

## Terms of reference – Veterinary wellness steering group

### Preamble

A (National) veterinary wellness steering group – a skills-based committee of up to six external stakeholders with lived mental health experience and one staff member, who will support the AVA Board and Management to successfully deliver our THRIVE wellness initiatives.

### Functions

- Ensures project is aligned with organisational strategy.
- Ensures project makes good use of assets.
- Assist with resolving strategic level issues and risks.
- Approve or reject changes to the project with a high impact on timelines and budget.
- Provide advice and guidance on business issues facing the project.
- Review and approve final project deliverables.
- Sets/recommends success measures and a timetable.

### Scope

Informs best practice for all THRIVE initiatives – supporting and protecting the wellbeing of all veterinary practitioners.

### Membership

Made up of no more than six external stakeholders selected by the Board, 1 senior staff member and an AVA Board Member. Amongst its membership, it ideally includes individuals who demonstrate the following:

- Deep understanding of positive mental health and mental ill-health
- Strong commitment to our THRIVE principles – prevent harm, promote the positives of the veterinary profession, and protect those in crises
- Stakeholder engagement and public relations experience
- Expertise in legislative processes
- Strategic planning, prioritisation and business planning skills
- Experience with implementing industry frameworks.

Each member of the Steering Group facilitates the project by providing direction and advice, by clearing obstacles to the project's success and by championing the project across the profession.

The Steering Group reports to the Group Chair, who in turn report to the AVA Board.

Actions and accountabilities may be delegated to individual Group members, but they remain accountable to the entire Group.

Membership of the VWSG is determined by the Board.

## Chairing

Board representative

## Meetings

The VWSC will initially meet monthly to achieve immediate goals. Future meeting scheduling will be determined as required.

The quorum for VWSC meetings will be a simple majority of the Committee with the Chair exercising a deliberative vote.

The Chair may invite other attendees to meetings. If other Group members would like to invite people to the Group meetings, this should be cleared with the Chair in advance of the meeting.

VWSG members are expected to participate in meetings with impartiality and in good faith. They are expected to contribute to the project and to review other AVA initiatives when requested. They are responsible for declaring any conflicts/interests they have relevant to the issue that may affect their work on the VWSG.

## Appointment process

An expression of interest process will be used and open to all AVA members and other interested stakeholders to apply. Membership of the steering group shall be appointed by the Board with oversight by Noms and Rems Committee.

## Term

Two years (with potential of reappointment for a further one-year term).

## Staff

Executive Officer Wellness

## Approval Process

The VWSG will operate on a consensus basis when possible. Where required, a majority vote will be used in determining recommendations for Board. The VWSG is advisory in nature and the Board retains authority over annual wellness plans.

## Responsibility of Members

Members of the VWSG are responsible to:

- Comply with the AVA Code conduct
- Attend and participate in meetings, being prepared for meetings.
- Be responsive to requests for feedback outside meeting times.
- Declare conflicts of interest
- Undertake decision making in the interest of the AVA and whole membership
- Ensuring that the wellness activity meets the expectations of the membership.

## Confidentiality

Meetings of the VWSG are confidential and correspondence must not be distributed outside the Committee, to any third parties, unless authorised by the Chair.

In some cases, members may need to sign a Confidentiality Agreement, depending on the nature of the issue.

## Managing Conflict of interest

Conflicts of interests could be described as facts that, when revealed later, could make a reasonable person feel misled or deceived. An important concept is that there does not have to be an actual conflict for a reasonable person to feel misled or deceived. A perception of a potential conflict can be sufficient to be a conflict of interest.

These interests may be personal, commercial, political, academic or financial, and may be “material” or “perceived”. In either event, members of the Committee must declare any interest before joining the group. Minor or perceived conflicts of interest may be managed by the relevant member withdrawing for decisions directly related to their conflict. More material conflicts of interest may mean that the proposed member cannot join, or must withdraw permanently from the Committee should such a conflict arise subsequently.

Interests that may be relevant to the work of the VWSG include (but are not limited to):

- Employment or a Directorship in the Veterinary Recruitment, Training, Mentoring, Counselling sectors
- Financial interest in a company providing services Veterinary Recruitment, Training, Mentoring and Counselling.

The Chair of the VWSG, in consultation with the AVA CEO, will make a recommendation on the way to deal with any conflict and eligibility to join the VWSG.

## Finalisation of VWSG activities

The VWSG will be disbanded when determined that responsibilities have been fulfilled (may be ongoing).