



Veterinary Surgeons' Board



## FROM THE REGISTRAR

Welcome to the first edition of the Board newsletter for 2022. I started writing this newsletter last week with the opening of the border on 5 February 2022 in mind but that has rapidly changed. The opening has been pushed back to "indefinite" but by the time you receive this, it may have changed again.

In this newsletter there are responses to some of the most frequently asked questions the Board receives about COVID-19. As the situation is rapidly changing, be sure to visit the links in the article for the latest updates.

Putting COVID-19 aside for now, the rest of the newsletter covers other "hot topics" such as antimicrobial use (your input to a survey is requested), veterinary nurses inducing anaesthesia and clarification of the requirements for the issuing of repeat prescriptions.

As always, feedback, suggestions and comments are very welcome.

Dr Sue Godkin  
Registrar



## COVID-19 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The Board has received a number of questions from veterinary staff about COVID-19 and its control. Answers to some of the most frequently asked questions are below. For more general information about the control of COVID-19 visit the WA Government link, [What you can and cannot do](#).

### Can I refuse to treat an animal of a client who refuses to wear a mask inside the practice?

[Masks are mandatory](#) in most indoor settings, including veterinary premises, in the Peel, Perth and South West unless an exemption has been granted.

You can offer to provide a mask and gently remind them that masks are mandatory indoors. If they are insistent they will not wear a mask, then you can refuse to treat their animal. Alternatively you can offer to treat their animal in the veterinary premises while they remain outside. If the client becomes threatening, the police should be called.

### Am I required to make sure that only fully vaccinated clients enter my practice?

There is no current requirement for veterinary staff to ensure that only fully vaccinated clients enter veterinary practices.

### What are the time frames for mandatory vaccination of staff of veterinary premises?

It is the employers' responsibility to ensure that all staff are vaccinated and significant fines may be incurred by both the employee and employer for non compliance.

Veterinary staff were required to have their first vaccination by 31 December 2021 and their second vaccination is due by 31 January 2022.

Booster (third) vaccinations are also mandatory and due as per the table below. For further information click [here](#).

Date of second vaccination	Eligible for booster	Due date for booster
On or before 4 September 2021	5 Months after second dose (on or before 4 January 2022)	4 February 2022
5 to 30 September 2021	4 months after second dose (5 to 31 January 2022)	5 to 28 February 2022
1 to 31 October 2021	31 January 2022	28 February 2022
1 November 2021 onwards	3 months after second dose (1 February 2022 onwards)	1 March 2022 onwards



## QUESTIONNAIRE ON VETERINARY ANTIMICROBIAL PRESCRIBING BEHAVIOUR

Researchers at The University of Melbourne are seeking Australian veterinarians to participate in a research project exploring:

***What factors influence the antimicrobial prescribing behaviours of veterinarians in Australia?***

This is one of two questionnaires that will be distributed on antimicrobial resistance, stewardship and use. The second questionnaire intends to gain information on *attitudes towards recording and reporting antimicrobial use*.

Please note the two questionnaires are very different and are delivered by different research groups, but both funded by the Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment. Please look out for the second questionnaire, we value your response to both questionnaires and thank you for the time taken to do so. Participation in the first questionnaire involves:

1. Completing a **15–25-minute online survey** about the factors that influence how you make your antimicrobial prescribing decisions.
2. **[Optional]** At the end of the survey, you can **choose whether you'd like to be invited for a 45- minute interview**. I will be interviewing a number of vets across all animal sectors to explore the different approaches people take to antimicrobial use. The interview will be recorded, and the recordings will be analysed to find common and unique themes in vets' responses. Responses may be included in a scientific manuscript but will not be traceable to any individual or clinic.

The results of this project will be used to design targeted resources to support vets in optimising their antimicrobial choices.

If you would like to participate, please go to this link, where you can read the participant information leaflet and complete the survey.  
[https://melbourneuni.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_3Weyl5sWZjrResu](https://melbourneuni.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3Weyl5sWZjrResu)

Please note:

- Participation is entirely voluntary.
- Participants who are interviewed will be given a \$50 voucher as partial compensation for their time, and an enormous amount of gratitude from me.
- Interviews will be conducted at a time that suits you and will be on zoom or by telephone.

Thank you so much for helping with this important research.

If you would like more information, please email me at [baileyk@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:baileyk@unimelb.edu.au) or call me on 0417 626 933.

Kirsten Bailey, BVSc, MANZCVS, PhD Research Fellow in Antimicrobial Stewardship  
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## REPEAT PRESCRIPTIONS OF SCHEDULED DRUGS

The Board has received several queries in relation to the issuing of prescriptions with repeats by veterinary surgeons and whether there is a requirement to discuss the health of the animal within the previous 7 days before filling the repeat.

The filling of these repeats, without further discussion with the owner or examination of the animal, is provided for in the *Veterinary Surgeons Act 1960*.

This is a different situation to issuing a new prescription for a drug for an animal or animals that a veterinary surgeon has previously issued a prescription for. In this circumstance an examination of the animal or discussion of the health of the animal with the owner in the previous 7 days is required.

It should be noted that:

- a veterinary surgeon is not permitted to issue a prescription for a Schedule 8 drug with repeats;
- the clinical record for an animal may record a prescription for a Schedule 4 drug that can be filled, including repeats.

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## VETERINARY NURSES AND INDUCING ANAESTHESIA

The Board has reviewed the duties of veterinary nurses in relation to the assisting with and monitoring the administration of anaesthetics.

The Board determined that approved veterinary nurses may, under the personal supervision of a veterinary surgeon, induce general anaesthesia and perform endotracheal intubation.

**Personal supervision** - The supervising veterinary surgeon must be in sufficiently close proximity to the veterinary nurse being supervised to be able to pay full attention to the actions of the veterinary nurse.



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