



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

At the time of writing, following the registration renewal period, there are 3,530 veterinary practitioners on the Register of Veterinary Practitioners in Victoria.

The renewal period is an opportunity to take stock of movement within the profession in Victoria. While every year there are new graduates who join the profession or seasoned vets who relocate from other states or countries, there are always some veterinary practitioners who cease practising in Victoria for various reasons. We are often contacted at this time by veterinarians who have retired after long careers in veterinary practice, and the options available to retiring practitioners are discussed in the overview of 2020 renewal later in this newsletter.

Following renewal, Board staff begin to prepare for registration of veterinary graduates. In mid-August we registered 12 graduates from Charles Sturt University. The Board welcomes those graduates to the profession, and we remind employers that 2020 graduates will need to be well supported by experienced colleagues as they transition to practice because they may not have been able to complete their usual work placements.

Annual reporting and complaints activity

The Board's annual report will be presented to the Victorian Parliament by the Minister for Agriculture later this year.

We'll be sharing detailed statistics on 2019-20 registration and investigation activity in the December newsletter. In the meantime, we can report that there has been an increase in complaints-related activity. In 2019-20, enquiries relating to complaints increased by 35%, and there was a 45% increase in complaints to the Board.

During the next months, the Board will be publishing resources to help veterinary practitioners and members of the public better understand the timeframes, processes and potential outcomes of Board investigations. **Continued next page...**

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NEW SPECIALISTS IN VICTORIA

Congratulations to the four veterinary practitioners the Board recently endorsed as specialists:

- **Dr Tania Shaw** – endorsed as a specialist in Small Animal Surgery on 1 July 2020.
- **Dr Patrick Shearer** – endorsed as a specialist in Veterinary Anatomical Pathology on 5 August 2020.
- **Dr Emma Croser** – endorsed as a specialist in Veterinary Clinical Pathology on 31 August 2020.
- **Dr Takanori Sugiyama** – endorsed as a specialist in Small Animal Surgery on 14 September 2020.

REMIND YOUR COLLEAGUES AND EMPLOYEES WHO HAVE RELOCATED FROM OTHER STATES TO REGISTER IN VICTORIA

Application deadline: Vets with current registration in Queensland, South Australia or Western Australia should **apply before 18 November 2019** to be registered in Victoria before 1 January 2020.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE CONT.

Review of guidelines

The Board continues to review feedback on the Board's draft Guidelines. In addition to their ordinary monthly Board meetings, since December 2019 the Board members have held 10 separate workshops on the draft Guidelines, checking for clarity and testing expectations in the drafts against the realities of professional practice.

The Board members wish to thank the participants in two focus groups held in July who shared useful insights on the veterinary practitioner-owner-animal relationship and referrals to specialist veterinary practitioners. Your contributions will assist us to develop Guidelines on these topics.

At this stage, it is expected that most Guidelines will be finalised by early 2021.

COVID-19 update

While the end of September sees some restrictions on business easing in Victoria, for the foreseeable future there will be a continuing requirement for veterinary practices to have measures in place to minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

The Board will continue to provide information to assist the profession understand their obligations during the changing circumstances of the pandemic:

- We address frequently asked questions at [COVID-19 information for veterinary practitioners](#)
- The [telemedicine guidance](#) issued by the Board will apply for the period of the pandemic.
- The team in the office responds to queries from veterinarians and the public on a case by case basis.

Veterinarians who have continued working throughout the lockdowns have had to adopt different forms of communication with clients and colleagues.

Working in team bubbles means that vets may not see their colleagues face to face as frequently as they did before. Examining an animal inside the clinic while their owner is outside may mean that it takes longer to communicate and discuss treatment options with a client and there is a greater potential for misunderstanding. The standards for communication with clients in [Board Guideline 8](#) continue to apply during the pandemic.

The members of the Board are conscious that veterinary practitioners who have continued to attend their workplaces throughout the pandemic have had unique pressures placed on them which have not been experienced by people working from home.

If you or someone you know needs assistance or support, the links on the last page of this newsletter may be helpful to you. Additional information is also available on the Board's website at [Support for veterinary practitioners](#).

Wishing you all good health in these last months of 2020.

Ted Whitem
President

BIOSECURITY ALERT: AFRICAN HORSE SICKNESS IN SOUTH EAST ASIA

On 3 September 2020, the World Organisation for Animal Health reported an outbreak of African Horse Sickness (AHS) in Malaysia. This followed the detection of AHS in Thailand earlier this year.

Exotic to Australia, AHS is the most serious known viral disease of horses, resulting in up to 80-90% mortality in affected horses.

The outbreak in Malaysia serves as an important reminder of the veterinary profession's need to be prepared for the increasing threat of AHS within our region.

The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment is monitoring and assessing the situation. Animal Health Australia has commenced a review of the Australian Veterinary Emergency Plan (AUSVETPLAN) disease strategy for African horse sickness.

For information on AHS and Australia's response, see: [African horse sickness in South East Asia](#) (Animal Health Australia).

UPDATE: AVIAN INFLUENZA

Further to the biosecurity alert sent to veterinary practitioners on 2 August 2020 notifying an outbreak of avian influenza, the disease has been confirmed at four poultry farms near Lethbridge, one near Bairnsdale and one emu farm near Kerang. There have been three different strains of avian influenza during this incident:

- 3 egg farms with highly pathogenic H7N7 avian influenza
- 2 turkey farms with low pathogenic H5N2 avian influenza
- 1 emu farm diagnosed with low pathogenic H7N6 avian influenza.

Agriculture Victoria is responding to the outbreak and restrictions are in place in affected areas. Cleaning and decontamination of the properties are in progress.

Avian influenza is a serious disease of poultry, and highly pathogenic strains can cause high mortality. Wild birds can carry avian influenza without showing any signs of infection and are the likely source of infection in poultry. It is not unusual for “spill over events” to occur when avian influenza from wild birds infects domestic poultry flocks.

Australia has previously had a small number of outbreaks of avian influenza. These were all quickly and successfully eradicated.

Veterinarians who suspect avian influenza **MUST** report it **IMMEDIATELY** to Agriculture Victoria by calling the 24-hour Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline on 1800 675 888.

More information from Agriculture Victoria: [Avian influenza \(bird flu\)](#)

Bushfire assistance Strengthening Business

Businesses impacted by the 2019-20 Black Summer bushfires in 32 identified local government areas in NSW, SA and VIC may be eligible for Australian Government assistance (before 31 March 2022).

For more information on accessing business advice from expert facilitators and possible funding, see: [Help to rebuild your business after the 2019-20 Australian bushfires](#)

INJECTABLE PENTOBARBITAL ON S4 APPENDIX D

Effective from 1 October 2020, the Poisons Standard has been amended to clarify the storage requirements for Schedule 4 injectable pentobarbital through the provision of a new Appendix D listing.

Pentobarbital in injectable preparations has been added to Appendix D of the Poisons Standard (**poisons which must be stored in a locked container to prevent unauthorised access**).

More information about this decision, including a detailed explanation for why injectable pentobarbital has not been moved to Schedule 8, can be read at the [Notice of interim decision](#) published by the Therapeutic Goods Administration.

WILDLIFE BIOSECURITY GUIDELINES

Wildlife Health Australia (WHA), and the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture and Water Resources have produced Australia’s first National Wildlife Biosecurity Guidelines.



Photograph by Rick Stevens

Developed to document best practice biosecurity measures for those working with Australian wildlife, the guidelines are intended for all people who work (or interact) with wildlife, including wildlife managers, researchers, veterinarians, carers and others.

The guidelines include comprehensive information and insights drawn from many specialist agencies including biosecurity, environment, human health, as well as many nongovernment organisations and expert individuals.

All organisations which work with wildlife are encouraged to use the information in these guidelines to assess their own biosecurity risks and to develop and maintain an optimum level of biosecurity for their operations.

Download [National Wildlife Biosecurity Guidelines](#)

OBLIGATIONS IN RELATION TO CARE OF WILDLIFE

There will be times when as a veterinary practitioner you are presented with sick, injured and/or distressed wildlife. All native wildlife is protected in Victoria under the *Wildlife Act 1975*.

Under the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986*, veterinarians have a legal duty to take steps to relieve unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress in animals that are presented to them. This includes administering emergency first aid and pain relief (or euthanasia if appropriate) or, if available and appropriate, a timely referral to another veterinary practice.

This duty exists whether the person presenting the animal can, or is willing, to pay, and whether or not they are a client of the practice. The duty exists whether the animal has an owner or not, and the duty includes wildlife.

There are also standards in the Board's Guidelines in relation to treatment of protected and native species. Board Guideline 9.5.4 states:

- a) Where there is a reasonable expectation that the animal can be successfully treated and released back to the wild, the animal must be released or referred to an appropriate licensed wildlife carer for further necessary care prior to being released.
- b) Where there is not a reasonable expectation that the animal can be treated successfully and released back to the wild, then the animal must be euthanased immediately.

The Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) administers the *Wildlife Act 1975*. DWELP maintains detailed information on the [management and care of wildlife](#) including:

- a general factsheet for veterinarians at [veterinary care for wildlife](#)
- a factsheet on [bushfire response for veterinarians](#).
- control of [possums](#) including euthanasia of common brushtail possums by a registered vet.

RENEWAL 2020 & REGISTRATION OPTIONS FOR PRACTITIONERS

When the registration renewal period started in late May, 3,602 registrants were eligible to renew their registration in Victoria. When the renewal period ended on 31 July 2020, 3,352 practitioners had renewed their registration.

35% of practitioners renewed their registration in the first week of the renewal period, compared with 25% in 2019.

Of the vets who renewed in 2020, 98% of vets renewed online.

The Board's small registration team (1.2 FTE) coordinated a high volume of renewal-related communications during the renewal period.

Commencing in May 2020, all veterinary practitioners eligible to renew their registration received a preliminary email, a launch email and launch SMS. Veterinary practitioners without an email address receive their renewal forms via post. Board staff sent four reminder emails and four reminder text messages.

At the end of the renewal period, notices of removal from the Register of Veterinary Practitioners are sent by registered post and emailed to practitioners who had not renewed their registration and not requested to be removed from the Register before the end of the renewal period. The names of these

practitioners are published later in this newsletter.

During any given year, there are always some veterinary practitioners who cease practising in Victoria for various reasons.

Some are retiring after a long career in veterinary practice. Some are temporarily ceasing practice in Victoria, e.g. on parental leave, working in a different profession or moving overseas for a short period.

Retiring veterinary practitioners

If you are planning to retire from veterinary work, you have several options.

- You can retain your general registration if you plan to continue treating animals on an ad hoc basis or if you wish to treat your own animals. Retiring veterinary practitioners who retain their general registration are reminded that they must still continue to meet the Board's continuing professional development requirements.
- You can move to non-practising registration, which would mean your name would remain on the Register of Veterinary Practitioners and you would continue to receive communications from the Board. To apply for non-practising registration you need to complete an application for non-practising

registration. This cannot be done online during the renewal period.

- You can notify the Board that you are retiring and wish your name to be removed from the Register of Veterinary Practitioners.

Temporarily ceasing practice in Victoria

If you have temporarily stopped practising in Victoria, you have several options in relation to your registration:

- You can retain your general registration, so you can step back into practising at any time to take locum shifts etc. This would also mean you could continue to treat your own animals.
- You can let your registration lapse and apply to re-register a month or so before returning to practise in Victoria. Fees to re-register include an application fee (currently \$155+) as well as registration fees.
- You can apply to convert to non-practising registration, which would mean your name would remain on the Register of Veterinary Practitioners and you would continue to receive communications from the Board.

Before you could return to practice, you would need to apply to convert back to general registration. Fees include an application fee (currently \$155) as well as registration fees.

Applying for non-practising registration

You will find a link to a non-practising registration application on the Board's [registration information page](#):

The non-practising application form contains a statutory declaration which must be signed in the presence of a person authorised to witness documents, in which you confirm that you will not:

- carry out veterinary procedures, including treatment of own animals, in Victoria
- provide veterinary services in Victoria
- purchase, possess or supply scheduled drugs under the Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances legislation in Victoria, and
- exercise authority requiring registration as a veterinary practitioner in Victoria.

VETERINARY PRACTITIONERS REMOVED FROM VICTORIAN REGISTER

The names of the following veterinary practitioners were removed from the Register of Veterinary Practitioners after renewal closed on 31 July 2020. While we are not informed of this in all instances, the Board understands that many of these practitioners have either retired or moved to other jurisdictions.

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Dr Charlotte Akins [V9492] | Dr Peter Grieve [V8949] | Dr Andrew McKenzie [V1625] |
| Dr Ahmed Al Ansari [V9393] | Dr Rose Hadden [V5459] | Dr Suzanne McNabb [V3409] |
| Dr Olivia Armstrong [V9674] | Dr Rebecca Hallett [V6325] | Dr Justin Michaels [V9466] |
| Dr Aashima Auplish [V8707] | Dr Charles Hawkes [V9167] | Dr Hannah O'Brien [V8802] |
| Dr Pradeep Balaraju [V8877] | Dr Anise Hee [V9400] | Dr Rebecca Penman [V4610] |
| Dr Wenwen Bao [V5444] | Dr Gregor Hepburn [V9129] | Dr Jamie Peyton [V9690] |
| Dr Jessica Beattie [V9634] | Dr Penelope Hicks [V8971] | Dr Christopher Philip [V1189] |
| Dr Faith Bell [V4266] | Dr David Hill [V1141] | Dr Paul Ramos [V5101] |
| Dr Briony Bray [V9144] | Dr Tom Hinchliffe [V9161] | Dr Kathlyn Reed [V8587] |
| Dr Brianna Caitens [V8952] | Dr Joyce Hung [V9640] | Dr Andrea Rieger [V9124] |
| Dr Isabelle Campbell [V9407] | Dr Michael Jeffers [V1269] | Dr Farhad Sadrinajafi [V3364] |
| Dr Peter Carbonell [V501] | Dr Eric Johnson [V9691] | Dr Andrew Stanley [V6273] |
| Dr Samantha Castle [V9500] | Dr Kirby Johnstone [V8935] | Dr Hannah Staunton [V9473] |
| Dr Mei Chan [V4299] | Dr Jess Kelly [V5105] | Dr Sandra Summerrell [V8656] |
| Dr Geoffrey Chapman [V1762] | Dr Mats Koelermij [V9396] | Dr Rachel Sweet [V9398] |
| Dr Joanne Coombe [V5232] | Dr Melanie Kuehn [V5323] | Dr Michelle Tensley [V9510] |
| Dr Katherine Cornall [V9123] | Dr Grant Kuseff [V1908] | Dr Ka Yip Tong [V9362] |
| Dr Amelie Cowan [V9411] | Dr Michelle Kwan [V9608] | Dr Colin Trott [V4150] |
| Dr Hannah Darke [V9505] | Dr Kim Lam [V5818] | Dr Jennifer Turner [V9638] |
| Dr Carol De Vrieze [V1586] | Dr Jennifer Lau [V9313] | Dr Trent Van Zanten [V8484] |
| Dr Robert Dewhurst [V9436] | Dr Emma Lawson Kissane [V5358] | Dr Amy Vandermeer [V9162] |
| Dr James Ede [V9073] | Dr Michael Lenc [V5941] | Dr Colin Walker [V1557] |
| Dr James Edwards [V2222] | Dr Freya Lister [V8430] | Dr Darby Walmsley [V9235] |
| Dr William Fehin [V9454] | Dr Margaret Lobitz [V9182] | Dr George Watson [V8405] |
| Dr Frederick Funston [V636] (retired) | Dr Christine Mackay [V1483] | Dr Carly Whittaker [V9058] |
| Dr Alice Gahan [V9509] | Dr Justin McKay [V6244] | Dr Rou Feng Yau [V9057] |
| Dr Amelie Geddis [V9435] | | Dr Shee Yong [V1144] |

SUPPORT AND INFORMATION FOR VETERINARY PRACTITIONERS

VETBOARD VICTORIA RESOURCES

- [Download proof of registration or update your contact details via the VetConsole](#)
- [COVID-19 FAQs](#) and [telemedicine guidance](#)
- [Registration](#)
- [Complaints](#)
- [The Board's Guidelines](#)
- The [Veterinary Practice Act 1997](#), and other laws relating to veterinary practice including the [Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981](#)
- [About the Board](#) and [Board members](#)
- [Annual reports](#)

PERSONAL SUPPORT DURING COVID-19

If you or someone you know needs assistance or support, the links below may be helpful to you.

Physical health:

- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) interactive self-assessment](#) (Victorian Government)
- [Symptom checker](#) (also on the Coronavirus Australia app) or call the coronavirus hotline 1800 675 398 (Australian Government)

General support:

- AVA [Worker wellbeing and COVID-19 notice](#) and [telephone counselling service](#) 1300 687 327 (Australian Veterinary Association)
- [Head to Health](#) (Australian Government)
- [Mental Health Resources – coronavirus](#) (Victorian Government)
- Lifeline Australia [Mental health and wellbeing during the coronavirus outbreak](#) 131 114
- Beyond Blue [Coronavirus mental wellbeing support service](#) - 1300 224 636
- [Sane Australia](#) 1800 187 263

Workplace support:

- [Victoria's restriction levels](#) (includes Workplace Directions)
- [Sector guidance FAQs](#) (Business Victoria)
- Business Victoria: call 13 22 15 or view [Coronavirus business information](#)
- Fair Work Ombudsman: [Coronavirus and Australian workplace laws](#)

AGRICULTURE VICTORIA CONTACTS

Emergency Disease Hotline

Call 1800 675 888 to report suspected emergency diseases. This hotline is staffed by vets 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Talk to local animal health staff

Call 136 186 to be put in touch with Agriculture Victoria District Veterinary Officers and Animal Health Officers located throughout Victoria.

General contacts

- Customer service line 136 186
- Email biosecurity queries or feedback to animal.biosecurity@ecodev.vic.gov.au
- Email animal welfare queries to pet.welfare@agriculture.vic.gov.au

General information

- www.agriculture.vic.gov.au
- [Emergencies](#) and [biosecurity](#) (including [notifiable diseases](#)).
- [VetWatch newsletter](#) – information about animal disease surveillance
- [Animal health and welfare](#)
- [Livestock care](#)
- [Pet care](#)
- [Resources for fighting antimicrobial resistance](#)

MEDICINES, MICROCHIPPING, RADIATION

- [Medicines and Poisons Regulation](#) office, Victorian Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).
- **Prescribing guidelines and resources:**
 - [Veterinary prescribing guidelines for companion animals, equines and bovines](#) the University of Melbourne
 - [Small animal prescribing guidelines](#) AIDAP per AVA
- **Microchipping:** [authorised implanter course for veterinarians](#) (Victorian Division AVA)
- **Radiation:** individual and management [licences to use radiation sources](#), DHHS.

Disclaimer: Some links in this newsletter direct you to the websites of third party organisations which are responsible for and/or may be able to assist you with the subject matter of an item. The Veterinary Practitioners Registration Board of Victoria has no control over and is not responsible or liable for the content of any third-party website.