

## AVA Division and Branch - Statement of Purpose

Under Section 23.4 of the AVA Constitution, the Board may devise or change Rules and agree guidelines for the operation of Divisions, Special Interest Groups and Branches, and other such groups as it may from time to time determine. This Statement of Purpose for Divisions and Branches was approved by the AVA Board on 28/7/23.

Divisions and Branches of the Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) have been an integral and important part of the AVA for many decades. Over time and with advancement in communication and technology the roles and responsibilities of the AVA Divisions and Branches have evolved.

The AVA champions and empowers the veterinary profession to thrive.

**The role of the Divisions and Branches is to provide leadership to the members of the Association in their jurisdiction by engaging with members around the AVA Board-approved objectives of providing a Voice, Education, Community and Support.**

### Voice

- Actively engage in advocacy and policy development on issues of importance to the veterinarians they represent.
- Encourage veterinarians to take a leadership role in the wider community, especially in areas associated with AVA's advocacy priorities.
- Enhance the profile of the profession and the association when presenting AVA policy and members' views to State and local levels of government, the community and other stake holders.

### Education

- Divisions promote appropriate AVA educational activities and resources for members.
- Branches promote local networking and educational events through Branch events.

### Community

- Champion the AVA as a professional career partner and encourage the mentoring capacity of our members to our colleagues and the wider profession.
- Develop a friendly, collegiate and inclusive culture within committees, and Division and Branch activities.

### Support

- Foster positive personal wellbeing and support for our members and their veterinary colleagues, and encourage the development of a support network.
- Disseminate national and local information which will impact members within the Division.
- Support services that meet the specific needs of the jurisdiction members and provide an awareness of national member services.
- Divisions will encourage and support the effective operation of the AVA local Branch network.

## Model of operation for Divisions

The primary role of Divisions is advocacy, member engagement and support.

The provision of CPD is not a core function of Divisions and standalone CPD events are no longer held.

### Role of Divisions in advocacy issues

- As well as national advocacy issues that impact all Divisions, there are state or region-based issues that require the AVA to undertake reactive or proactive advocacy. The Division committee works with the relevant Senior Advocacy Officer to prioritise and undertake the majority of state and region-based advocacy with the resources available. When a state-based advocacy issue is of national importance (as determined by the National Advocacy Plan or the AVA's Strategic Plan) the Head of Veterinary and Public Affairs may direct additional advocacy resources to the issue.
- The Division Advocacy Forum Representative presents the Division's advocacy priorities to assist in the formation of the yearly National Advocacy Plan.
- The Division Committee and the relevant Senior Advocacy Officer encourage and maintain relationships with appropriate state stakeholders impacting the veterinary profession (regulators, government, industry and animal welfare organisations).

### A Division actively engages with their Branches to:

- Seek out issues of importance and encourage participation in Division committee meetings.
- Provide an update of important advocacy issues of local significance.
- Maintain connection through regular digital communications.
- Encourage collaboration and development of a peer support network.

### Role of Divisions in events

- Divisions are encouraged to hold at least one non-CPD networking event per year to which all members are invited. Proposed events are appropriately costed and organised according to AVA event guidelines.
- AVA resources may be used for Divisions to provide at least two educational offerings which are in the form of webinars or newsletter articles.
- Divisions do not hold stand-alone conferences or multi-day events.
- Where another CPD event (AVA conference or SIG conference) is being held within the same jurisdiction, the Division may submit a proposal to hold a CPD event concurrently. All proposed events are appropriately costed and organised according to AVA event guidelines.

### Division Committee governance

- The Division Committee has 5 - 9 members.
- The election process, committee roles and length of terms are detailed in the AVA Division and Branch Handbook.
- The Division Committee meet virtually on a regular basis with an agreed schedule for the year.
- The Divisions can request a pre-approved budget to accommodate one face-to-face committee meeting per year.
- Division Committee members can request pre-approved travel for AVA purposes such as advocacy. Please refer to the AVA Travel Policy for further details.
- The presence of an AVA staff member is preferred but may not always be possible at virtual and/or face-to-face committee meetings.
- The Committee can request the attendance of an AVA Board member at a meeting.
- A committee member is appointed secretary for the purpose of recording minutes and actions items on the approved AVA template.
- All virtual meetings are recorded.

- The Division Committee encourages the participation of local SIG and Branch members at their virtual meetings.
- The Division Committee conducts an Annual meeting of the Division with a scheduled list of business to be transacted (refer to AVA Division and Branch Handbook). The Annual meeting may be face-to-face if conducted in conjunction with another event, or virtual if conducted as a standalone event.
- The Division Committee appoints a representative to attend:
  - Advocacy Forum
  - Policy Advisory Council
  - Council of Presidents (COPs) – President or nominee

## Model of operation for Branches

The role of Branches is to provide member support and education through their Branch network.

### Role of Branches in advocacy issues

- Local reactive advocacy issues identified by the Branch are communicated to the Division for triage and action if required, within available resources.
- Local proactive advocacy issues identified by the Branch can be advanced to the Advocacy Forum through the Division Advocacy Forum representative.

### A Branch actively engages with their Division to:

- Identify and provide an avenue of communication for membership and advocacy issues of importance.
- Maintain connection through regular communications.
- Collaborate with their Division and other Branches to provide a peer support network.

### Role of Branches in events

- Active Branches hold up to two events per year: one event is an educational event, the other is a networking event. All members of the Branch are invited to both events (based on locality).
- Branch events have a duration of one-day or less.
- Branches may collaborate with other Groups to hold longer events.
- For the AVA to comply with legal requirements and insurance cover, all AVA events must be approved by the AVA Board. For Branch events the responsibility for approval has been delegated to the Education Advisory Committee.
- All Branch events need to be scheduled, costed, planned and approved according to AVA event guidelines. This includes sponsorship arrangements.

### Branch governance

- The governance of a Branch should be as simple and efficient as possible.
- Existing established Branches are identified through an annual re-nomination process.
- A member is designated to a leadership role as the Branch Representative, who liaises with the Division Committee and other Groups in the AVA and AVA administrative staff.
- The Branch representative seeks assistance in planning and organising CPD events and networking functions from their Division Committee and the relevant AVA staff member.
- A new Branch requires Board Approval. A signed proposal from at least seven (7) current financial AVA members, with the endorsement of their Division committee is required in order to seek Board approval to form a new branch.

## Reference documents

This Statement of Purpose should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- AVA Division and Branch Handbook
- AVA Travel Policy
- AVA Event guidelines
  - AVA Events Scheduling Policy and Procedure
  - AVA Events Pricing Policy and Procedure
  - AVA Events Planning Policy and Procedure