



VETERINARY PRACTICE BOARD
WESTERN AUSTRALIA



WILDLIFE MEDICINE FOR VETERINARY PROFESSIONALS - FREE ONLINE TRAINING

This online training course is open to veterinarians, veterinary nurses, and trainees in both of these professions. Thanks to sponsorship from WWF-Australia, the training will be free of charge until October 2023.

This training will provide a solid knowledge base for the treatment of Western Australian wildlife species that may present to general veterinary practices. Content includes safe handling techniques and husbandry, triage and first aid, viability assessment, euthanasia, referral, and management of wildlife emergencies such as bushfires and oil spills. Also included are downloadable in-clinic resources such as a wildlife admission form, triage guides, physical exam quick reference charts, and an interactive drug dosage chart. Practical training sessions will also be available on completion of the online content.

Visit wawildlife-training.thinkific.com to enrol.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact training@wawildlife.org.au

ROUTINE SURGICAL REMOVAL OF DEWCLAWS IN PUPPIES

Historically it has been common practice to surgically remove the dewclaws, particularly the hind dewclaws of neonatal puppies. However, current veterinary standards are that surgery should not be carried out on companion animals unless there are sound medical reasons for doing so. Furthermore, surgery should never be performed without adequate levels of general anaesthesia and analgesia, whilst maintaining professional standard sterile surgical techniques.



There is concern that the routine surgical removal of dewclaws is an unnecessary and painful cosmetic surgical procedure with the inherent risk of infection. Prophylaxis to avoid the low risk of injury is not sufficient justification to routinely perform the procedure given these concerns.

The Australian Veterinary Association's policy on "[Surgical alteration of companion animals' natural functions for human convenience](#)" reflects the current position on dewclaw removal.

EHRlichiosis Diagnostic Testing Update

History of *E. canis* in WA

In May 2020, following the first detection of *E. canis* in WA, the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) undertook a surveillance program for *E. canis* with the aims of determining the geographical distribution of disease within and outside the Kimberley region.



During the surveillance program, DPIRD Diagnostics and Laboratory Services (DDLs) provided fully subsidised initial and repeat *E. canis* diagnostic testing for all dogs with and without clinical signs who presented for sampling.

Surveillance has shown that *E. canis* is now established in northern WA, as well as in other parts of Australia. As per our previous communication in 2022, nationally, it has been agreed that *E. canis* cannot be eradicated from Australia.

WA has now modified how it regulates *E. canis* in the state.

E. canis is now regarded as an endemic disease in all regions where the intermediate host, the brown dog tick, is present. The risk of contracting *E. canis* needs to be managed by dog owners through the regular use of an appropriate preventative product as part of responsible pet ownership. As a result, diagnostic testing for dogs **without clinical signs of *E. canis* will no longer qualify as being charge-exempt**. However, diagnostic testing will be available in these circumstances on a fee-for-service basis.

As *E. canis* remains a reportable disease in WA, reporting suspicion of the disease remains a requirement. Diagnostic testing for dogs with clinical signs will continue to be funded by DPIRD. The submitting veterinarian must complete the [E. canis laboratory submission form](#) in full for testing to be carried out. The form must clearly state that the dog has clinical signs, and the full details of clinical signs must be provided. Failure to provide details may result in the case incurring a fee for service.

Fee-for-service diagnostic testing will be available through DDLs and Vetpath Laboratory Services. An indication of associated fees can be provided by contacting Jade.Laine@dpiird.wa.gov.au

Animal Welfare Grant Program

Applications for round three of grant funding are scheduled to open on 1 April 2023. We encourage all eligible organisations to apply. Please visit the DPIRD [Animal Welfare Grant Program webpage](#) for further information.

Awareness program

DPIRD, in collaboration with a nationally coordinated awareness program, will continue to raise awareness about *E. canis*, its causes, diagnosis, prevention and treatment. See the [DPIRD E. canis](#) webpage for the most recent information.

Further information is available by emailing animalbiosecurity@dpiird.wa.gov.au



RECORDING OF VITAL SIGNS

Recording of vital signs in animals include taking measurements and observations of the heart rate, respiratory rate, temperature, capillary refill time and mucous membrane colour and hydration status.

A veterinarian has sought clarification from the Board as to whether it is sufficient to record "NAD" or similar if vital signs are measured and found to be within normal limits for the species of animal.

The short answer is, if you measure the vital sign, then you must record it. While there are normal ranges for vital signs for each species, there is significant variation for individuals. By recording vital signs, trends for individual animals become apparent and a variation indicating an issue with their health more easily identified.

RESEARCH PROJECT PARTICIPATION INVITED

Final year students at Murdoch Veterinary College are conducting research into why veterinary students choose to either conscientiously object to, or participate in the terminal surgery learning activity

Why you should participate:

- Help to inform future curriculum development.
- You will have the chance to win! (One of 4 \$100 Visa gift cards or One of 4 \$50 Visa gift cards)
- Have your voice heard!

Who can participate?

- Current, enrolled Veterinary students (Years 1-5) at Murdoch, Melbourne, or Sydney University.
- Graduate veterinarians registered and located within Australia

If you fit these requirements and are interested in helping, sign up for the study by clicking on this [link](#):

For further details contact

[Jade Fowler](#)

BSc in Veterinary Biology & Doctor of Veterinary Medicine
(Murdoch University, 5th Yr, Class of 2023)

[Dr Barbara Hostalek](#)

Waardong lecturer & Project supervisor

UPDATED BOARD GUIDELINES

The following guidelines have been updated to reflect the Veterinary Practice Act 2021

- Veterinary telemedicine – minor changes.
- Veterinary House Calls for small or companion animals.
- Honorary veterinarians.
- Large animal mobile veterinary services.
- Responsibilities of a veterinary supervisor.
- Small animals veterinary mobile surgical facilities.
- Complementary and alternative therapies – minor changes; and
- Ownership and microchipping of dogs and cats

The updated guidelines can be viewed [here](#).

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