



The Hon Gayle Tierney MP

Minister for Training and Skills  
Minister for Higher Education  
Minister for Agriculture

2 Treasury Place, East Melbourne  
Victoria 3002  
Telephone: +61 3 9637 3196

DX 210074

Ref: BMIN-2-22-23789

Dr John Harte  
President  
Veterinary Practitioners Registration Board of Victoria  
Level 14, 10-16 Queen Street  
MELBOURNE VIC 3000  
Email: [john.harte@vetboard.vic.gov.au](mailto:john.harte@vetboard.vic.gov.au)

Dear Dr Harte

## **STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS FOR THE VETERINARY PRACTITIONERS' REGISTRATION BOARD OF VICTORIA**

I am pleased to provide you with my expectations for the Veterinary Practitioners Registration Board of Victoria (the Board) to guide the regulator's business planning processes.

As Minister for Agriculture, I am responsible for administering the Veterinary Practice Act 1997 (the Act) and this guidance should be read in the context of the objectives, obligations and functions outlined in this Act. This guidance should also be read in the context of any other legislative and non-legislative obligations, in addition to your core business activities.

To begin, I would like to acknowledge the essential role that the Board plays in protecting the public and the health and welfare of animals. The Board's regulation of the veterinary profession is critical to upholding high standards of veterinary care across Victoria.

The expectations I have outlined below focus on building on the Board's current foundations to deliver good regulatory practice, while recognising the limitations that exist for small entities.

To achieve this, my expectations are that the Board deliver on the following three priority areas:

1. Refine internal processes and administrative practices
2. Advance risk-based compliance and enforcement
3. Enhance communication and prevention

The initiatives and actions outlined below describe how I expect the Board to address these priorities:

### **1. Refine internal processes and administrative practices**

I expect the Board to continue to refine systems and processes that improve productivity and timeliness. Specifically, I expect the Board to:

- refine internal processes and policies for conducting investigations, including appropriate delegation, consistency, transparency in, and documentation of, decision making, and communications of decisions to affected parties
- strengthen the application of good governance principles/practices to streamline Board operations
- achieve, and report annually on performance against, strategic objectives and delivery of the Board's regulatory strategy
- harmonise and upgrade internal IT systems to modernise and increase workflow efficiencies and Board productivity.
- foster a high-performance culture that promotes the health and wellbeing of team members and invests in their learning and development.

## **2. Advance risk-based compliance and enforcement**

I expect the Board to develop compliance activities that focus on areas of greatest risk and take into consideration harm to the public, industry, professionals and animal welfare. Specifically, I expect the Board to:

- adopt and refine risk frameworks (culpability, likelihood and consequence) and apply them to complaint assessment and investigation policies as appropriate
- actively engage and consult with stakeholders early in an investigation as to support effective decision-making and problem solving
- engage in open and regular discussion with the Department on emerging issues, priorities and approaches to regulation
- identify regulatory opportunities in collaboration with the Department and veterinary practitioners to improve animal disease risk management activities.
- enhance data collection and intelligence capabilities to identify risk trends and prioritise regulatory efforts.

## **3. Enhance communication and prevention**

I expect the Board to:

- develop and collaborate on resources to support veterinary practitioners to proactively manage client expectations, improve client understanding of professional decision making processes and to establish avenues to address and resolve client concerns
- provide regularly updated and practical examples and case studies of common pitfalls in practice and causes of complaints, to educate veterinary practitioners about appropriate preventative interventions and client management strategies

- guide veterinary practitioners to undertake continuing education which supports professional and sustainable practice, with particular emphasis on self-awareness and effective communication skills
- develop and collaborate on resources to provide veterinary practitioners with the appropriate expertise and skills to manage the risk of emergency and other animal diseases, with particular emphasis on risk mitigation strategies and preparedness.

I request the Board to incorporate, where possible, these expectations into its current work program and corporate planning process. Please identify milestones and appropriate review points for this work.

I further request the Board, in conjunction with Agriculture Victoria, to undertake a light touch review of the expectations in this letter as part of your annual reporting obligations. Please advise me when the Statement needs to be updated or reviewed.

Yours sincerely



**The Hon. Gayle Tierney MP**

Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Minister for Agriculture

Minister for Training and Skills

Minister for Higher Education

Date: 12 October 2022