



# VETERINARY PRACTICE BOARD WESTERN AUSTRALIA



## Authorisation to carry out certain acts of EQUINE DENTISTRY in Western Australia under the direction of a registered veterinarian

### 1. GUIDELINES

#### Preamble

The Veterinary Practice Act 2021 (Act) allows for the authorisation of a person who is not a registered veterinarian to carry out, under the direction of a registered veterinarian, an act of veterinary medicine that is specified by regulation.

Schedule 6 of the *Veterinary Practice Regulations 2022* (Regulations) specifies equine dentistry to be an act of veterinary medicine which may be performed by an authorised person.

The Veterinary Practice Board (**Board**) is responsible for administering the Act and is therefore responsible for the process of authorising a person who is not a registered veterinarian, to perform acts of equine dentistry.

The following guidelines provide details of the process and criteria applied by the Board when considering an application for authorisation.

#### Application of these Guidelines

These Guidelines apply from and including **13 June 2023**.

These Guidelines may be superseded by subsequent versions. To ascertain whether this version has been superseded, view the current version on the Board's website at [www.vpbwa.org.au](http://www.vpbwa.org.au)

It is the responsibility of authorised persons and their directing veterinarians to be conversant with the current version of these Guidelines.

#### DEFINITIONS

The Board applies the following definitions:

**authorised person** is a person who the Board considers to be suitably qualified and experienced to be authorised to perform specific acts of veterinary medicine. The responsibilities of the authorised person are detailed in this document;

**direction** means regular frequent supervision but does not necessarily imply continuous personal supervision;

**directing veterinarian** is an appropriately experienced veterinarian approved by the Board to direct an authorised person. The duties of the directing veterinarian are detailed in this document.

## **Authorisation by the Board**

The Board will apply the following criteria in relation to the authorisation of a person to carry out equine dentistry.

1. Authorisation to perform equine dentistry:
  - a) is not required for any act of equine dentistry that falls within Category 1 of the categories of equine dentistry procedures, as defined in Part 2 of these guidelines;
  - b) includes authorisation to perform any act of equine dentistry that falls within Category 2 of the categories of equine dentistry procedures, as defined in Part 2 of these guidelines;
  - c) does not include authorisation to perform any act of equine dentistry that falls within Category 3 of the categories of equine dentistry procedures, as defined in Part 2 of these guidelines.
2. Authorisation will not be granted unless the applicant:
  - a) satisfies the Board that they have undertaken training in equine dentistry; and
  - b) provides proof of competency and experience in each of the competencies listed in Part 3 of these guidelines.
3. Authorisation will not be granted unless the registered veterinarian nominated to direct is approved by the Board to so direct.
4. Authorisation will be for a period no greater than one (1) year.
5. Authorisation will be maintained subject to compliance with these guidelines during the period of authorisation. Authorisation may be revoked immediately where the Board finds that these guidelines have not been complied with or will not be complied with during the period of authorisation.
6. Authorisation may be renewed where the requirements for authorisation as set out in these guidelines continue to be met and where the Board is satisfied, by evidence provided by the authorised person, that with reference to the preceding period of authorisation:
  - a) the authorised person has satisfactorily performed equine dental procedures;
  - b) the authorised person has complied with these guidelines;
  - c) the authorised person has carried out authorised acts of equine dentistry on at least fifty animals as evidenced by written records; and
  - d) the accuracy of the authorised person's written records have been verified by the directing veterinarian.

## **Directing Veterinarian**

1. The directing veterinarian must:
  - be resident and registered in Western Australia unless otherwise approved by the Board;
  - have current experience in performing equine dentistry and maintain competency in equine dentistry; and
  - must complete the required form. Forms may be obtained from the Board office or the Board's website at [www.vpbwa.org.au](http://www.vpbwa.org.au).
2. The directing veterinarian is responsible for the authorised person in relation to the performance of each authorised act of veterinary medicine.

3. The directing veterinarian must keep a record of each supervision of the authorised person.
4. The directing veterinarian is accountable to the Board for the performance of equine dentistry by the authorised person.
5. The directing veterinarian must maintain access to the records of the authorised person in relation to:
  - a) the date and details of each equine dentistry examination and treatment;
  - b) the name and address of the owner of the horse;
  - c) the address of the property on which the equine dentistry was performed;
  - d) the name or identification of each horse on which equine dentistry was performed; and
  - e) any advertising by the authorised person for the provision of equine dentistry.
6. The directing veterinarian must ensure that a registered veterinarian is available to attend in the event that veterinary expertise is required.
7. The directing veterinarian will have their approval to direct an authorised person withdrawn if they:
  - a) cease to be a registered veterinarian;
  - b) have conditions placed on their registration such that they are no longer eligible to be a directing veterinarian; or
  - c) do not wish to continue to comply with all of the requirements for directing veterinarians, as contained in these guidelines.

### **Authorised Persons**

1. The Board requires that an authorised person performing equine dentistry will conduct themselves in a manner consistent with that expected of a registered veterinarian.
2. Advertising by an authorised person must:
  - a) be factually correct;
  - b) relate only to acts of veterinary medicine that the person is authorised to perform;
  - c) state that the service is performed under the direction of a veterinarian; and
  - d) state the name of the directing veterinarian.
3. The authorised person must maintain an accurate and complete record of:
  - a) the date and details of the equine dentistry, examinations and treatments;
  - b) the name and address of the owner of each horse;
  - c) the address of the property on which the equine dentistry was performed;
  - d) the name or identification of each horse on which equine dentistry was performed by the authorised person; and
  - e) all procedures performed.
4. The authorised person must provide the directing veterinarian with access to all records required to be made under paragraph 3 above.
5. The authorised person must report clearly, accurately and in a timely fashion to a veterinarian any adverse reactions.

6. The authorised person must accept advice and instruction from the directing veterinarian.
7. Authorisation to perform equine dentistry does not include authorisation to administer sedatives or tranquilisers or muscle relaxants and reversal agents used in conjunction with sedatives or tranquilisers. A separate application for authorisation to administer sedatives or tranquilisers must be made to the Board.
8. Any medical treatment that is required following a dental procedure may only be prescribed or supplied by a veterinarian who has a bona fide vet- client-animal relationship. A directing veterinarian cannot prescribe or supply drugs unless they have a bona fide vet-client-animal relationship.

### **Insurance**

The veterinarian and the authorised person are responsible for their insurance requirements and should seek professional advice on public liability insurance and professional indemnity insurance cover.

### **Record keeping by the Veterinary Practice Board**

1. The Board will provide a certificate of authorisation to the authorised person.
2. The Board will maintain a register of authorised persons and the relevant directing registered veterinarians.

## **2 EQUINE DENTISTRY PROCEDURES**

For the purpose of the administration of the Act, the Board uses the following three categories of equine dental procedures.

### **Category 1**

Procedures that may be performed by a person without authorisation from the Board include:

- the examination of equine teeth
- rasping using non motorised dental instruments **only**
- incisor reductions are to be limited to <1mm
- removal of sharp enamel points and small dental overgrowths on the cheek teeth
- Such enamel overgrowths must be less than 3mm high and involving less than half of the tooth's occlusal surface
- removal of digitally (finger) loose deciduous teeth ("caps")
- removal of calculus which lies above the gum line.

### **Category 2**

Procedures that may be performed by a person authorised by the Board include:

- extraction of digitally loose teeth [> 5mm movement], such as geriatric teeth or teeth suffering from advanced periodontal disease
- Incisor reductions are to be limited to <1mm
- removal of cheek teeth enamel overgrowths <3mm tall.
- techniques requiring the use of motorised dental instruments.
- the use of cut-off wheels is prohibited.

### **Category 3**

Procedures that may be performed only by a registered veterinarian include:

- Incisor reductions >1mm
- removal of cheek teeth enamel dental overgrowths >3mm tall
- any procedure that involves an incision or elevation of the gum
- extraction of normal, fully erupted and non-displaced wolf teeth
- administration of a local or regional nerve block(s)
- the investigation of, and where appropriate extraction of teeth loosened by trauma
- extraction of teeth that are not digitally loose, by oral extraction, repulsion, or lateral buccotomy
- endodontics including root canal treatment
- orthodontics
- repair of mandibular or maxillary fractures.
- radiology

## **3 COMPETENCIES**

The Board will only authorise a person to perform equine dentistry procedures if the Board is satisfied that the following competencies have been met.

### **General knowledge**

1. Has knowledge of and competency in Category 2 procedures.
2. Has knowledge of:
  - a) basic anatomy of equines
  - b) dental anatomy in detail
  - c) basic physiology of equines;
  - d) dental physiology in detail
  - e) when referral to a veterinarian is required;
  - f) relevant zoonoses; and
  - g) animal welfare legislation, codes and standards.

### **Animal Health and Welfare**

1. Provides empathic care for horses undergoing dental procedures.
2. Carries out equine dentistry procedures effectively and safely so as to minimise any possible adverse impact on animals or personnel.

### **Record keeping**

Keeps clear, accurate records of all work carried out.

### **DISCLAIMER**

This document (printed, electronic or any other medium) cannot be regarded as legal advice. Although all care has been taken in preparing these Guidelines they do not replace advice specific to the reader's circumstances. Where necessary, advice must be sought from competent legal practitioners. Neither the authors nor the Veterinary Practice Board of Western Australia accept or undertake any duty of care relating to any part of these Guidelines.