



# VETERINARY PRACTITIONERS REGISTRATION BOARD OF VICTORIA

19 December 2017

The Hon Jaala Pulford  
Minister for Agriculture  
Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources  
1 Spring Street  
Melbourne VICTORIA 3000

Dear Minister Pulford

## **Ministerial Statement of Expectations for the Veterinary Practitioners Board of Victoria**

Thank you for your Statement of Expectations (SOE) dated 21 November 2017 for the Veterinary Practitioners Board of Victoria (the Board). Under Section 62(3) of the *Veterinary Practice Act 1997* (the Act), the Board must consult with you and have regard to your advice and expectations in carrying out its functions and powers. This letter confirms the Board's continued commitment to improving its regulatory functions and provides you with any information and advice you reasonably require as per the Act.

### **Improvements and targets**

The Board will meet your priorities for improvement through the initiatives outlined below.

#### ***Timeliness***

The Board recognises the importance of timeliness in relation to our stakeholder interactions. We are committed to improving our performance with regards to timeliness and the communication of timeframes to regulated parties and the community. We will implement a digital innovation plan which will include the monitoring of current timeframes and the provision of applications forms in digital formats to reduce time-based burden on our regulated parties. The Board will also review current communications regarding timeframes to ensure they are accurate and easily understood.

<b>Improvement</b>	<b>Target</b>
Review the Board's website and all forms to ensure that they are current, accurate, easily understood, written in plain English and accessible for veterinary practitioners as well as the public community.	31 December 2018
Collect and review data concerning the time currently taken to submit information for registration and complaints. Where appropriate offer the opportunity to renegotiate requested timeframes to provide information.	31 December 2018

<b>Improvement</b>	<b>Target</b>
Transition 50% of application forms to electronically fillable and accessible formats to reduce time-based burden on regulated parties.	30 June 2018
Review the Board's current information management systems and update to accommodate an enhanced web-based case management system.	30 June 2019
Implement a web-based case management system, which will allow individuals to provide required information through a simple online portal. This will also enable an individual to follow application status and progression of regulatory processes, as appropriate.	31 December 2019
Review current advice relating to timing and regulatory processes available on the Board's website and in forms and guidance notes, to ensure clarity.	30 June 2018
Provide status updates of regulatory processes to affected parties within four weeks of the cessation of the regulatory process (including any anticipated delays). Continue to provide status updates fortnightly if requested.	30 June 2018
Publish the <i>Service Charter</i> on the Board's website and provide a mechanism for individuals to provide ongoing feedback.	31 January 2018

### ***Risk-based strategies***

The Board recognises the importance of risk-based strategies as effective tools to facilitate effective enforcement and compliance. We recognise that non-compliance by our registrants may result in adverse consequences for public and animal health. The Board will review, revise, and develop risk-based compliance strategies across our business to mitigate potential risks to our stakeholders and the public. Compliance objectives will be published on the Board's website. These strategies will be published on the Board's website and will be reviewed during the term of this SOE to ensure their continued relevance.

<b>Improvement</b>	<b>Target</b>
Review current practices and develop a risk-based compliance strategy.	30 June 2018
Publish compliance objectives and principles on the Board's website.	30 June 2018
Review and update all risk-based compliance strategies and operation plans.	31 December 2018

### **Compliance related assistance and advice**

The Board provides a wide range of advisory material to veterinary practitioners and the general public through our website. We acknowledge the importance of providing advice that is both clear and concise and will continue to review our website content, fact sheets and guidance notes to ensure that material remains current.

<b>Improvement</b>	<b>Target</b>
Review website content to ensure currency, relevance and accessibility for veterinary practitioners and/or public stakeholders.	31 December 2018
Review hard copy guidance notes, fact sheets and other material content to ensure currency, relevance and accessibility for veterinary practitioners and/or public stakeholders.	31 December 2018
Review information currently available to veterinary practitioners concerning compliance with Professional Conduct Guidelines. Revise/augment this information as appropriate to provide veterinary practitioners with easily understood advice regarding compliance with these guidelines.	31 December 2018
Prepare a plan for ongoing review of all regulatory process advice provided by the Board via the website or other material to ensure continued relevance.	First review by 30 June 2018
Develop a review process to respond to issues which may arise regarding registration and complaints processes for veterinary practitioners as well as the public community.	31 December 2018

### **Accountability and transparency**

The Board recognises the importance of accountability and transparency in its role as a Victorian regulator. For this reason, we have committed to an external audit and review of functioning of the Board by the end of 2017, to provide impartial feedback on the Board's functioning. As part of this review process, a summary of findings and recommendations and our responses to these will be made publicly available. We will report our progress against addressing these recommendations. We will continue to undertake regular and effective communication about our activities and processes to all stakeholders to ensure transparency in our business operations.

Veterinary practitioners have the privilege of being able to use scheduled drugs and poisons under the *Drugs Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981*, but they also have a responsibility to prescribe, supply, and use them in a way that constitutes professional conduct. The Board recognises the potential risks to animal and human health and welfare which may result from inappropriate prescribing practices and acknowledges its role in providing information and advice to veterinary practitioners regarding what constitutes professional conduct as reflected in the *Professional Conduct Guidelines*. The Board will work closely with DEDJTR and DHHS to make appropriate resources available to veterinary practitioners and the general public, and actively promote responsible prescribing practices.

<b>Improvement</b>	<b>Target</b>
Publish summaries of 100% of regular monthly Board meetings on the Board's website, highlighting decisions and outcomes that will affect veterinary practitioners and the public.	Monthly within two weeks of each Board meeting, commencing 31 January 2018
Review information currently available regarding compliance with <i>Professional Conduct Guidelines</i> .	31 December 2018
Revise/augment information and advice available concerning compliance with the Professional Conduct Guidelines to ensure transparency in expectations about compliance with these guidelines by veterinary practitioners operating in Victoria.	30 June 2019
Publish DEDJTR resources concerning antimicrobial resistance (AMR) on the Board's website and quarterly newsletter.	31 January 2018
Publish a summary of the findings and recommendations of the 2017 external audit and review on the Board's website, along with a plan to implement these recommendations.	30 June 2018
Report on progress meeting targets in the improvement plan in the Board's annual report.	Annually commencing 30 June 2018

### **Evaluation**

An evaluation of the performance improvements contained in the SOE including reporting against the Boards compliance outcomes will be included in the annual report.

<b>Improvement</b>	<b>Target</b>
Evaluate the performance improvements and targets contained in the SOE.	In annual reports

### **Reporting**

I confirm that the Board will report on the achievement of these targets in its annual report, incorporate the targets into the Board's Corporate Plan, and publish the SOE as well as this response statement on the Board's website.

Yours sincerely



Associate Professor Peter Mansell  
**President**  
**Veterinary Practitioners Registration Board of Victoria**