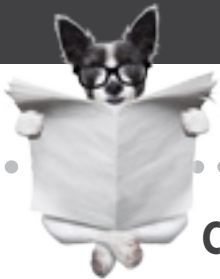


AUTUMN 2018

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CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to the following veterinary surgeons who have recently been granted specialist registration in Western Australia.

Dr Emma Jane McConnell	Equine Medicine
Dr Alexa Brown	Small Animal Medicine
Dr Leon Warne	Veterinary Anaesthesia
Dr Taemi Horikawa	Veterinary Ophthalmology
Dr Rosemary Cuming	Equine Medicine

REGISTRAR'S REFLECTIONS

Last year I attended the Council on Licensure Enforcement and Regulation (CLEAR) Congress in Melbourne. One lecture that stood out for me was where the speaker told a story about a village situated by a large fast flowing river. One day the villagers heard cries for help and rushed to rescue several children who were floating helplessly down the river. However, as soon as they rescued one group of children, another lot would come floating down the river. Eventually one villager left the water and started to walk upstream. His fellow villagers berated him for abandoning the children but he replied that his efforts would be better spent going upstream to see why the children were falling into the river in the first place.

For the rest of the Congress, speakers and attendees, no matter what the topic was, regularly asked 'Are we working in the upstream?' It became an unofficial theme of the Congress.

That led me to ponder how many of us spend our time and energy fixing things and

neglect exploring options for prevention and improvement. Metaphorical band aids and duct tape can only do so much!

Last year, with 'working in the upstream' in mind, the Board and deputies attended a workshop to discuss a new strategic plan and the issues the Board will be focussing on for the next five years. Subsequently, the Board released a one page [Board Strategic Plan](#). Have a look at the Strategic Plan and let us know what you think.

I will leave you with a quote from someone whose name may not be well known but his work is.

"It is well known that 'problem avoidance' is an important part of problem solving. Instead of solving the problem you go upstream and alter the system so that the problem does not occur in the first place."

Edward De Bono
(Father of lateral thinking)

WE ARE HERE TO HELP!

Yes, really! Do you have questions about working as a veterinary surgeon in WA? Do you have a challenging client? Do you want to know if what you are planning to do is compatible with legislation? The Board staff are always ready to answer questions and explore the options with you.

We can be contacted by email admin@vsbwa.org.au or by phone **9317 2353**. If you have a query after office hours you may find the answer in the Board's Veterinary Surgeons' Handbook which can be accessed at <http://www.vsbwa.org.au/>





MURDOCH VETERINARY COLLEGE REGISTRATION DAY 8 DECEMBER 2017

Each year I have the privilege of attending the Murdoch College Registration Day and Ceremony, where newly qualified veterinary surgeons are recognised and welcomed to the profession. The first task of the day was registering 59 new veterinary surgeons so they can work in Western Australia.

After this pleasant task, I attended the Registration Ceremony. A highlight of the ceremony were two inspiring and engaging (short) speeches which were completely different in style but both provided sound advice for the newly qualified veterinary surgeons and not so newly qualified ones.

Dr Peter Punch (Chair of the Veterinary Surgeons' Board) spoke

about what it means to be a professional and provided practical tips on how to live a balanced, happy life while having a satisfying career.

Dr Jenni Hood discussed, from a very personal perspective, where her veterinary degree has taken her and offered advice as to how to make the most of the opportunities that come your way. Do yourself a favour and read the speeches which can be found [here](#) in their entirety.

On behalf of the Board, congratulations to the class of 2017 and welcome to the profession.

MICROCHIPPING & STERILISATION

It has been brought to the Board's attention that some veterinary surgeons are advising clients that they can give away kittens that are not sterilised as long as they are not profiting from the enterprise.

This is incorrect as it is an offence under Section 23 of the Cat Act 2011 to transfer a cat that is not microchipped or sterilised unless an exemption applies or a sterilisation voucher has been provided to the new owner. All cats over 6 months of age are required to be microchipped unless an exemption has been granted.

For more information visit the Department of Local Government and Communities website at <https://www.dlgc.wa.gov.au/AdviceSupport/Pages/Cats-and-dogs.aspx>

PROVISION OF NEEDLES & SYRINGES TO THE PUBLIC

The Board has been advised by WA Police that they have received information from a community source that people (believed to be drug users) had been seen entering a country veterinary hospital and purchasing "fist full" amounts of needles at a time. The source has seen this on more than one occasion.

Veterinary hospitals supplying drug users with needles and syringes is not appropriate.

Drug users can access needle and syringe exchange programs (NSPs) across metropolitan and regional Western Australia. The below link gives the location of NSPs in this state.

http://healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/U_Z/Where-to-find-needle-and-syringe-programs-in-WA

PROVISION OF AN AFTER HOURS SERVICE

The Board has received a number of queries from veterinary surgeons about a veterinary practice's obligation to provide an after hours service.

Since 2007 veterinary practices in WA have not been obliged to provide an after hours service. However, veterinary surgeons are expected to let their clients know how they can obtain veterinary assistance if an animal they have been treating needs urgent attention. This could be satisfied by making prior arrangements with another practice to have clients referred to them after hours. There is no set time period after treatment a veterinary surgeon should do this for. However, it is expected that in most cases the critical time when serious or urgent things go wrong after surgery/treatment of an animal would be under 48 hours.

The Board understands that veterinary practices try to look after their clients and animals but sometimes, due to practicalities, the optimum result is hard to achieve.





CHANGES TO THE REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCREDITATION OF REGISTERED VETERINARY SURGEONS PREPARING COMPANION ANIMALS FOR EXPORT

The Department of Agriculture and Water Resources has changed the requirements for accreditation of registered veterinarians preparing companion animals for export.

1. From 2 January 2018 the Department no longer requires accreditation of registered veterinarians preparing companion animals for export. All veterinarians fully registered by a State or Territory Veterinary Board in Australia are able to prepare companion animals such as dogs, cats and pet birds for export from Australia.
2. All registered veterinarians are now eligible to purchase rabies vaccine for use when preparing dogs and cats for export (other restrictions on the use of rabies vaccine are unchanged).
3. The Accreditation Program for Australian Veterinarians (APAV) will no longer be a requirement for veterinarians to prepare companion animals for export.

Information to assist veterinarians preparing companion animals for export is available on the department website <http://www.agriculture.gov.au/export/controlled-goods/live-animals/companion/vets>. This information outlines the step by step process of preparing companion animals for export. All veterinarians preparing companion animals for export should refer to this information before proceeding with this process.

These changes came into effect from 2 January 2018. The Department's website has been updated to reflect this change. The list of veterinarians on the department's website has been removed.

Please note there are no changes to the requirements for Australian Government Accredited Veterinarians (AAVs) preparing livestock for export.

If you have any questions regarding this change, please contact Leah Wells or Geoff Offner on 07 4241 7822.

BROKEN (CLINICAL) RECORDS

Inadequate clinical records continue to be a source of concern. Whenever the Board receives a complaint against a veterinary surgeon the Board requests that the clinical records for the animal that is the subject of the complaint are provided as part of the assessment of the matter. Unfortunately a significant percentage of the clinical records received are not up to standard and are in breach of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1960 (Act). Apart from avoiding being in breach of the Act there are a number of compelling reasons for keeping good clinical records. These include:

- allowing other veterinary surgeons to access information on clinical presentation, diagnoses and treatments, enabling them to continue the treatment;
- essential for the animal's long term welfare;
- provide a tool for review and research;
- to provide the necessary information for referrals; and
- as a defence against litigation or Board action.

For information on what is required in a clinical record go to page 16 of the Veterinary Surgeons' Handbook which is available on the Board's [website](#)

BREAK INS TO VETERINARY PRACTICES & THEFT OF SCHEDULED DRUGS

Recently it was reported in the news that a number of dangerous drugs, namely Lethabarb and apomorphine were stolen from a metropolitan veterinary hospital. Police were seeking information from the public about the theft.

The Board contacted the Department of Health for further information only to be told that the theft had not been reported to them.

This is a concern as veterinary surgeons must report the loss or theft of any scheduled medicine or poison to the Department of Health immediately.

If at any time a veterinary surgeon identifies that scheduled medicines or poisons have been stolen from their practice or business then the Department of Health must be informed immediately using the [Notification of loss, theft or incident for investigation form \(Word 837KB\)](#).

Department Officers will routinely investigate cases of theft. Veterinary surgeons are expected to review their security arrangements and when necessary take steps to prevent the risk of reoccurrence. The Department of Health also encourages reporting of any confirmed theft to the Police.





DUTIES OF THE MANAGING VETERINARY SURGEON FOR A VETERINARY PRACTICE

The Veterinary Surgeons Act 1960 (Act) requires that a veterinary hospital or clinic is under the management of a registered veterinary surgeon and that the Board is informed in writing of the name of the person who has been appointed to this position. A veterinary practice will not be granted registration unless a managing veterinary surgeon has been appointed.

The managing veterinary surgeon is responsible for ensuring that the practice is run in compliance with legislative requirements of various acts which include but are not limited to:

- The Veterinary Surgeons Act 1960
- The Medicines and Poisons Act 2014; and
- Radiation Safety Act 1975.

The Board is currently compiling an information document which provides further details of the responsibilities of the managing veterinary surgeon of a practice. In the meantime if you would like to discuss further the responsibilities and obligations of the managing veterinary surgeon please contact the Board office at admin@vsbwa.org.au or 93172353.



DID YOU KNOW

that clinical records must be kept for seven years?

DID YOU KNOW

that only a registered pharmacist can supply scheduled drugs on the basis of a prescription written by a veterinary surgeon?



GUIDELINES ON THE MICROCHIPPING OF DOGS & CATS

The Board has finalised guidelines on the microchipping of dogs and cats with particular emphasis on ownership issues and microchipping.

The guidelines can be accessed on the Board's [website](#) under the 'Vet' tab and by clicking 'guidelines'.



VETERINARY SURGEONS' BOARD OF WA

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

- Chair: Dr Peter Punch – AVA nominee
- Deputy Chair: Ms Catherine Carroll – Ministerial appointee
- Dr Graham Harradine – Elected member
- Dr Tony Leeflang – Elected member
- Dr Michael Paton – Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development nominee

HOW TO CONTACT US

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