



# VSBSA NEWSLETTER

November 2011 VSBSA Newsletter



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## Registration Fee Increase

You will notice that the registration fees for 2012 have increased.

As foreshadowed in the September 2011 Newsletter this is due to a significant increase in the Board's legal expenses.

The Board is dealing with a number of on-going matters, and also pursuing new investigations involving unregistered persons. This puts a significant strain on the VSBSA finances, and with the Board's income stream almost entirely derived from registration fees, the fees had to be increased considerably for 2012.

## Registration Renewals – 2012

Enclosed is your Annual Renewal of Registration Form for 2012. Forms must be completed and returned by no later than **31 December 2011** to retain your registration.

### Renewing On-line

If you are renewing on-line, go to the Board's website at [www.vsbsa.org.au](http://www.vsbsa.org.au). Click on the Vet page, and then on Renew Registration. The page will open and display the fees for 2012. Go to the bottom of the page, and click on 'Continue'. You will then be asked to log on to access the Renewal Form. You should log on with:

**User name:** vetreg12

**Password:** 1m8o5j

*Both user name and password should be entered in lower case.*

There are 'required fields' on the Renewal Form. If you do not complete a 'required field', you will be asked to go back and enter the information. The Renewal Form is not case sensitive; but when entering telephone numbers and fax numbers you should **not** put a space in the number (i.e. enter 83319433, not 8331 9433).

When you have completed the Form, you will be taken to ANZ e-Gate. This is the on-line payment system for the ANZ Bank. To complete your renewal, you will be asked to pay on-line with your Visa or MasterCard Credit Card. All data collected through on-line renewals (including payment details) is secure and protected.

## Professional Indemnity Insurance – important information

Insurance policies vary from year to year, and essentially a new policy is entered into each year, even with the same insurer.

The Board considers it is necessary to get full insurance details each year at renewal time. You will notice that this section in the Declaration has been expanded.

It is important that you are familiar with your insurance policy and schedule, including whether it contains limitations or exclusions to your cover. If so, this must be disclosed.

On the Declaration form, under the insurance section, you must provide full details of your insurance cover, (whether your own or that provided under your employer's insurance arrangements).

Details required include:

- Name of Insurance Company (not the broker);
- Policy number;
- Amount of Cover \$;
- Full details of all and any limitations or restrictions or exclusions on cover.

## RENEWAL CHECKLIST

Whether you renew on-line, or return it by post, your Renewal cannot be processed unless you have completed all the following:

- Your name and address details
- Completed the insurance section in the Declaration
- Ticked the necessary boxes in the Declaration
  - ⇒ Civil claims
  - ⇒ Charges
  - ⇒ Subject of any Inquiry or disciplinary proceedings
  - ⇒ Medical fitness
  - ⇒ Recency of practice
- Signed the Declaration
- Completed contact for Declared Disasters (VSBSA Primary Registrants located in SA only, and if willing to participate)
- Provided your CPD points – **all VSBSA Primary Registrants** (except new graduates in their first year of practice, and those undergoing formal post graduate training in a relevant field).

Once your Renewal has been received, checked and processed, your Annual Practising Certificate will be posted to you as soon as possible.

Please note that your Annual Practising Certificate represents your receipt for taxation purposes. There is no GST payable on statutory fees (such as registration).

**PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOUR RENEWAL IS FULLY COMPLETED AND RETURNED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE – AND BEFORE 31 DECEMBER 2011.**

**If returning by post, send it to: VSBSA  
185 FULLARTON ROAD  
DULWICH SA 5065**

### Outgoing VSBSA Deputy Board Members

The Board wishes to express its sincere thanks to:

- Mr John Counihan
  - Dr Kirsten Hailstone
- for their many years of service to the Board.

### Current Board Members are:

- Ms Debra Lane, Presiding Member
- Prof Chris Riley, AVA representative
- Ms Wendy Hunt, Layperson
- Ms Adele Steel, Layperson
- Dr Hayley McPhee
- Dr Jim Smith
- Dr Robert Rahaley

### Deputy Members are:

- Mr Paul Leadbeter
- Dr Andrew Carter
- Mr Charles Goode
- Dr Mark Peters
- Dr Karen Hunter
- Dr Elizabeth Aikenhead
- Dr Celia Dickason

Several terms expired at the end of September 2011. While some Members were reappointed to their current role, or became Deputy Members, [the Board welcomes 2 new Members: Prof Chris Riley and Ms Wendy Hunt.](#)

## SOME RECENT CASE STUDIES

### ESTIMATES

This complaint concerned a verbal estimate for the extraction of one tooth which the owners understood to be under \$200, but which ultimately cost over \$600. The initial quotation was given in March 2011; and was recorded on the clinical record as between \$300-500 – a more realistic estimate than the amount understood by the owners.

In June, the owners signed an admission form for the procedure and agreed to blood tests at an additional cost. However, an estimate for the procedure was not included on the admission/consent form. The owners remained of the view the procedure would be around \$200 and the cost of the blood test. It was not until some time later that they were advised of the final costs. An offer was made by the clinic to reduce the account, but the owners declined the offer.

The Board noted during its enquiry that the clinic had now changed their admission/consent form to include a written estimate of the cost of procedures.

While agreeing this was appropriate, the Board also suggested that the clinic should have offered a further consultation or review before the procedure in June, given that it was 3 months since the initial discussion on the dental procedure with the owners.

It agreed that it was possible the owners misunderstood the verbal estimate, perhaps only hearing one component of the cost, as they subsequently acknowledged they later understood the likely cost of the procedure would not be less than \$300.

The owners were satisfied that the outcome of their complaint had been that the clinic had changed their ad-

mission/consent form to include written estimates.

While it is the case that the Board does not consider complaints involving fees or accounts, this matter highlighted the importance of ensuring that owners are given written estimates. Estimates should also cover all costs that may be involved with a procedure, including any after-care treatment if required.

### CAUSE OF DEATH UNKNOWN

This complaint involved a dog that died suddenly one month after surgery to remove a mast cell tumour. The complainant was concerned it may have been related in some way to the surgery.

After considering the documentation available, the Board concurred it was not possible to identify a cause for the apparent sudden death of the dog as there was insufficient information available.

The Board noted that a post mortem was suggested by the vet, but the option was declined. It was therefore difficult for the Board to come to any conclusion on the cause of death, though it agreed it was likely that the dog's death was unrelated to the removal of the mast cell tumour. It came to this conclusion because the surgery to remove the mast cell tumour was performed one month earlier, and from the clinical record available, the dog appeared to have recovered well from the anaesthetic, and the surgical procedure.

The Board agreed there were a number of possible reasons why the dog may have suddenly collapsed and died, however, in the absence of any clinical evidence it was not able to offer any further explanation.

### RETURN OF ASHES

This complaint concerned the alleged failure to treat an older dog for a respiratory problem which subsequently died that evening. The complaint further alleged that the wrong ashes had been returned initially, and the owner was uncertain whether the ashes now in her possession were those of her dog.

There was a different view on whether the veterinarian had called the owner later in the day to check on the dog's condition – as the owner stated no call was received while the vet's report advised the call had been made and a message left. The Board did not have enough evidence to come to a conclusion either way on this issue.

However, the Board's enquiries revealed that the dog had been diagnosed with pneumonia and possibly congestive heart failure, and that the veterinarian suggested further treatment and diagnostic testing which the owner did not wish to proceed with. It agreed the clinical treatment was satisfactory, and it appeared the owner did not fully understand the seriousness of the dog's condition.

In relation to the return of the ashes, the clinic acknowledged that their protocols for cremations and returns needed improving, and they agreed the wrong ashes were returned initially. This occurred because two animals were labelled with the same name, leading to the confusion. Having assessed all the documentation, including information from AWL, the Board found that the owner now had the correct ashes. The owner of the clinic informed the Board that their protocols have been revised, and that the chances of a similar mistake occurring again have been minimized.

## NATIONAL REGISTRATION – AND NATIONAL DATABASE

In 2010, Victoria became the first State to pass amendments to its legislation to enable national recognition of registration.

From January 2011, veterinarians with primary registration and specialist registration in another state/territory are not required to register to practice in Victoria.

In 2011, NSW also passed its amendments to recognise veterinary registration in other states and territories. This has been effective from 20 September 2011.

In both Victoria and NSW, veterinarians who reside in other states and territories and have primary and/or

specialist registration are 'deemed' to be registered in NSW and Victoria.

Veterinarians are not required to inform the NSW or Victorian Veterinary Board if they are working in that State. Nevertheless, any conditions or limitations placed on your registration in your 'home' state will apply when practising in NSW or Victoria.

Importantly, veterinarians are legally obliged to abide by the legislation, the Code of Professional Conduct, and any other requirements of the jurisdiction in which you are working.

The Board advises you to contact the interstate Board and/or ensure you are familiar with the requirements for practice in that State.

### National Database

It is intended to establish a National Database of all registered veterinarians in the future. Amendments to the Veterinary Practice Act in SA have been drafted to enable national recognition of registration, as well as amendments to facilitate the VSBSA contributing to the proposed national database. This will allow VSBSA to upload some data held on the SA Register to the national database.

## OUTBREAK OF AVIAN PARAMYXOVIRUS – VICTORIA

In September 2011 Biosecurity SA advised of the outbreak of Avian Paramyxovirus in Victoria.

The current situation is that 49 properties have been confirmed as infected in Victoria since the outbreak. 23 have been resolved and are now disease free. Six detections have been found in feral pigeons around Melbourne.

The last property confirmed as infected was on 8 November 2011.

Biosecurity advise the outbreak is stable to declining, and there has not been any detection of the virus outside of Victoria. The SA pigeon flock remains free of the disease; and there has been no detections in Australian commercial or backyard poultry flocks.

Nevertheless, pigeon racing and shows have been cancelled in South Australia until

further notice. With the start of the pigeon breeding season, movement of birds and squabs interstate has commenced. Introduction of pigeons into South Australia requires a permit, and Biosecurity are receiving permit applications at one per day.

The Livestock Act in SA has been amended to list virulent avian paramyxovirus as a notifiable exotic disease. This means that pigeon and poultry owners and producers, as well as veterinarians, are under an obligation to report any signs of the disease.

Suspected cases of paramyxovirus infection should be reported to Biosecurity SA by phoning **1800 675 888**.



## ANIMAL HEALTH IN AUSTRALIA

Animal Health Surveillance Quarterly – is a quarterly report on topical animal health matters across Australia. The most recent edition can be downloaded.

The 2010 Report on Animal Health in Australia is now available. This report provides a comprehensive overview of Australia's animal health system and status in 2010.

You can obtain copies of these reports by visiting the website of Animal Health Australia: [www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au](http://www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au) or contact them: [ahsq@animalhealthaustralia.com.au](mailto:ahsq@animalhealthaustralia.com.au)

### Practising when not registered

The Board has laid charges in the Magistrates Court against Dr GJ Mooney for practising as a veterinary surgeon when not registered.

The charges concern a number of incidences, and include offences contrary to section 39 of the Act (providing veterinary treatment when not registered), and illegally holding out as a veterinary surgeon (section 40 of the Act).

### Sending copies of patient records

Veterinarians have an obligation to send a copy of patient records to another veterinarian if requested to do so. Before doing so the Board recommends you ensure the owner has agreed to the patient record being provided by the primary vet to the second vet.

A second veterinarian may have been asked to provide a second opinion by the animal's owner. Or the owner may have moved. The owner's agreement can be sought beforehand – e.g. when they become a client of the primary veterinarian. Or in many circumstances the agreement will be given by the client to the second vet.

If the client/owner specifically does not agree to the patient records being provided, the obligation of the primary veterinarian to provide the record diminishes.

Contact the Registrar if you are unsure and need to discuss a particular issue.

## VETERINARY SURGEONS BOARD OF SA

*postal and street address:*

**185 FULLARTON ROAD  
DULWICH SA 5065**

**Phone: (08) 8331 9433**

**Fax: (08) 8364 4688**

**Email: [admin@vsbsa.org.au](mailto:admin@vsbsa.org.au)**

**Office Hours: 10 am – 4 pm  
Monday to Friday**

Visit the website for regular  
news items and information  
[www.vsbsa.org.au](http://www.vsbsa.org.au)



The Members and Deputy Members of the VSBSA Board extend their best wishes for Christmas and the New Year to all members of the profession. We also thank all who have assisted the Board during the year, and wish everyone a safe and enjoyable holiday season.

Please note that over the Christmas & New Year period the VSBSA office will close 12pm Thursday 22nd December 2011 and reopen 10am Tuesday 3rd January 2012; if you have an urgent enquiry during this time, please call 0419 826 389.



### INFORMATION & REMINDERS

#### GE CARE CREDIT

There may be a misconception within the veterinary profession that GE Care Credit require a minimum amount of \$300 on applications for GE Care Credit.

The Board understands this is not correct – this minimum amount is offered by GE Care Credit as a guide. It is not a requirement that applications can only be made for amounts of \$300 or more.

#### CHANGES TO THE FEES AND LICENCES UNDER THE RADIATION PROTECTION AND CONTROL ACT

The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) have advised that proposed increases to EPA fees for licences and registrations granted under the Radiation Protection and Control Act 1982 (the RPC Act), and new licences and fees that will result from changes to the RPC Act that have been passed by Parliament. All proposed changes are anticipated to come into effect on 1 January 2012.

#### REGISTRATION CHECKS FOR NEW VETS

Vets **must** have their registration approved in writing before commencing practice in South Australia.

You should contact the Registrar's Office if you have any doubt about the progress of your registration application, or registration status.

Employers are also advised to check registration status when employing new veterinarians. Vets with provisional registration will have a certificate issued (to enable them to commence practice before the Board formally approves the application). Other vets will have current primary, secondary, or limited Registration.

#### ADDRESS OR NAME CHANGE

It is vital that you update us of any changes in your details such as new address and / or change of name. If not, you may miss out on receiving important information from the Board, such as your renewal notice, and other news.

### HAVE A LAUGH: Dog Property Rules

1. If I like it, it's mine.
2. If its in my mouth, it's mine.
3. If I can take it from you, it's mine.
4. If I had it a little while ago, it's mine.
5. If I'm chewing something up, all the pieces are mine.
6. If its mine, it must never appear to be yours anyway.
7. If it just looks like mine, it's mine.
8. If I saw it first, it's mine.
9. If you are playing with something and you put it down, it automatically becomes mine.
10. If its broken, it's yours.

