



Historical Items Working Group

Terms of Reference

Reviewed By	Nominations and Governance Committee
Approved By	AVA Board
Approved On	16 July 2026
Next Review	December 2027
Policy Level	Board

Background and Purpose	The AVA has accumulated a range of historical items over time, including documents, artefacts, photographs, digital files, publications, memorabilia and organisational records. These items represent the Association's heritage, achievements, and evolution, and form an important part of its identity. The purpose of the Historical Items Working Group is to: • Preserve the AVA's heritage and history. • Identify and safeguard historically significant documents, artifacts, photographs, publications, memorabilia, and records. • . • Facilitate appropriate access to historical materials for members. The Working Group will oversee a structured review process to ensure decisions align with AVA's strategic priorities, heritage value, member expectations, and resource capacity.
Role	The role of the Working Group is to review, assess, and make recommendations to the AVA Board on the future management of AVA's historical items. This includes overseeing a structured process to identify, catalogue, evaluate, and determine appropriate next steps for all historical artefacts, documents, memorabilia, and archival materials held by the AVA. The Committee acts in an advisory capacity only, providing expert-informed options and prioritised recommendations that ensure AVA's historical assets are managed in a way that aligns with organisational strategy, heritage value, member interest, and resource capability.
Objectives	The Working Group will: 1. Audit and Catalogue • Identify, document, and catalogue all AVA-held historical items (physical and digital). • Assess current condition, storage arrangements, and any associated risks (e.g., deterioration, legal, reputational). 2. Assess Significance and Value • Evaluate the historical, cultural, professional, and organisational significance of items. • Consider member and broader veterinary community value. 3. Determine Future Management Options • Develop clear criteria for decisions on: ○ Retention and preservation ○ Conservation or restoration ○ Digitisation ○ Display or exhibition ○ Archival storage ○ Rehoming, loaning, or transfer to appropriate institutions (e.g., museums, universities) ○ Ethical and compliant disposal where appropriate.

	4. Develop Recommendations • Produce a set of recommendations with rationale, priorities, indicative costs, and required resources. • Provide a proposed long-term plan for ongoing management of historical items. 5. Engage Relevant Expertise • Identify whether external expertise (archivists, museum curators, heritage consultants) is required. • Consult relevant AVA groups, historians, or sector experts. 6. Provide a Final Report • Deliver a final report to the AVA Board within the agreed timeframe, outlining findings and recommendations for implementation.
Scope of Work	In Scope: • All physical artefacts, photographs, documents, archives, artwork, memorabilia, awards, publications, and other items currently owned or held by AVA. • Items in AVA premises, off-site storage, or on loan (e.g. to universities). • Engagement with AVA staff, volunteers, SIGs, and external experts as relevant. • Preparation of options for both short-term decisions and a sustainable long-term approach. Out of Scope: • Financial approval or procurement—committee makes recommendations only. • Legal decisions relating to records management or intellectual property. • Decisions regarding disposal of assets without board approval.
Authority for Decisions	The Working Group is not a decision-making body. They will provide advice and guidance that will be used to provide project recommendations to AVA management and the Board.
Membership and Appointment Process	• Chair (appointed by AVA Board or is a Board member). • Up to 6 Working Group members. Members will be selected via an open expression of interest to AVA members. • At least 3 members will need to be Sydney based as most of the physical items are located in AVA's Sydney office in St Leonards. • Legal decisions relating to records management or intellectual property. • Members should possess relevant knowledge and experience in veterinary history, heritage curation or archival practices. • AVA team support will be provided by the Executive Officer / Office Manager Corporate Services. • External expert(s) as advisors (optional)
Term and Deliverables	The project will be completed over a 12-month period.

	Deliverables (guideline) • Month 1–3: Complete audit and catalogue. • Month 3–5: Assess significance and categorise items • Month 5–8: Develop future management options and costing • Month 8–10: Engage stakeholders and refine recommendations • Month 10–12: Deliver final report and implementation roadmap
Reporting and Accountability	The Working Group will report to the Head of Corporate Services / providing recommendations for Board consideration or approval. The Working Group will provide written updates after completion of each milestone.
Working Group Responsibilities	• The Working Group will meet as required either in-person meetings (for Sydney based members) at the St Leonards office or via videoconference to progress work. • Ensure decisions and recommendations follow AVA policies, legal requirements, and ethical standards. • Show care and respect towards other members of the Working Group. • Actively participate in the Working Group to progress actions. • Monitor progress against timeline and alert the Board to any risks or delays.
Approval	These Terms of Reference will be approved by the AVA Board. Date approved: