending obtaining accredited qualifications.

For full details, please see the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council (AVBC) website

<https://avbc.asn.au/overseas-graduates/>

Who is eligible for registration?

The short, or not so short answer, OTVs with the following degrees are eligible for registration:

- New Zealand, UK, and Pretoria South Africa;
- Ireland (not 1986-2003)
- North American degrees plus the NAVLE (North American Veterinary Licensing Exam)
- Utrecht graduates since 1973 plus NAVLE,
- Lyon, Mexico, West Indies (Ross & St Georges) graduates since 2011 plus NAVLE.

Who is not eligible for registration?

Basically other European, Middle Eastern, Asian, South American and other African degrees are not accredited for the purposes of registration in Australia. However, holders of those degrees may sit the Australian National Veterinary Exam (NVE), through the AVBC.

National Veterinary Exam

The NVE is a three step process with a practical clinical examination. In Tasmania, OTVs who are preparing for the final NVE clinical exam may apply for approval from the Board to practise veterinary surgery, but they **MUST** be working under the supervision of a registered vet who **is physically present** while they are providing the veterinary service.

In effect, the NVE candidate is akin to a student on clinical placement. On this basis it is unlikely that paid employment would be an option, but of course, practices may be prepared to accept NVE candidates for placement purposes, providing that the practice provides proper supervision.

The supervised practice option is only available to NVE candidates, and not to OTVs who may be seeking accreditation through other avenues overseas. (Some other States do have the option of a limited or specific registration for OTVs, but this is not available under Tasmania law, the Board has no discretion in this matter.)

Once the OTV has passed the NVE, the vet eligible for full registration in Australia.

Expired S8s & S4s

A common finding by inspectors is that vets are holding expired drugs. These should be disposed of promptly.

Expired S4 drugs can be handed in to your local pharmacy for disposal by the Return Unwanted Medicines (RUM) project. S8s need to be disposed of by two vets together, or one vet and another health professional (such as a pharmacist or doctor.) Both persons need to sign the S8 register.

It is recommended that practices implement a scheduled substances (drugs) stock control protocol. This will not only ensure that expired drugs are not used inappropriately, but would be cost effective by ensuring that drugs nearing their expiry date are used first.

The Board notes the advice from the Pharmacy Board of Australia in its newsletter of September 2018¹. This advice would apply equally to registered veterinary surgeons:

The expiry date of every dispensed medicine must be checked to ensure that the medicine is in date for the expected duration of treatment.

A good dispensing process, with a number of routine checks including an expiry date check, should be in place and observed every time a medicine is dispensed. ...

You also need to leave the manufacturer's expiry date visible when labelling a dispensed medicine to ensure

that patients or clients, carers and/or other healthcare providers have access to this information if needed.

To further minimise the risk of supplying an expired medicine, processes should be in place in the pharmacy for the periodic checking of expiry dates of stock, easy identification of near-outdated stock, and appropriate disposal of any expired stock.

A vet would not be acting within their scope of professional responsibility by using an expired scheduled substance because they would not be able to guarantee that it is safe and effective beyond the stated expiry date.

Euthanasia

The following **Euthanasia Protocol** is reproduced from the Veterinary Council of New Zealand May Newsletter 2019 with their permission. It was developed in response to a complaint about the lack of communication about what would happen during a procedure, even though the actual care provided was appropriate.

1. Initiate the euthanasia consultation with the client and family – this is an extremely emotional and fragile event in the vet-client relationship and with some forethought can easily be managed very successfully.
2. Outline with the owner the preferred process your clinic follows to minimise the distress for the patient. Implementing sedation and an intravenous catheter (IV) catheter is a very useful way to avoid the risk of complications and embarrassment should there be difficulties during the process. For example, it is generally very effective in avoiding having to wrestle with patients or the need to apply a muzzle. It also reduces the risk of a vein blowing whilst placing the IV injection which often leads to veterinarian frustration and an avoidable tension in the consult room.
3. Confirm the client's preference for how they would like to manage the body after the euthanasia and that, if they would like, you are happy to leave them with their pet for a short while to say their good byes.
4. Ask if they have any questions about the process or the euthanasia itself.
5. The preparative steps could be:
 - o Briefly admit the patient into the hospital to enable a mild sedation to be administered to

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<https://www.pharmacyboard.gov.au/News/Newsletters/September-2018.aspx>

relax the patient. The sedation could be case dependant and may range from a simple premed (an Opioid + Acetylpromazine) to something more substantial (Medetomidine + Butorphanol), and

- Place an intravenous catheter to provide an open vein for the administration of the anaesthetic used for the euthanasia.
 - Return the patient to the consult room
6. The euthanasia procedure could be:
- Ensure the patient is in a comfortable and safe position - either on the floor, consult table top, or on the client's knee;
 - Explain in your own words the process and expectations including for example – the injection of the pentobarb anaesthetic with relatively quick effect on the patient; possibility of the bowls and bladder relaxing and voiding, possibility of a gasping breath (all quite normal), that you will check for a heart beat to confirm the patients passing etc.
 - Ask again if they have any questions about the process
 - Confirm with the client they are ready to proceed.
7. Perform the euthanasia.

Research Survey – Charles Sturt Uni

What is the purpose of this study?

This study seeks to investigate the extent to which both personal and work-related factors predict burnout in Australian veterinarians. Burnout within the veterinary profession is a significant issue that can impact on both personal and professional domains. Therefore, it is important that we know what factors predict veterinarian burnout so that both workplace and individual strategies can be implemented to minimise its occurrence.

https://csufobjbs.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0ANezTaBAqHc78F

The above link will take to you an Information Statement with further details. If you have any additional questions about this study, please contact Ella Fyfe on 0416 457 302 or ella_fyfe_9@hotmail.com.

New Board - TBA

No doubt you are all waiting with bated breath for news about the new Board members. At the date of writing, we have no news so the 2016-2019 Board members are kindly continuing in their roles as an interim measure until the new appointments are announced (soon).

Farewell from the Registrar

After exactly 8 years, I am leaving the position of registrar, hopefully for greener pastures and a relaxing retirement. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with the Board and the profession and have learned a lot about vets, veterinary practice and animals!

A special thank you to Dr Neil Leighton who has been chairman throughout this time and has been a great source of advice and assistance in carrying out my functions.

During this time, I have registered (well, the Board has) about 250 vets, the first being on 11 August 2011, and the most recent from 1 July 2019.

I am pleased to be handing over the position (and the filing cabinet) to Amelia Jones, who commences as registrar on 1 August. I am sure she will be a great asset to the Board and will approach the registrar's duties with fresh eyes.

Please bear with us while the email address and phone number change – details to be advised. I promise I will forward any stray messages and emails on to her!

Thank you to everyone for your kind messages for my retirement.

Anne Horner

Registrar (till 31 July)

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

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