To the Hon Rory McEwen MP
Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries

In accordance with the Public Sector Management Act 1995, Section 66, and the Veterinary Practice Act 2003, Section 25, I present the Annual Report of the Veterinary Surgeons Board of South Australia for the 2007/08 financial year.

Paul Douglas Leadbeter LLM
Presiding Officer
Veterinary Surgeons Board of SA

30 September 2008
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PRESIDING OFFICER’S REPORT

The primary role of professional bodies such as the VSBSA in South Australia is an important one. On the one hand professional bodies must regulate the profession to ensure it maintains and improves standards; on the other hand it must protect the interests of the public. This is a continuous balancing act, because to ensure it can fulfill both these roles, the Board acknowledges that it is important for it to maintain the confidence of both the profession which it regulates, and the broader community. It also acknowledges, as do most veterinary surgeons, that community expectations from the profession continue to rise. During 2007/08 the Board actively sought the views of the profession about the Board and its role – in maintaining professional standards; protecting the interests of the public; and promoting animal welfare. For the first time, the Board put a survey ‘in the field’ to all veterinarians. The Board was encouraged by the feedback it received, and the responses will assist the Board in its role in the future.

The Board continued its practice of meeting with the profession during the year. At its meeting with rural practitioners, prescribing medication was the key topic of discussion. After this meeting, and following comments from the Department of Health, the Board developed its policy on prescribing and supplying medications and promoted this across the profession. Other activities in policy development during the year included the review of the Standards for Hospital Accreditation; and approaches to guide its consideration on applications for registration where the veterinarian has not practiced for 3 years or longer, and veterinarian’s health and fitness to practice.

2007/08 also saw the first intake of veterinary science students into the new course at the University of Adelaide. This is a significant development for South Australia, and the Board expects that in future years, when graduates emerge from the school, the shortage of veterinarians in this State will be ameliorated. The commencement of the new school has created some additional responsibilities for the Board, and in future the Board will work collaboratively with the University to develop appropriate processes to support students in their clinical studies.

Financially, the Board retained a modest surplus for the second year in succession. To assist in its planning for national registration, (when SA will be financially disadvantaged), a 5 year Financial Strategy was developed during the year. The plan identified a strategy to enable the Board to meet all its obligations into the future, while at the same time, absorbing the effects of a significant reduction to its income from national registration. At the national level, the Board continued to support the process of national recognition of registration, which now awaits the endorsement of the Ministerial Council of Primary Industries.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge that the Board has continued to work productively and collaboratively throughout the year. The mix of skills and knowledge across the Board and Deputy Board members contributes greatly to the capacity of the Board to identify and progress important issues for both the profession, and the community. I particularly wish to acknowledge the contribution of Ms Helen Radoslovich, the lay member of the Board, who will retire in September 2008 after many years with the Board. Her commitment over the last 9 years, along with her insight, wisdom and reasoned approach to all matters which confront the Board has been valued by all members. On behalf of the Board and the profession, I wish her well for the future and thank her for her long years of service.

After six years in the role, this is my last year as Presiding Officer, as my term expires in September 2008. My time with the Board has been both interesting and stimulating and has enabled me to develop an insight into the Veterinary profession not possible to the general public whose dealings with the profession are largely through the occasional treatment of their animals. My overriding impression of the Veterinary profession is a positive one. The vast majority of practitioners appear committed to providing services for the care and welfare of animals of an impressively high standard in circumstances which can at times be both difficult and traumatic for the animal and the animal's owner. Many of the complaints received by the Board arise out of a failure in communication in such circumstances rather than any negligence in the provision of veterinary treatment.
I wish to thank my fellow Board members for their support and dedicated contributions to the Board’s tasks and functions. I have enjoyed their camaraderie and positive contributions which have helped make my term as Presiding Officer a most enjoyable one. I should also acknowledge and thank the Board’s Registrar, Ms Sue Millbank and the Assistant to the Registrar, Ms Alison Fulwood for the excellent ongoing administrative support which they provide to the Board and their exemplary role as the Board’s first point of contact for members of the public and the veterinary profession. I particularly wish to express my gratitude to Sue Millbank (and indeed her predecessor as registrar, Helen Ward) for their very helpful guidance and reasoned views on the many and varied matters which the Board has had to address during my term of office. I hope my successor will gain as much satisfaction from the role as I have.

I have pleasure in presenting the Annual Report for 2007/08.

Paul Douglas Leadbeter LLM
Presiding Officer
Veterinary Surgeons Board of SA
The 2007/08 year was a busy year for the Office, with considerable effort put into policy development and planning for the future. During the year, the Hospital Standards were revised for the first time, and the process for hospital accreditation modified. In particular, preliminary approval to design plans for hospital facilities is now no longer provided by the Board. Attention was also given to developing procedures to enable the Board to deal effectively with veterinarians who have not practiced for 3 or more years. In addition, the Board approved a process, in partnership with the SA Medical Board, to assist veterinarians with health issues which may affect their fitness to practice.

During the year, the Board considered the financial effect of national recognition of registration and adopted a 5 Year Financial Strategy (2007/07 to 2012/13) to plan for this eventuality. The strategy identified the financial impact of national recognition of registration, which primarily will be the loss of around $25,000 pa from secondary registrations. It also considered the Board's financial reserves, and recognized the reserve fund needs to increase to enable the Board to withstand any future appeal or unforeseen contingencies.

Operationally, the number of complaints to the Board again decreased. This was the fifth successive year that the number of complaints declined, though it was again the case that a small number of complaints were very serious matters requiring the attention of a disciplinary tribunal hearing.

The number of veterinarians registered in South Australia again increased slightly from last financial year (636 in 2006/07 to 663 in 2007/08). The largest increases were in primary registrations (481 to 501), and non-practising veterinarians (40 to 54). Secondary registrations decreased slightly for the first time in a number of years (105 to 99). Two new Specialists were added to the Register in 2007/08.

Considerable effort was put into improving communications with the profession during 2007/08. In particular, the Board’s website was revised and enhanced. The new website is able to be maintained ‘in house’, and this enables relevant information to be posted onto the site regularly. All Board Guidelines, Standards, Forms and other material has been loaded onto the site, so that information is readily accessible to both the profession and members of the public.

On-line renewal of registration was available for the first time through the website, and the Board was encouraged that approximately 20% of veterinarians renewed their registration on-line. This will continue to be available as an option in future; as feedback to the Office indicated it was a convenient way for many members of the profession to renew their registration.

In addition, a Survey was generated and distributed to all registered veterinarians in South Australia. Just over 10% responded to the Survey, and its results (which have been posted on the website) provided valuable information for the Board and will be used as a baseline for future surveys.

The Office received many requests for advice from overseas qualified veterinarians seeking to migrate to Australia, and register as a veterinarian. This is so because South Australia is a designated ‘regional area’ for migration purposes. Information sought includes advice about qualifications, registration status, the National Veterinary Examination, and work experience available in SA while preparing for the National Veterinary Examination. Many other requests for advice or information were also received from members of the profession and the public during the year.

Sue Millbank
Registrar
Veterinary Surgeons Board of SA
ORGANISATION OF THE AGENCY

AS AT 30 June 2008 THE BOARD CONSISTED OF THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS:

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<tr>
<th>Attended/out of</th>
<th>Term of office expires:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chairperson:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEADBETER, Paul Douglas, LLM</td>
<td>09/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JASINSKI, Helena Alide, LLB</td>
<td>01/02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McNICHOLL, Jane Eleanor, MVB</td>
<td>09/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HUNTER, Karen Anne, BVSc</td>
<td>07/08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RADOSLOVICH, Helen, BSc (Ma)(Hons)</td>
<td>06/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAKER, Robert Marshall, BVSc, MSc, MAgSc</td>
<td>09/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CARTER, Andrew Wallace, BVSc, DVD</td>
<td>10/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEEL, Adele Lea</td>
<td>06/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Members:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOUBE, Andrew John, BVSc</td>
<td>02/02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUNCHENBERG, Christopher John, BSc, BVMS</td>
<td>00/01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COUNIHAN, John</td>
<td>04/05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DICKASON, Celia-Jane BVSc</td>
<td>02/02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McBRYDE, Ian David Balfour, BSc, BVMS</td>
<td>01/01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PETERS, Mark David, BSc, PhD Grad Dip Bus</td>
<td>02/05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Chairperson is a solicitor, Dr Carter is the Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) nominee, Dr Baker is from the Department of Primary Industries, Dr McNicholl is the large animal/rural veterinarian, Dr Hunter is the small animal/metropolitan veterinarian, Ms Radoslovich is a layperson on the Board, and Ms Steel is a layperson with a specific interest in animal welfare.

LEGISLATION, FUNCTIONS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE BOARD

The Board administers the legislation governing the profession, which in September 2005 became the Veterinary Practice Act 2003. In accordance with this, it maintains three Registers. These are:

1. The Register of persons qualified to practise veterinary surgery
2. The Register of persons entitled to be registered as Veterinary Specialists
3. The Register of veterinary surgeons removed from the Register as a result of disciplinary procedures

The Board also maintains a list of Veterinary Services Providers. Veterinary Services Providers are defined as non-veterinary surgeons providing veterinary treatment through a veterinary surgeon. In addition, the Board maintains a list of veterinary surgeons and their relatives who have a business interest in prescribed veterinary products or services; and a list of accredited Hospitals in South Australia.

The functions of the Board are to

1. regulate the practice of veterinary surgery in South Australia
2. maintain the standard of veterinary practice in South Australia
3. protect the interests of the public
4. foster animal welfare principles

The consumer market is wide ranging, covering owners and breeders of domestic pets, animals in sport and recreation, import/export markets, public health and research.
OPERATIONS

MEETINGS

The Board met 11 times during the year for monthly meetings (the first Thursday of each month except January). In addition, various members/deputy members met as part of a Tribunal to hear formal proceedings. Some Board and Deputy Board Members attended a special meeting in June 2008 to consider national issues associated with AVBC.

In February 2007, the Board arranged a meeting with rural veterinarians. Over 20 veterinarians based in rural locations around South Australia attended the meeting. Prescribing and dispensing prescription medications was discussed and feedback was received from rural veterinarians on a proposed Checklist for the dispensing of medications.

THE REGISTERS

At 30 June 2008 the role consisted of 663 registrants.

This was made up of:

- 501 Primary Registrations
- 99 Secondary Registrations (the primary place of practice is in another Australian state or territory)
- 9 Limited registrations
- 54 Non-practising veterinarians

19 of the above registrants are also on the Specialists Register.

There are no veterinary surgeons on the Removed Register as at 30 June 2008.

NEW REGISTRATIONS

During the 2007/08 financial year, 94 applicants were granted registration by the Board. 70 registrations were new registrations, while the remaining registrations were reinstatements to the Register, or limited registrations. Of the 70 new registrations, applicants had obtained their veterinary qualifications from universities in the following countries:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 56 applicants who obtained their veterinary degrees in Australia studied at the following universities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University of Sydney</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Melbourne</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Queensland</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murdoch University</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following chart overviews the total number of Registrations from 1997/98 until 2007/08.

VETERINARY SPECIALISTS

19 Veterinary Surgeons were registered as Specialists as at 30 June 2008 in the following branches:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specialty</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Veterinary Ophthalmology</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterinary Pathobiology</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterinary Pathobiology</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterinary Pathobiology</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterinary Pathobiology</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterinary Radiology</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterinary Surgery</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterinary Surgery</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal Behaviour</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterinary Pathobiology</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterinary Pathology</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterinary Medicine</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VETERINARY SERVICES PROVIDERS

34 veterinary services providers were listed as at 30 June 2008. In accordance with Sections 50/51 of the Veterinary Practice Act 2003 Veterinary Services Providers must provide the Board with required information. Veterinary Services Providers are defined as non-veterinary surgeons providing veterinary treatment through a veterinary surgeon.

Information which the Board is required to keep for Veterinary Services Providers includes:

- Name and address of the Veterinary Services Provider
- Premises at which the veterinary services are provided
- Names of veterinary surgeons providing veterinary treatment
- Persons in authority for the Veterinary Services Provider

The listing is available for inspection in the Office of the Registrar.

VETERINARY HOSPITALS

Division 4 of the Veterinary Practice Act 2003 enables the Board to accredit veterinary hospitals. The Board encourages practices to apply for Hospital accreditation, as this has the effect of raising the standard of veterinary practice in South Australia.

The Board approved 2 new Veterinary Hospitals during 2007/08. As at 30 June 2008 there were 25 approved Veterinary Hospitals.

Hospitals carrying current accreditation with the Australian Small Animal Veterinary Association (ASAVA) are automatically approved by the Board. There are currently 6 hospitals in this state with ASAVA accreditation. The remaining hospitals have been accredited by the Veterinary Surgeons Board of SA (VSBSA).

VSBSA accredited veterinary hospitals must be inspected once every three years, and/or six months after a change of ownership to maintain accreditation. Inspection is done by a Hospital Inspector appointed by the Board.

During 2007/08, the Board withdrew accreditation from three veterinary hospitals. One accreditation was withdrawn voluntarily by the new owner of the premises.

Hospital Inspectors must be appointed by the Board; currently there are three appointed Hospital Inspectors:

- Dr John Hamilton
- Dr Andrew Doube
- Dr Jennifer Weston

PRESCRIBED BUSINESS INTERESTS

The Veterinary Practice Act 2003 requires veterinary surgeons to inform clients about potential conflicts of interest when referring clients to veterinary services or products where the veterinary surgeon has a financial interest. Veterinary Surgeons are also required to declare their financial interests in these products or services to the Board.

The list of veterinary surgeons declaring their interests in veterinary products or services is kept in the Office of the Registrar.
COMPLAINTS

One of the important ways the Board fulfils its role to maintain high standards of competence and conduct across the profession is to investigate complaints. By assessing the merits or otherwise of complaints the Board is able to inform individual veterinarians, and the wider profession, of ways to improve practice. Further, it has a statutory responsibility to investigate complaints lodged by members of the public, the profession or organizations.

The complaint process usually involves seeking information from the complainant, and often involves directing the complainant back to the veterinarian in the first instance, if they have not discussed their complaint with him/her. For complaints of a minor nature, if this does not resolve the problem, the Registrar may become involved and mediate an outcome. If this does not resolve the complaint, or if the complaint is of a more serious nature, a formal (or written) complaint will be lodged and investigated. The most serious complaints that allege professional misconduct or negligence may be referred directly to the Crown Solicitor’s Office for investigation. These more serious matters are considered by a Disciplinary Tribunal Hearing.

Once a written complaint has been lodged, a report from the veterinary surgeon concerned is sought. Other veterinary surgeons involved in the matter will also be asked to provide a report. The report from the veterinary surgeon who is the subject of the complaint is then sent to the complainant for comment. In particular, comments from the complainant are sought on any matters of fact or new evidence. The Board will then consider the complaint.

The Australian Veterinary Association Ltd Code of Professional Conduct is used as the benchmark in all matters of conduct.

The fundamental principals of the Code of Conduct are:

- The primary concern of the profession is for the welfare of the animals.
- All work performed by veterinarians is to a standard of competence acceptable to their peers.
- Veterinarians, individually, act to promote cohesion within the profession and the trust of the profession by the general public.
- No personal advantage is sought to the detriment of a professional colleague.

Complaints from members of the public are treated as ‘open’ complaints, while complaints from members of the profession against another veterinarian are generally accorded confidentiality. The Board recognises that the Code of Professional Conduct stresses the need for the profession to promote cohesion and trust within the profession. It flows from this that complaints from a veterinarian against another veterinarian are taken as serious matters by the Board.

The average length of time taken to resolve complaints in 2007/08 was 65.4 working days. This compares with the average length of time in 2006/07, which was 58.3 working days. In 2007/08, the longest time taken to resolve a matter was 166 working days (144 days in 2006/07), and the shortest was 35 working days (37 in 2006/07). Complaints remaining unresolved as at 30 June 2008 were excluded from these calculations.

The following chart shows the number of complaints received and dealt with by the Board over a 10 year period. The peak during this period was in 2001/02, when 61 complaints were received. Since then the number of complaints have gradually declined, and this trend continued during 2007/08 with 20 written complaints received.
During 2007/08, 20 new (written) complaints were brought before the Board. Of those:

- **1 case was referred to the Crown Solicitor**

  One complaint is being investigated for formal prosecution. This complaint involved an Inspector appointed by the Board to inspect the records of a veterinarian involved in a complaint. After receiving the Inspector's report, the complaint was forwarded to the Crown Solicitor's Office for investigation into unprofessional conduct related to record-keeping. The original complaint was found to have substance and involved a formal report.

- **2 complaints were brought against lay people**

  Non-registered persons reported to the Board for carrying out acts of veterinary treatment are advised of the potential to breach legislation, not only the Veterinary Practice Act, but also the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, the Controlled Substances Act and the Livestock Act. Continuing to carry out such acts may result in the Board laying charges in order to protect the community. One of the complaints against laypersons was resolved; the other involved insufficient evidence to proceed further. Nevertheless the layperson involved was fully informed about requirements of the various Acts and the penalties which apply for breaching the Veterinary Practice Act 2003.

- **2 complaints involved communication**

  Communication was identified as the main issue in two complaints. In both matters, medical management was not a concern.

- **8 complaints were determined as having no case**

  These matters involved medical treatment, where the treatment was found to be correct. Sometimes, these complaints may also involve communication difficulties between the complainant and the veterinary surgeon.
5 complaints involved the preparation of a formal report

A formal report indicates that the veterinarian was informed that the matter could have been handled better, or that a mistake was made though it was not considered serious enough to be negligent. Four separate veterinarians were involved in these complaints. In some instances, the veterinarians were required to demonstrate to the Board that their practice has changed in order to avoid future problems, or to undertake continuing professional development in the required area of expertise.

1 complaint was vexatious

A vexatious complaint is defined as one which is instituted with the intention of annoying or embarrassing the person against whom it is brought; if it is brought for collateral purposes, and not for the purpose of having the Board adjudicate on the issues to which they give rise; or if, irrespective of the motive of the complainant, they are so obviously untenable or manifestly groundless as to be utterly hopeless.

The remaining complaint was not finalised in 2007/08.

Complainants
From the 20 complaints, 9 complainants were female, while 3 were male. The remaining 8 complainants were identified only as the owner of the animal, and may include breeders or joint owners.

Animals
Dogs were the main animals which were the subject of complaints (9), with cats almost equal (8). No animals were involved in the remaining 3 complaints.
Dogs have consistently been the animal involved in a significant number of complaints to the Board over the last 5 years. For the first time in many years, there were almost as many complaints about cats as about dogs in 2007/08.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Year</th>
<th>Dogs</th>
<th>Cats</th>
<th>Horses</th>
<th>Other Animals</th>
<th>Not Available</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002-2003</td>
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<tr>
<td>2003-2004</td>
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<td>2004-2005</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005-2006</td>
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<td>2006-2007</td>
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<td>2007-2008</td>
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TRIBUNALS

During 2007/08, one Tribunal was convened. This was for a complaint lodged the previous year. The Tribunal was convened in May 2008 and as at 30 June 2008, the Determination was under consideration.
The Board produced 2 editions of its Newsletter during 2007/08. These were distributed to all registered veterinary surgeons.

Copies of the Register of Veterinary Surgeons is available for a fee.

The list of Veterinary Services Providers is available from the Office of the Registrar, as well as the list of Prescribed Business Interests of registered veterinarians.

The Board has a website, www.vsbsa.org.au, which is updated regularly.
FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR 2008/09

During 2008/09, the Board will continue to develop its procedures to deal with health issues for veterinarians, where serious health problems may impact on their capacity to practice. During the current year, the Board agreed in principle to work with the SA Medical Board on this matter, and this will be formalised during the next year. It is a requirement under the Veterinary Practice Act 2003 that veterinarians declare their fitness to practice when renewing registration, and it is therefore important that procedures are in place to deal with this situation if it occurs.

The Board will continue to meet with the profession in 2008/09 to inform them about changes to national and state registration, and to discuss issues of concern to the profession. At these events, the Board also proposes to inform the profession about its role, and provide general advice and information.

In 2008/09, the Board will sponsor the inaugural Annual Oration for the veterinary profession. The Board supported this concept in 2007/08, and arrangements are in hand for the first event in September 2008. The Annual Oration will be named the L.B. Bull Oration, after Lionel Batley Bull, an eminent veterinarian in SA. It aims to

- raise the professional standard of the veterinary profession in SA
- raise the professional profile of the veterinary profession in SA
- raise awareness of the role of the profession within the SA community

The oration will be presented on one of the following general themes

1. Maintaining professional ethics in a commercial environment
2. Health of the profession
3. Public interest and private practice
4. Animal welfare and veterinary practice
5. Professional ethics
6. Education standards for the profession
7. Communicating in an anxious world
8. Managing risk in a litigious and professional environment

The Board will continue to collaborate with the new veterinary school at the Roseworthy campus of the University of Adelaide in 2008/09, and develop a process for student registration, enabling students to engage in clinical practice under the supervision of a registered veterinarian.

The Board will also continue to progress national recognition of registration, and will work with the Department of Primary Industries on the legislative changes required to enable South Australia to recognise primary and specialist veterinarians registered in other States and Territories.
NATIONAL ISSUES

The **Australasian Veterinary Boards Council Incorporated** (AVBC) ([www.avbc.asn.au](http://www.avbc.asn.au)) provides a forum where representatives of Australian and New Zealand Veterinary regulatory bodies and education providers discuss issues of national and international concern relating to maintaining the standards of veterinary practice. It provides a mechanism to foster standardisation and quality assurance of the delivery of veterinary sciences and enables Australia to liaise effectively with other countries. The Council is funded by the individual Boards. The AVBC administers the National Veterinary Examination and assesses overseas qualifications for the purpose of migration.

The last national conference was held in Perth in May 2008. Dr Julia Nicholls represented the Board as the South Australian delegate and the Board thanks her for her diligence in representing its interests at the national meeting. Regular teleconferences are also held involving all State, Territory and NZ delegates.

Reports were received from the various sub-committees of AVBC, including the Veterinary Schools Accreditation Advisory Council, the National Veterinary Examination Panel, the Working Group on Registration of Veterinary Nurses, and the Advisory Committee on Registration of Veterinary Specialists.

AVBC also considered a Discussion Paper on emerging issues for the profession. Prepared by Prof T Heath, the Discussion Paper raised a number of important matters, and the AVBC developed a priority list for attention in future years. National recognition of registration was accorded the highest priority.

The Australasian Veterinary Boards Council also agreed to review its procedures, and established a new governance model in 2007/08.

The Registrars of Australian Boards and New Zealand met the day before the AVBC Conference to discuss matters of mutual interest. Particular emphasis was given to Letters of Good Standing, and national registration.
ADMINISTRATION

Freedom of Information
The Registrar is designated as the Freedom of Information Officer for the Board. She is obliged to provide access to personal files and to provide copies of information contained in these files to the individual concerned on receipt of application for access.

The Board is not obliged to provide access or copies of information relating to the investigation of complaints, and particularly to complaints undergoing formal investigation with the laying of formal charges through the Crown Solicitor's Office. However, the Board may provide access under certain circumstances to information relating to other complaints. It will treat any requests on the merits of each individual application.

No applications were received in 2007/08.

Executive and staff employment & human resource matters including Workforce Diversity
The Board employs two part-time officers: the Registrar and Assistant to the Registrar.

Equal Opportunity
The gender balance of membership of the Board is taken into consideration when members are appointed.

Remuneration
Members of the Board are paid sitting fees in accordance with the directive of the Commissioner for Public Employment:

- Chairperson: $47.50 per hour ($190 for 4 hour sitting)
- Members: $40.00 ($160 for 4 hour sitting)

The Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson, who are both legal practitioners and in their second term with the Board, are paid a fee of $5,050pa in accordance with advice from the Department of Primary Industries.

The last increase to all sitting fees was on 1st June 2005.

Fraud
No instances of fraud were detected in this financial year.

Financial Performance
Financial affairs of the Board are audited by Neill Neill & Co pursuant to the Veterinary Practice Act 2003, and the statements are included within this Annual Report.

Occupational Health, Safety & Welfare
There were no notifiable incidents within the period.

Workers Compensation
No claims were made during 2007/08. This is a matter of continuing concern for the Board. Given its limited resources, the Board is concerned that it does not have the financial capacity to respond to any workers compensation claim. The Board has taken this matter up with the South Australian Government, and understands that the Office for Public Employment and Treasury is now examining the policy issues related to liability for small Boards and agencies. The Board will continue to seek clarification on this issue in order to gain a resolution which does not place the Board at financial risk.
Use of Consultants
The Board did not engage any consultants during the 2007/08 financial year. From time to time the Board seeks opinion from members of the profession with a particular expertise or special interest. Unless it forms part of formal proceedings, there is usually no fee for this advice.

_The Board wishes to formally thank those members of the profession who have generously shared their knowledge and experience._

Overseas Travel
There was no overseas travel by employees.

Disability Action Plans
The services of this agency are accessible by all people. Where a complainant is not able to make a written complaint a verbal statement is taken.
FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

OVERVIEW

Neill Neill & Co are appointed as Auditors for the Veterinary Surgeons Board of SA. The Board continues to engage the services of Not For Profit Accounting Specialists for quarterly assessments of the Board's financial position.

In 2007/08 the Board made a modest surplus. This was mainly due to an increase in registration income from the previous year, as a result of an increase in registration/renewal fees in October 2007. Registration fees were increased in preparation for the anticipated reduction to income when national recognition of veterinary registration commences. The Board expects its income to reduce by an amount of $25,000 at this time.

Some savings were made on expenditure for legal fees because only one complaint was taken forward to a Disciplinary Tribunal during the year.

Small savings have also been achieved in some expenditure areas, such as Accounting.

On an accrual basis, the Board made a surplus of $41,716 (2006/07 surplus was $21,413).

The Board continues to be in a sound position with net assets of $248,876 ($224,595 in 2006/07).

The following pages provide the audited Statement of Financial Performance for 2007/08.