



IDENTIFIED NEED POLICY

VETERINARY PRACTITIONERS REGISTRATION BOARD OF VICTORIA

Background to section 7(1)(d) of the Veterinary Practice Act 1997

One of the primary functions of the Veterinary Practitioners Registration Board of Victoria (the Board) is to protect the public by providing for the registration of veterinary practitioners and ensuring that they are appropriately qualified.

The Australian Veterinary Boards Council Inc. (AVBC) maintains (through a rigorous accreditation process) a nationally agreed list of qualifications that entitle their bearer to general registration as a veterinary practitioner in Victoria.

The Board may in certain circumstances grant specific registration to applicants who hold qualifications in veterinary practice which do not qualify them for general registration.

Under section 7(1)(d) of the *Veterinary Practice Act 1997* (the Act) the Board may grant specific registration to an applicant who does not hold an accredited qualification where *...the Board is of the opinion that, in order to meet an identified need for a veterinary practitioner, it is necessary for a person having qualifications in the nature of the applicants to provide veterinary services.*

The Board does not grant registration to people who do not hold eligible qualifications for general registration unless it forms the view that there is an identified need. It may take some time for the Board to assess an application made under this section, and substantive evidence of the applicant's qualifications and skills, and of the identified need, will be required.

The definition of "*an identified need*" and circumstances where it is "*necessary*" are not specifically described in legislation but are subject to the interpretation of the Board on a case by case basis. The purpose of this policy is to provide some guidance as to how the Board interprets this section of the Act.

Policy

When assessing an application for registration under Section 7(1)(d) the Board will consider:

1. whether the identified need is real, and providing specific registration is necessary:
 - The identified need must be based on public, community, or government need. The commercial considerations of an individual or business do not meet the criteria for identified need.
 - Substantive evidence is required as to the nature of the identified need and how the needs of the public and/or health and welfare of animals will be at risk if the position is not filled.
 - The Board must be provided with evidence of efforts made to fill the position with a practitioner eligible for general registration, including meaningful advertising of the position to the veterinary profession and the provision of appropriate working conditions and remuneration.
 - The identified need may be for either a specific skillset that is not readily available from the pool of general registrants or to a location where the lack of a veterinary practitioner may negatively affect animal welfare. It would be expected that the Board place conditions on the registration that restricts practice to the area of identified need. The proposed veterinary duties should be clearly defined in a letter from the proposed employer. The proposed level of supervision should also be detailed. The Board may require a signed supervisory agreement before considering an application.
 - Subject to section 7 of the Veterinary Practice Act 1997, specific registration is granted for a period of no more than 12 months. Continued registration under section 7(1)(d) will only be granted if the Board remains satisfied that an identified need exists which is unable to be fulfilled

by a practitioner with or eligible for general registration under the Act. A separate application for registration must be made each year, and include the requisite evidence as documented in this policy and on the application form.

2. whether the applicant's knowledge, training and experience is sufficient for registration under this section:
 - Qualifications – The Board will consider whether the qualifications of the applicant are appropriate. Evidence should be provided regarding both the qualifications held and technical competence of the applicant with respect to the specific duties that are proposed. This should include a CV and referees that can be contacted by the Board.
 - Letter of Good Standing – The Board will require evidence of good standing from previous jurisdictions in which the applicant held registration as a veterinary practitioner. Applicants may provide referees, and the Board may require specific evidence in individual cases.
 - English proficiency - The Board may require evidence of English proficiency (such as results of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS)) and applicants may be required to attend an interview.
 - Understanding of the laws and regulations surrounding veterinary practice in Victoria.

Conditions

The Board would normally place registration conditions that will:

- restrict the duration of practice to a maximum of 12 months from the date of registration
- restrict practice to the specific duties specified in the description of the identified need
- restrict practice to a specific business or location, and
- describe the level of supervision required.

Veterinary practitioners with specific registration are subject to the same statutory provisions as other registered practitioners, including the requirement to meet appropriate standards of veterinary practice and are subject to the same processes if a complaint is made to the Board about the professional conduct of the practitioner.

Please note that the Board expects veterinary practitioners to work within the bounds of their competence and be mindful of their own limitations.

Extract from the *Veterinary Practice Act 1997*

7 SPECIFIC REGISTRATION

- (1) The Board may grant or refuse to grant specific registration as a veterinary practitioner to an applicant if the applicant holds qualifications in veterinary practice which do not qualify that applicant for general registration — ...
 - (d) if the Board is of the opinion that, in order to meet an identified need for a veterinary practitioner, it is necessary for a person having qualifications in the nature of the applicant's to provide veterinary services; or ...
- (2) A grant of specific registration under this section is subject to any conditions, limitations or restrictions imposed by the Board including the period of registration which must not exceed 12 months.
- (3) The Board may of its own motion, or upon application by the veterinary practitioner granted specific registration, amend, vary or revoke any condition, limitation or restriction imposed under subsection (2).