SA State Election

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South Australia Division June 2014

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Australian Veterinary Association SA Division BULLETIN ● June 2014 3
As I sit down to write a report on Division’s activities over the last 12 months, I’m surprised by the value provided to our members by the AVA both nationally and at division level. Most of you will be aware of our continuing education program and social activities but may not be very conscious of the amount of work the goes in to representing our profession in the political sphere.

Since Graham Pratt has been our Executive Officer, he has managed to keep us in the forefront of political decision-making in South Australia.

You may ask “What effect does this have in my everyday practice?” You would be surprised how much.

Over the last 12 months, South Australia Division has represented your interests with the Veterinary Surgeons Board introducing some changes to the latest amendment to the Veterinary Practice Act. We’ve also had discussions with the Veterinary Surgeons Board about enforcement of section 45 of the veterinary practice act which requires veterinarians to inform the Board of any claim made against a veterinary surgeon and discussions about the level of insurance cover required by the veterinary practice act.

We held a meeting with Christopher Pyne, along with representatives of many other professions, to protest the proposed limit on the tax deductions allowed for education expenses. This combined effort resulted in this change not being implemented.

We continue to discourage the introduction of further breed specific legislation and instead promote the AVA’s more scientific-based approach to management of dogs and cats in South Australia. To this end we continue to have discussions with the Dog and Cat Management Board and provide information about prevention of dog bites and the management of cats and stray animals to government authorities.

We made representations to PIRSA to try and prevent changes to the livestock act that currently restricts the use of vaccinations to veterinarians. Unfortunately in this case we do not appear to have been successful but the protections provided by the controlled substances act still restrict the supply of S4 drugs which include all the live vaccines.

We attended a briefing on the update to the Radiation Protection and Control Act and as a consequence have put together a subcommittee with a brief to make operation of CT scans and fluoroscopy by veterinarians possible in South Australia. The committee will also investigate the possibility of licensing nursing staff to take radiographs. In addition, we have created templates to make it easier for members to complete the radiation safety plans required by legislation.

Nationally a great deal of effort and financial resources has gone into fighting the recent attempt by the NSW racing to require veterinarians treating thoroughbreds in New South Wales to be licensed by them. Unfortunatley have not won this battle, but the AVA continues this fight.

You can see that the Australian Veterinary Association is key to supporting our profession but our value as an organisation depends on its members. Those of you who are not members of the AVA should seriously consider joining us so that the AVA can become truly representative of all Members of the profession throughout Australia.

**Continuing education**

The South Australian Division has continued to provide a wide range of continuing educational opportunities in South Australia over the last 12 months, including a successful annual conference, rural vets meetings and evening seminars. The Hindmarsh branch has continued to arrange a variety of very interesting meetings of more general interest to veterinarians.

**Social activities**

Not only does the Division organise continuing education but they also arrange a series of social activities throughout the year. The highlights for me have been the quiz night ably hosted by Mark Reeve and the ball attended by over 170 members of the industry.

**New Graduates**

Last December, our first batch of students graduated from the University of Adelaide’s veterinary school. I congratulate these new members of the profession and all the staff at the university on their success. The AVA has continued to support integration of students
and new graduate veterinarians into the profession. Simon Edwards and Mark Reeve have again provided an excellent service to new graduates by running the new graduate mentor program and a series of activities are planned out the year to allow the newest batch of graduates to integrate into the profession and get an opportunity to develop into valued members of the profession.

**Promoting the profession**

Last month the Division again provided vet checks at the Million Paws Walk. This is a great opportunity for the profession to be shown in a good light.

All of these activities rely on willingness of committee members, the support of members of the profession, our sponsors, and the hard working staff members to achieve this great success. So I thank them all for the continued support of the depression and allowing the strain Veterinary Association to continue its important work. Please take the time when you run into representatives of our sponsors, committee members and especially Barbara Gill and Graham Pratt to thank them for the work they do. And think about next year, putting your hat in the ring to help is out as a committee member or to help organise one of the many activities we run throughout the year. We will be glad to hear from you.

---

**Executive Officer’s Report - Graham Pratt**

With the State Election, a number of dinner meetings, the annual Vet Ball, and preparations well under way for the Stat Conference, it has been a busy start to the year.

The South Australian Division hit the ground running at the start of the year and prepared a State Election platform for the AVA. You’ll find details in this edition of the Bulletin.

The platform was well received by a number of candidates and parties. Now the Division is focusing on following up on the issues raised with the Government.

As with any election, the aftermath leaves us with a changed political environment. While the Government was returned, a ministerial shuffle has left us with a new Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, the Minister responsible for the Veterinary Practice Act. Hon. Leon Bignell MP has taken over the portfolio from Hon. Gail Gago MLC. The Division looks forward to engaging with the new Minister and continuing to represent the profession.

One issue that we’re working on at the moment is veterinary use of CT. It was one of our election issues and we have now formed a working group to map out our next moves. Please let me know if you are interested in helping.

The 2014 Vet Ball in May was very well attended and saw a record number of practices attend. Feedback from the night has been very positive. Now the search for the 2015 venue begins. If you have suggestions please let us know.

As I write this I am about to get on a plane for the AVA National Conference in Perth. Support for the event seems to be strong this year. I’m looking forward to it and the additional AVA meetings that are occurring—we seem to pack an awful lot into a week. A couple of the highlights will be the May Policy Advisory Council meeting and the annual AVA Group Summit. The later is where we gather all Presidents of the Divisions and Special Interest Groups within the AVA to discuss the year ahead.

The South Australian Division will be holding its own conference on the 19-20 July. We have secured Dr Phil Moses as key speaker for the event. He’ll be talking on a number of ‘Heads and Necks’ surgical topics. It promises to be a fascinating conference. Keep your eyes out for further details.
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Going into bat for the profession during the State Election

The AVA took advantage of the 2014 South Australian State Election to raise a number of issues on behalf of the profession. These included animal welfare, the breeding and sale of companion animals, and licensing for x-ray and CT use. The AVA is now following up these issues with the Government.

**Animal welfare**

In Australia many of the gains in animal welfare over the past decade have been achieved through and as a result of the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy (AAWS). The AAWS was aimed at establishing national consistency in regard to animal welfare codes of practice. The establishment of the AAWS was visionary and became a world-leading initiative. However, with the Federal Government decision to end its involvement with the AAWS there is a risk that gains made over the past decade will be lost.

We urged the State Government to remain involved with the Strategy by encouraging government employees to continue contributing to its work, and to take a leading role among the states and territories in a new phase of the AAWS.

**Sale and re-homing of companion animals**

In 2013 the Select Committee into the Breeding and Sale of Companion Animals handed down its report to State Parliament. The AVA broadly supports the recommendations of the report and believes that they should be progressed in the current Parliament.

One of the key recommendations related to codes of practice for the sale and breeding of companion animals. This, coupled with a code of practice for the re-homing of companion animals, was seen by the AVA as a priority.

**Radiation**

The use of CT is a valuable tool within veterinary medicine and allows improved outcomes for animal health and welfare. With the costs of CT and fluoroscopic equipment becoming lower it is becoming increasingly reasonable for veterinary practices to invest in this equipment.

Unlike other states, the only pathway for a vet here to become licensed to use CT is Fellowship. The AVA SA believe this is unnecessarily onerous.

---

**Summary of Recommendations**

**Animal Welfare**
- That the State Government to remain involved with the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy by encouraging employees to continue contributing to its work.
- That the State Government take a leading role among the states and territories in a new phase of the AAWS that continues and extends the achievements of AAWS into the future.

**Sale and re-homing of companion animals**
- That the SA Code of Practice for the Care and Management of Animals in the Pet Trade be revised and an updated version be put in place.
- That an enforceable Code of Practice for the re-homing of comparison animals be established.

**Radiation**
- That a suitable Graduate Certificate qualification be recognised as an appropriate condition for registered veterinarians to become licensed to operate CT equipment.
- That veterinary nurses with the Cert IV in Veterinary Nursing be eligible to be licensed to operate x-ray equipment.
Veterinary Ball - SA gets their groove on

On 10 May the Division held the Veterinary Industry Ball at the Mercure Grosvenor Hotel. There were over 170 people attend including vets, nurses and partners from clinics across Adelaide and a few of the SA Division sponsors.

Vets, nurses, staff and partners were entertained on the night by live band, the Groove Jets, who added that party atmosphere to the evening. Graham Catt the CEO of AVA National, also flew to Adelaide to attend the event.

See all the photos on the AVA South Australia Division Facebook page.
The AVA has other online or person to person backups, services and resources available for the tough times or the curly questions. Ours is not an easy professional choice and there will be many challenges ahead at all stages of our careers- financial management, ethical dilemmas, HR questions, work-life balance, finding the right job, working in a diverse team, higher expectations of producers and animal owners, the media dumping on us at every opportunity. It will not get any easier for this next generation of veterinarians.

There are other providers of continuing education, of professional indemnity insurance, of practice management, accounting and superannuation and of HR advice. Recent graduates often say that they have to choose between VIN membership and AVA membership. Specialists may choose between chapter, board or college membership and the AVA. Business owners are often too busy to belong to anything. Academics and researchers do not think that the AVA has much to offer them. We often hear that the AVA is dominated by employers. Women vets think the AVA is male dominated and run. Male vets are struggling to adapt to work practices and expectations of the large number of younger women joining the profession. If you join and participate you will learn that we have more employee members than employer; we can help you run your business and get back a life; we are preparing the profession and the AVA for demographic change; we frequently advocate and lobby on educational matters; we have offerings and services for all categories of employment- take a look at the AVA website.

This is why a professional membership association is so important; now more than ever. Only the AVA understands the whole profession. Only the AVA provides access to targeted career stage services. Only the AVA advocates for you and your colleagues to regulators, the community, government and the politicians. Only the AVA can help you with an individual plan and meet your continuing education needs. Only the AVA provides access to a community of like-minded individuals who will be with you for your whole career and into retirement.

The AVA has five strategic priorities arrived at after extensive consultation with all members. None of these are advocated for or resourced by any other organisation. In pursuit of fulfilling these objectives this is what is happening:

- We are doing workforce surveys with the help of the Boards and this year will construct a stock and flow model to demonstrate workforce trends and if necessary advocate for changes in numbers and retention of graduates.
- We are going to undertake some economic modelling to help you and our stakeholders understand how to make our profession sustainable and rewarding.
- We monitor all of the Regulations, Acts and Codes that impact on us and where required go in to bat for you so that your professional lives are less hampered and regulated. We have developed guidelines for veterinary practice acts and have gone to court over an attempt to register vets on racecourses.
- We are very concerned about the cutbacks in government veterinary services and we constantly lobby for an adequate and trained veterinary workforce that can be mobilised in the event of emergencies or exotic disease outbreaks.
- We are actively involved in monitoring and measuring the level of microbial resistance in production and companion animals and aim to have a seat at the table whenever this is discussed. We have prescribing guidelines to help minimise further development of microbial resistance.

So if you are considering not joining or not renewing your AVA membership think about what you are missing out on. A new graduate can become an AVA member for only $31 a month. There are a range of concessions for those on low incomes and you can now pay relatively painlessly on a monthly basis. The AVA represents 52% of your colleagues let them represent you.

AVA Membership - Dr Julia Nicholls

A recent get together of new graduates and their mentors reminded me of my first years following graduation and that mixture of excitement, apprehension and exhaustion. It was wonderful to catch up with some of the state’s first home-grown graduates, many of whom have stayed in South Australia as hoped for when the University of Adelaide established the school.
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Still Biking for the Children of SA - Dr Trevor Rickman

Over the past six years the routes have included the Flinders Ranges, the Grampians and Daylesford regions, the Riverland, Southwest NSW, the wine regions of SA, and the Great Ocean Road. This year we are travelling through the Victorian Alps, but in late October hopefully to avoid the snow—that would be too much of a challenge on two wheels!

The Variety SA V2 Bike Run is now entering its seventh year after starting in 2008. Its small band of bikers have now raised over $1.2 million for the children of SA.

The success of the V2 Motorcycle Run is, as with all Variety events, dependent on the generosity and support it receives from its entrants, sponsors and supporters.

To participate each bike entrant has to reach a minimum of fundraising, this all goes to Variety and the children of SA. I have been fortunate to be able to participate in four of the six runs so far and have enjoyed the generous support in fundraising of Vets4Pets and Provet SA every time.

Just to give you an idea of some of the major projects Variety SA has funded:

- Child Health Research Institute
- Establishment & Ongoing Support $1.95 million
- Royal Flying Doctor Service
- Medical Equipment for new aircraft $1.1 million
- Womens & Children Hospital $3.71 million
- Flinders Medical – Neonate & Pediatric Units $1.7 million
- Riding for the Disabled $1.47 million

And the list goes on.

Being involved with the Variety “Family” has been very rewarding – each trip we get to meet young children and their parents who have received help such as wheelchair access vans, electric wheelchairs, specialised equipment to help with mobility, and assistance in education, sports and the arts for children in need.

A new area for funding has been the Lab’s ‘n Life Labradors Organisation – in a recent example Bella the Labrador has been given to a family to assist their young child through challenging behaviour in the classroom and at home and we are happy to report Bella has helped reconnect the entire family.

If you wish to support Bike 28 in raising donations for this year Variety V2 Bike Run please contact Variety SA through their website at www.variety.org.au/SA/Donate/ and donate online to the V2 Bike Run & Bike 28.

“You are never so tall as when you stoop to help a child”
What’s new at the Uni - Di Whatling

The week of the 28th April saw two events which celebrated the success of our students. First, on the 28th, was the School Prizes night, held in the Veterinary Sciences Building and very well attended by School staff, prize donors, prize winners and their families. The number of prizes and awards grows a little each year and we are grateful for the generous support and interest shown by our donors and benefactors.

It is a wonderful way to celebrate the dedication of some of our best students and to acknowledge the support of their families.

**Congratulations to our graduates**
And then, the next day was graduation. On Tuesday, April 29th, we had a record number of students graduate from the School of Animal & Veterinary Sciences, including our first DVM graduates. On behalf of the School I congratulate all of our Animal Science, Veterinary Bioscience, DVM, Honours, Masters and PhD graduands for completing their degrees and congratulate the staff who helped get them there. It was another enjoyable celebration and another benchmark achievement for the School.

**Veterinary Health Centre News**
The Equine Health & Performance Centre is now open for first opinion and referral surgical and medical cases, complementing our ambulatory service. The service is fully equipped with staff and equipment and we look forward to a large case load for student teaching. In the next few months a CT service will be available for large and small animals. Further information will be circulated to practitioners in the State in the near future.

The Companion Animal Health Centre has extended its emergency service cover 24 hours per day, seven days a week with extended normal consultation times until 7.45pm. The CAHC provides overnight care for clients’ animals of all species. We are able to admit overnight patients by appointment after 5.30pm or anytime on weekends. Any practitioners who require a start-up kit containing referral protocols and a window decal referring clients to the VHC emergency service please contact us on 83131999. Referrals to specialists are available for surgery, oncology, dermatology, internal medicine and pain management. Dr Gavin Newman also conducts ophthalmology consultations from the VHC on a three weekly basis.

The Production Animal Health Centre also provides a twenty four hour ambulatory service and offers a hospitalisation service. For all enquiries or wish to take a tour of our services please contact the Veterinary Health Centre on 83131930

**Continuing Education**
The Veterinary Health Centre provides continuing education sessions to veterinarians during the year. The next date is August 20th and the topic will be oncology (Dr Anne Peaston).
CONTRIBUTED ARTICLE

Cat owner research

One of the Dog and Cat Management Board’s (DCMB) strategic objectives is to improve the management and care of owned and unowned cats. To help understand the current situation of cat ownership in South Australia the DCMB undertook a survey in March 2014 of 608 South Australian cat owners, across metropolitan and regional areas, to collect information about the neuter status of owned cats and incidence of micro-chipping.

Owners were asked if their cats had any unplanned litters and if they believed that a female cat should have a litter before being desexed. They were also asked about their knowledge of the age at which a cat can have kittens and how they kept their cats. Motivations for why they keep their cats inside were also explored.

Summary of the results:

Desexing
Of the owners surveyed, 80% responded that their cats were desexed. 47% of the cats had been desexed between three and six months of age.

The main reason owners gave about why they had not desexed their cat was that it was too young (41%). The cost of the desexing procedure and wanting to breed with the cat were also commonly mentioned by respondents (25% and 20%, respectively).

Owner belief that a cat should have a litter before desexing
24% of respondents believed that a female cat should have a litter before being desexed, and 16% were not sure.

Unplanned litters
22% of respondents reported that their cat(s) had produced one or more accidental litters of kittens. This is a higher rate than found in a UK study (13%) (Welsh et al. 2013).

Knowledge of cat reproduction
42% of the respondents believed that a cat cannot have kittens until it is 6 months of age or older, 29% were not sure.

Micro-chipping and collar/tag
62% of owners reported that their cat was micro-chipped and 65% of cats wore a collar/tag.

Confinement
Over half of the cats were either kept indoors at all times or indoors with access to a purpose built enclosure. 23% of cats were kept indoors at night only and 16% were outdoors at all times and allowed to freely roam off the property.

When asked why they keep their cats inside, owners responded that reducing the risk of injury and disease to their cats was the main motivation (79%) with protecting wildlife not far behind at 60%.

Responsible Cat Owner campaign
In response to the need to provide more information about cat management and being a responsible cat owner, the Board launched its Responsible Cat Owner campaign in May 2014 creating a new GoodCatSA Facebook and Twitter page and advertising through posters in bus shelters and metropolitan and regional newspapers.

The full survey report is available at dogandcatboard.com.au
RSPCA Million Paws Walk

On Sunday 18 May the AVA SA Division ran health check stations at the annual RSPCA Million Paws Walk. We use this event to raise the profile of the veterinary profession to members of the public and to promote responsible pet ownership.

Vet, nurses and students were run off their feet at the Million Paws Walk on the weekend. The vet checks proved as popular as ever. The day started at 9.00am with pet owners keen to have their dogs checked before the walk, and the line stayed full right up until the end when we closed at 2.00pm.

A big thank you to all of the vets, nurses and students that helped out on the day:

- Dr Julia Nicholls
- Dr Karl Ong
- Dr Tim Tolley
- Dr Anne Marie Moody
- Dr Sylvia Kriesberg
- Dr Richard Savory
- Dr Anna Kolinda
- Dr Nicky Sluczanowski
- Dr Greg Wright
- Dr Lewis Vaughan
- Dr Andrew Carter
- Dr Rachel Oliver
- Tiffany O’Dea
- Rachel Sweet
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- Bronwyn Bennett
- Siobhan Goble
- Mark Clifford
- Timothy Thai
- Hayley Skeffington
- Charlotte Han
- Imogen Geh
- Tyler Roennfelt-Philp
- Rebecca Churchill

A Quiz to Remember

The 2013 AVA SA Quiz Night saw over 100 people attend and raise funds for the Adelaide Koala and Wildlife Hospital. The night was a great success. Congratulations again to the winning team from the Unley Veterinary Surgery.

The Quiz Master, Dr Mark Reeve, is busy preparing for this year’s challenge. So it’s time to start thinking about getting your team together. We have a new venue this year, so plenty of room for last year’s teams, plus a few more.

The 2014 Quiz will be on Friday 12 September at the Burnside Community Centre. Booking out soon.

See all the photos on our Facebook page
CONTRIBUTED ARTICLE

RSPCA Campaign - Dr Di Evans

Dr Di Evans, RSPCA South Australia Animal Welfare Advocate, is keen to hear from veterinary practitioners who would like to support the ‘Lead by Example’ campaign, which is due to be launched on 1 September.

As a veterinary practitioner, the importance of well-mannered dogs is paramount to having a stress-free and safe working environment. This can be achieved by helping owners to get the right advice. By encouraging positive training methods, everybody wins – the dogs, the owners, the community and not least veterinary staff.

Although the campaign aims to increase awareness that e-collars (shock collars) are illegal to use, and that prong are inhumane and unnecessary, an important focus is encouraging appropriate training of dogs.

The campaign was initially considered in response to reports that e-collars are being recommended to some owners and some dogs have been found wearing e-collars.

However, as we delve deeper, the issue has expanded into the bigger question of dog training methods as these types of collars are aversive, which can compound behaviour issues and result in welfare concerns.

It has been reported that some dog training groups insist on prong collars being used, even on young dogs and small breeds.

A recent study has shown that training methods based on positive reinforcement are less stressful and potentially better for welfare than those using negative reinforcement.

A University of Pennsylvania survey of dog owners who use confrontational or aversive methods to train aggressive pets, found that most of these animals will continue to be aggressive unless training techniques are modified.

Another study showed that dogs trained only with positive reinforcement showed less behaviour problems and dogs were more likely to show a fear response to other dogs where owners used punishment of any kind in their training.

Our approach is to discourage the use of aversive techniques and to encourage the use of harnesses for exercising.

Harnesses, especially front attaching, are a great alternative to attaching a lead to a collar for walking.

A harness, combined with appropriate training, is more comfortable and poses fewer risks than a collar.

With a stronger emphasis on and access to trainers who use force-free methods, there is really no justification to promote and use collars that are aversive. Some dog owners are not aware that alternatives exist. This is why RSPCA South Australia has compiled a list of force-free trainers in Adelaide.

The Pet Professional Guild defines force-free as; *No shock, No pain, No choke, No fear, No physical force, No physical moulding, or No compulsion based methods are employed to train or care for a companion animal.*

For clarification, clubs or trainers who use or promote either check chains or prong collars do not meet this definition. In addition, trainers who promote a ‘balanced’ (positive and negative methods) approach would not be considered force-free as they use aversive methods.

There is increasing research being done in this area and there is no doubt that there are strong opinions on the topic.

Our main focus is to prevent and avoid suffering
The growth in online networking tools provide a wide range of ways in which you can engage with your Association. From just keeping up to date with current issues to checking out the latest photos from AVA events, it is well worth connecting online.

RSPCA South Australia will be forwarding a ‘Lead by Example’ poster and leaflets to veterinary clinics during August.

Contact for more information or a copy of the force-free trainers list:
Dr Di Evans devans@rspcasa.org.au or ph 0408 867 756.

References:

Note: Some may recall Di as developing the AVA’s PetPEP program some years ago. She moved from WA to Adelaide 12 months ago.

Insurance
When someone tried to litigate against me, Guild wouldn't back up a barrage on them from their own and very competent legal staff – the case never got to court. When my house burnt down, Guild were there immediately, providing funds and guidance to get over a horrific situation. As an AVA member I have $1500 on my annual premium, and they honour their commitment during the claim process. There are cheaper insurance companies, and there are more expensive ones too, but couldn’t I just get the support I got from Guild, so I’m sticking with them.

Dr Rob Zeznitt
New South Wales, AGRVA, Australian Greyhound Veterinarians

The Australian Veterinary Association
Please contact the Australian Veterinary Association to find out more about the value of membership

Connect with the AVA online

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https://twitter.com/AustVetAssoc

Facebook
www.facebook.com/groups/483625721653317/

LinkedIn
www.linkedin.com/company/australian-veterinary-association

AVA Website
www.ava.com.au
In 2013, the Animal Health Committee agreed to nationally consistent conditions and remuneration policies, developed by a working group involving representatives of the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, state and territory governments, the Australian Veterinary Association as well as private veterinarians.

These arrangements allow private veterinarians to be directly engaged by state or territory governments as temporary or casual government employees, or as contractors at a nationally agreed remuneration rate.

Private practitioners need to determine whether they would prefer to be engaged as a contractor or an employee. If they wish to be engaged as a contractor, they need to discuss with their public liability and professional indemnity insurance provider whether they would be covered for this sort of emergency work, or what additional costs there may be to provide this cover. Information for private practitioners regarding these arrangements and the difference between being engaged as a contractor or employee can be found on the PIRSA Biosecurity SA website www.pir.sa.gov.au/biosecuritysa/animalhealth/veterinarians or by contacting the Biosecurity SA’s Glenside office on 08 8207 7900.
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Australian Veterinary Association SA Division BULLETIN • June 2014 19
How the AVA has supported the veterinary profession

Now is a good time to stocktake on what the AVA has achieved over the last 12 months.

AVA membership provides a wealth of benefits for its members and the veterinary profession. If you’re an Australian veterinarian, you can’t afford not to be involved with the only organisation representing your profession. Join now by visiting the AVA website at: www.ava.com.au

A Stronger Voice
We increased our investment in being a stronger advocate for the profession in the past year. After extensive consultation with our members, we established programs for our five strategic priorities to bring about change on the issue the veterinarians care about most:

- Planning an effective veterinary profession
- Ensuring economic sustainability
- Filling the gap in government veterinary services
- Better regulation
- Fighting antimicrobial resistance

Highlights of what the AVA has achieved in these areas, include:

- The work of our pet insurance taskforce
- Submissions and significant media coverage on the need to control veterinary student places
- Fighting moves by Racing NSW to impose a second regulatory regime on veterinarians

We also established strong relationships with the new federal government, and were involved in significant policy issues in the states and territories.

One of our most important achievements was helping to scrap the self-education expenses cap proposed by the previous federal government. This was a major threat to both members and the Association, and it was wonderful to report a successful result.

The AVA website
During the year, all four large special interest groups moved their websites to become part of the main AVA website. This means that we now have a much more centralised online reference point for services and information, which will make a difference to members. Non members are not able to see the full extent of the AVA’s website content because it’s reserved for members only.

New Graduate Membership Program
Our revamp of the new graduate membership program included adding a new benefit of complimentary insurance coverage for members in their first and second years after graduation. The online resource centre My New Career is a one-stop-shop for the newest members of the profession as they make their transition to the profession.

The AVA released some new information resources, including the Guidelines for prescribing and using compounded medications and ASAVA’s Regular health check standards for dogs and cats.

We now also communicate with our members through video and social media.

Looking Ahead
In the next 12 months we intend to represent the profession in the review of our industrial award, and undertaking much needed research into the veterinary workforce.

We’re also establishing some new approaches to membership. We anticipate that our pilot trial of practice subscriptions will help practices communicate the value of AVA membership to their employees and also gain more from the Association to benefit their business. Associate membership for people who aren’t veterinarians will also undergo a renovation.

Alongside our constant development of continuing professional development opportunities, online services and member benefits, the year ahead is looking good. Visit the AVA website for more information on benefits of membership.
Hindmarsh Branch - Professor Mary Barton

Dr Cleopas Bamhare addressed the Hindmarsh Branch at its recent meeting on Friday 28th February at the Rex Hotel. About 22 members and partners attended. The after dinner speaker was Dr Cleopas Bamhare, Manager Animal Health Disease Surveillance, Biosecurity SA – he spoke on Disease Surveillance in Namibia.

Some of us may have been a little surprised to hear of the similarities between the work in Namibia and Australia although there clearly are some different challenges too.

The sophistication of the veterinary services in Namibia was impressive. A big “thank you” to Barbara for all the organisation.

We are still working on the program for the rest of the year but possibilities include a visit to the Desalination Plant, a tour of the new SAHMRI building on North Terrace, a visit to Coopers Brewery and dinner in a boutique brewery somewhere and a talk from the new RSPCA CEO Tim Vasudeva and visit to the RSPCA shelter at Lonsdale – or maybe the Animal Welfare League.

The next Hindmarsh meeting will be on Friday 11 July. The speaker will be Tim Vasudeva, CEO RSPCA SA and his topic will be “Vision for the RSPCA in SA”.

Please note that all AVA members are welcome to come to our meetings. We try to include something to stimulate the little grey cells but also the aim is to provide a chance to meet with colleagues present and past.

Networking

“People say that you get back what you are prepared to put into an organisation – but the AVA gives back so much more than that. Collegiality, a sense of connection with different groups within the profession and a voice for the profession to be heard in the wider community are the things I get back from the AVA.”

Dr James Gilkerson
Victoria, Equine Veterinarian Australia
Wild kangaroos are increasingly seen in the outer suburbs, as is evidenced by the increase in roadside warning signs. Treating a wild macropod in hospital is realistically close to, if not completely, impossible, and is most likely not to be in the animal’s best interest. A kangaroo with fractured limbs after a motor vehicle collision requires rapid and humane euthanasia, and this will be discussed. Best practice animal welfare is NOT “save every animal”.

Please remember Wildlife Treatment Sheets are available as a PDF from the AVA SA office, or from the Coordinator, homecarevet2pet@internode.on.net
Contributions for the Kangaroo sheet can also be sent to this address.

BirdsSA – Avian Responses to Fire
In early May a few group members attended a public lecture at the BirdsSA AGM, given by Dr Sonia Kleindorfer of Flinders University.

Sonia’s very engaging talk described the research of her PhD student Simone, in documenting Avian Responses to Fire. Two species were studied, on firegrounds on Eyre Peninsula, the Blue-breasted Fairy Wren (BBFW), and the Inland Thornbill. Data was gathered in land comprising three “Burn ages”, of 0-5 years, 8-15 years, and 20-30+ years, named “burned”, “regenerating” and “mature” respectively. Results for BBFW found very interesting differences in the way birds foraged (pick, glean or probe), their morphology (bill and tarsus length) and their territory variation. The Inland Thornbill developed groups of foraging specialists with different morphology and a smaller home range.

The take home message was that we need to manage for a range of burn ages to promote avian diversity.

Notification of meetings like this one are available by email by signing up to Birdpedia (www.birdpedia.com). You’ll also receive notification of some excellent bird watching events, many near Adelaide.

Continuing Veterinary Education (the old Sydney Postgraduate Foundation) is offering a Marine Wildlife course as part of this year’s TimeOnline program. The link is: www.cve.edu.au/marinewildlife

Dr David Blyde will run the course, from 16 June to 13 July.

Suggestions, news or any useful information which can be forwarded to the Group’s email list is always welcome.

Rachel Westcott
Wildlife Group Coordinator
E homecarevet2pet@internode.on.net
M 0427 70 70 44.
SAVEM Update - Dr Rachel Westcott

SAVEM’s Autumn 2014 newsletter, came out on the first anniversary of the “Cherryville” fire of May 2013. The Newsletter looks at the ‘PPRR’ model of Emergency Management (EM), as described in the AIIMS manual. Exerts follow below and how it is being implemented.

Prevention
We thank our volunteers who ask for and then distribute our information brochure. This is an on-going and regular means for us all to raise awareness amongst people generally and widely about the responsibility for their own animals to be part of their own family emergency plan.

Several of our senior volunteers regularly present on the subject of animals in disasters to community groups. If you have a local group to whom this topic is of interest, pass our contact details on to them. One of our on-going tasks is to help educate the public about complications and potential adverse effects on wild animals from being taken into care. We explain the difference between best practice animal welfare outcomes, and the “save every animal” mindset, which is by no means the same thing.

Preparedness
The collaboration between SAVEM & the Wireless Institute Civil Emergency Network (WICEN) has lead to installation of a UHF radio hard wired into SAVEM’s Jeep. The vehicle also carries some hand helds for the response crew.

WICEN’s President, Nic McLean, ran a training tutorial at our After Action Review for Team Leaders on 16 March. WICEN will also source and install a satellite phone for SAVEM.

WICEN’s support includes the erection of temporary transmission towers in the field to assist SAVEM’s communications within an operational area, and mapping comms reliability in difficult terrain as was found this season such as the Eden Valley area. A SOP is in draft between our two agencies. The SAVEM Coordinator was guest speaker at the WICEN AGM.

Volunteer Training Notes (VTN’s)
In recent months we have been preparing & uploading to our website a package of Volunteer Training Notes, which conclude with a self paced quiz. The purpose of this initiative is to give new volunteers something with which to begin their training.

We encourage existing trained volunteers to study the notes as an easily accessed refresher course, essential when activation is mostly likely to occur during summer months. As with other EM volunteers groups, such as CFS & SES, training can, and should, During last Summer’s responses, it was clear that the CFS had enough understanding of, and trust in SAVEM’s role to allow us early access to firegrounds.

It is imperative that we show our respect & understanding, and adhere to correct procedures and chain of command. We make no apology for the militaristic nature of the system. It works, and it’s SAFE.

Recovery
This phase continues for weeks, months or years, depending on the scale and impact of an incident.

Debrief
After each activation “hot debrief” occurs before we leave the area. This is then backed in with a comprehensive “After Action Review” at the season’s end. This year’s After Action Review was held on 16 March, involving Team Leaders activated during the season. Discussions help decide priorities and resourcing issues to target during “peace time”, and training focus at our exercise. SAVEM also took part in PIRSA’s Participating Agency debrief.

It’s about training …..and communication!
A winter training program will be announced as soon as the Board and Leadership team have an opportunity to meet.

Veterinarians who registered during 2011/12, but who have not attended at a Response will be asked to update their registration forms on-line.

A general volunteer coordinator is to be created to manage the influx of “spontaneous” volunteers during an incident.

For a full copy of the newsletter visit www.savem.org.au
RVPB (Rural Vets Practitioners Branch)

Over 40 vets from across the state gathered in Clare in March for the first Rural Vet Practitioner Branch (RVPB) seminar of the year.

The focus of the event was biosecurity with talks on Theileriasis, infertility investigations, large animal models of human disease, and a number of biosecurity updates.

On the social side, attendees visited local winery, Mt Surmon, and sampled some wonderful wines while enjoying stunning views across the Clare. Saturday evening saw everyone having an enjoyable evening as Bungaree Station hosted a BBQ dinner and Dr Tim Kuchell gave a presentation on his work at SAMRI. Check out the photos on the AVA SA Facebook page.

Planning is well underway for the Robe Seminar on 20-21 September where Dr Ben Gardnier, current AVA National President and large animal practitioner, will be joining us. Mark the date in you diary now.
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AVA calling for review of nurse funding decision

The state government has recently changed the funding arrangements for the Cert IV in Veterinary Nursing. The Funded Training List (FTL) compiled by the state government dictates which courses are funded and under which enrollment conditions.

Prior to the FTL of 8th January 2014, the Cert IV in Veterinary Nursing was subsidised for trainees and for those employed in the industry, however with the recent changes the course will only be subsidised for students that are employed as trainees.

All other students will be charged full fees. The AVA SA are concerned that this will restrict the supply of veterinary nurses in an industry environment where practices are already struggling to find appropriately qualified nurses.

The AVA SA are working on having this decision reviewed ahead of the 2015 intake. With this in mind the Division is establishing a working group to consider the options for change. If you would like to be involved in the working group please contact Graham (execsa@ava.com.au) in the State office.

Any comments and thoughts on the change can also be forwarded. In particular, please let us know if you have had particular difficulty in attracting appropriately qualified nurses.

CONTRIBUTED ARTICLE

Medication error - Guild

A client claimed her dog was harmed as a result of a medication error. She alleged the dog suffered ‘tick poisoning’ after the practice supplied an inadequate dose of ‘tick prevention medication’. The dose given was calculated on a lower weight range than the dog’s current weight.

A client alleged his dog died from renal failure as a result of incorrect dosing with an anti-inflammatory agent. The wrong weight had been recorded in the animal’s record. Although the dog was a small breed, a weight of 28kg was recorded. The veterinarian then used that weight to calculate the dosage, without recognising that it was unlikely to be accurate for a dog of that size.

Guild Insurance also receives a number of similar claims every year where the cause of the incident is difficult to identify. In some instances, the veterinarian simply made a prescribing error and recorded the wrong dose or medication. In others, doses were weaned or titrated incorrectly. That is, a dose was increased when it should have been decreased, or a medication was continued long after it should have been ceased. While many of these errors result in minimal or no harm to the animal, some have had serious consequences. Errors involving prednisolone, NSAIDs or insulin have allegedly caused renal and hepatic failure. Some animals have died.

Tips for practice improvement

The cases above serve as a timely reminder about just how easily errors can occur. Fatigue, distraction, lack of decision support tools and poorly designed work areas are all recognised as common contributing factors. Therefore, take the time to evaluate your current prescribing and dispensing practices. Are you really doing everything you can to reduce the risk of error?

For the rest of this article go to Guild’s Riskequip website www.riskequip.com.au/veterinary

This article is one of a series of resources developed by the AVA/Guild Insurance Risk Management Committee
While you’re taking care of an emergency, who’s taking care of you?

An Australian first in vet protection
Animal Health Australia, the Australian Veterinary Association and Guild Insurance have put together a unique framework to cover private practising vets like you to assist in an Emergency Animal Disease Response (EADR). No other insurer offers this unique cover.

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Risks associated with clients seeing multiple veterinarians - Guild

Guild Insurance undertook a review of veterinary claims for the year 2012. It was found that there was significant trend in claims involving treatment being provided by at least two veterinarians. This led Guild to explore why a client seeing more than one veterinarian may lead to a claim arising and what can be done to prevent this from occurring.

Reasons for seeing a second veterinarian

There are a few reasons why a client may choose to see a second veterinarian. Sometimes it isn’t entirely by choice such as if their regular veterinarian has referred them to a specialist. It may also be a necessity if they require emergency after hours treatment and they therefore go to an emergency centre.

There will be occasions when a client requires a follow up appointment and isn’t able to make an appointment to see their usual veterinarian at a time which is convenient for them. Rather than waiting for an appointment they choose to go elsewhere.

The situations which are most concerning in terms of possible claims are the occasions when a client is unhappy with the treatment their animal has received and they choose to go elsewhere for a second opinion or follow up treatment.

Possible risks

Not all cases where more than one veterinarian is involved in the treatment of an animal will lead to issues arising or claims developing. However it is important veterinarians understand that on occasions the involvement of other veterinarians can lead to issues.

The following cases highlight the types of claims which can occur following the involvement of a second veterinarian.

1. An owner had taken her dog to her regular veterinarian due to her dog seeming weak and unable to walk normally. As there was little noticeable improvement following retreatment for arthritis the owner decided to take the dog elsewhere for a second opinion and the dog was diagnosed with a tumour. The owner requested a refund of all fees paid to the first veterinarian.

2. Surgery was performed on a dog which resulted in a large wound. The owner was unhappy with the outcome, even though the treating veterinarian was able to explain the reasons for the outcome, and went to see some else. The second veterinarian criticized the work of the first veterinarian. The owner requested a refund of part of the fees paid to the first veterinarian.

3. Surgery on a dog’s broken leg resulted in complications and the client was referred to a specialist for further surgery. The client then claimed that the first veterinarian should have referred him to a specialist in the beginning, rather than performing the surgery himself. The client was therefore claiming a refund of the fees paid to the first veterinarian.

4. Surgery was performed to remove a lump on a dog’s elbow; however the wound didn’t heal correctly. The owner claims that after many attempts to correct the issue, he then went to see a specialist who recommended another form of treatment. The owner claimed this treatment should have been offered at the beginning. He threatened to make a complaint to the Veterinary Surgeons Board and sought compensation for treatment, medication as well as a dog trainer.

Ethical considerations

Some veterinarians believe there is an increase within the industry of veterinarians criticizing the work of others. Guild’s claims suggest that this can be one of the triggers for a client making a claim or complaint against a veterinarian. This behavior is considered unprofessional and reflects poorly on the entire profession.

It’s possible that the second veterinarian seeing the animal doesn’t have all the information needed to make this judgement. Quite often when incidents occur, they are not simple matters. Determining who, if anyone, is at fault and why is not always obvious. Therefore making the judgement that a veterinarian has performed below an expected standard without there being an investigation is unfair and inappropriate.

Whilst clients may tell you what they believe has taken place, they could quite possibly be inadvertently giving you incorrect information. They
may have trouble remembering, understanding and explaining the clinical elements of what has previously taken place, particularly if it was some time ago. They may also be upset and emotional due to their animal being unwell which may affect their objectivity in the matter. It is also important to remember that when a veterinarian sees an animal which has previously been seen by someone else, it is possible that the symptoms have changed so the two veterinarians have not seen the exact same scenario.

Making even what you see as a small or insignificant comment to a client regarding the quality of treatment provided by another veterinarian could be enough to encourage that client to consider making a complaint or a demand for compensation. It should therefore always be avoided.

**Recommendations for avoiding risks**

Managing client expectations from the outset is vital. The client should be made aware of what to expect; they don’t want surprises. The more they understand the less likely they are to be dissatisfied with the treatment and then go elsewhere for further treatment.

Building relationships with clients is an important element in running any successful business. Get to know your clients and their animals. Give them a reason to trust you and come back to you.

Provide your clients with written information to take away with them. Sometimes not all information will be taken in and understood during an appointment; giving them something to take away and read in their own time will assist with their understanding. This could include information about the procedure, why it was done, what to expect during the recovery process, what signs to look for to know if there has been a complication and who to contact in case of an emergency.

If a follow up appointment is needed, don’t simply tell the client to come back in three days for example. This can easily be forgotten leading to the appointment being missed. Make this follow up appointment with them before they leave the clinic and provide them with an appointment card.

Have all your nursing staff phone clients the day after surgery or with cases you are uncertain about to check how the patient is recovering, that the owners understand the post-operative instructions and that they are managing the administration of any medications.

Clients can often become frustrated with the ongoing costs of treatment. Where possible, bundle the costs of multiple appointment or treatments together. For example, if a particular treatment will always require a follow up appointment, incorporate the cost of this follow up appointment into the cost of the treatment. They are more likely to attend when it has already been paid for.

Avoid offering refunds or free treatments in the event of a poor outcome. This may be seen by the client as an admission of responsibility or liability. It is then possible that the requests for discounted or free treatments will continue. Always speak to Guild Insurance before offering any form of compensation to a client.

Document everything! The key to dealing with a dissatisfied client who is considering making a claim or complaint against you is your accurate clinical records. If your work is being questioned by a client or another veterinarian, you will need evidence of what you did and why. If a client is claiming they were not made aware of the possible negative side effects of treatment or the need for a follow up appointment, your records need to be able to prove you informed them. This documentation includes all communication with veterinarians, other staff and the clients, particularly telephone conversations.

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Please email resume to Sandie Presneill, Practice Manager with subject VET POSITION AVA Bulletin: manager@girraweenvet.com.au
Heads and Necks

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