



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As I prepare to step down as President next month, I want to take a moment to reflect and simply say thank you. It has been a genuine privilege to serve as President of the Veterinary Practitioners Registration Board of Victoria over the past four years.



I am deeply grateful to my fellow Board members and our dedicated team of professionals for their commitment, hard work and shared determination to strengthen and improve the Vetboard. The progress we have made has truly been a collective effort.

When I stepped into the role in mid-2022, we set ourselves an ambitious goal: to modernise the Board as a regulator and improve the way we support and protect both the profession and the community. We committed to becoming a more contemporary risk-based and outcomes-focused regulator, with greater emphasis on prevention, transparency and supporting good practice across the profession.

Looking back, I'm proud of how much we've achieved together. We have strengthened our core regulatory functions, improving how we manage registrations, complaints and investigations at a time of increasing demand and complexity. We have also expanded our guidance and communication to practitioners, with clearer expectations and more practical support on the issues veterinarians face every day.

At the same time, we have invested heavily in the organisation itself – building capability, improving systems and governance, and placing the Board on a stronger and more sustainable financial footing. This work has been essential to ensuring the Board can continue to meet the growing demands on veterinary regulation while remaining an effective, independent and practitioner-funded body.

Importantly, we have repositioned the Board as a more proactive regulator, one that not only responds to complaints but actively works to prevent harm, strengthen professional standards and support a safe, sustainable veterinary sector.

Over this period, we have also worked closely with government and stakeholders on broader reform initiatives. There is still much to do to ensure regulation of the veterinary profession in Victoria remains fit for purpose and responsive to the evolving science, practice and

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delivery of veterinary medicine. I am confident, however, that the Board is well placed to continue that work and adapt to the changing regulatory landscape ahead.

Throughout it all, our focus has remained where it should be: protecting animal welfare, maintaining public confidence, and supporting a profession that continues to work under significant pressure while delivering exceptional care to animals and the community every day.

I would also like to acknowledge departing Board member Dr Charlie Blackwood and thank him sincerely for his six years of dedicated service, particularly as Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee. Charlie has made an important contribution to the Board and its work. We now welcome applications from registered practitioners interested in joining the Board, with applications closing on 31 May.

Finally, I want to thank all veterinary practitioners across Victoria for the care, professionalism and compassion you bring to your work every day. It has been an honour to serve our profession. I wish the next President, and the Board, every success in the years ahead.

John Harte
President

COMPLAINTS OVERVIEW

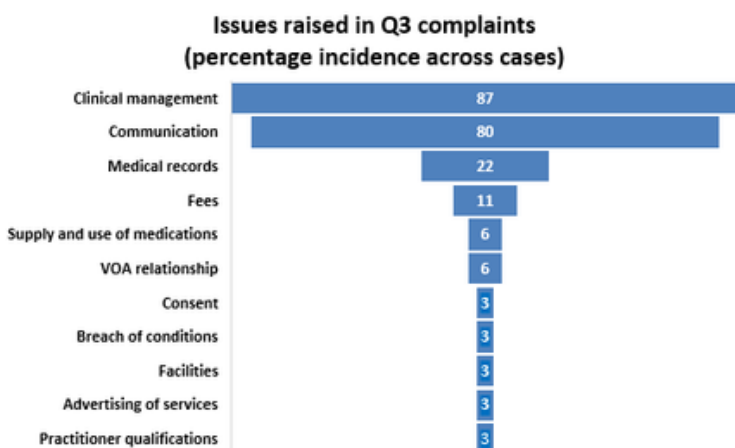
In the third quarter of 2025-26 (Q3), the Board received 83 preliminary enquiries and 56 written complaints about the conduct of veterinary practitioners (compared with 66 enquiries and 35 complaints in Q2).

The Board considered 38 complaints (including some from the previous quarter, and one instigated by the Board of its own motion), around the same number as the 40 considered last quarter.

Of the 38 complaints considered, the Board determined 28 were lacking in substance and 10 were to be investigated.

Issues raised

Noting that a single complaint may involve multiple issues, issues raised in Q3 complaints are shown in the graph below. The main issues were clinical management and treatment of the animal (87%), communication with clients (80%), veterinary medical records (22%). Other issues included fees (11%), supply and use of medications (6%) and the veterinary practitioner-owner-animal relationship (5%), and consent, breach of conditions, facilities, advertising of services and practitioner qualifications (all 3% each).



Investigation outcomes

This quarter, one matter was referred to an informal hearing after preliminary investigation.

Sixteen matters were finalised:

- 1 after a formal hearing (see next column)
- 2 with an educative letter requiring participation in a continuing professional development program. One of these vets was also required to provide a reflection.
- 2 with an educative letter requiring a reflective piece
- 9 with an educative letter
- 2 with no further action.

Investigation outcomes continued

Six (6) matters were closed after veterinarians whose compliance with Board requirements was being monitored completed their obligations.

Formal hearing outcome

At a formal hearing held in February, a hearing panel found a veterinary practitioner had engaged in unprofessional conduct of a serious nature and cancelled their registration.

OUR APPROACH TO HEALTH ISSUES

The Board’s management of recent matters involving veterinary practitioners with health issues reflects our commitment to a responsive and empathetic approach that recognises the emotional impact regulatory processes can have on vets.

Disclosing health issues

Vets completing their annual registration renewal application are asked to declare whether they have a physical or mental impairment or substance dependence that significantly impairs their ability to practise. A vet is not required to disclose physical or mental health issues that are appropriately managed and have no significant impact on their capacity to practise. Health issues may also come to the Board’s attention at other times, including through disclosures made by the vet or concerns raised by other persons.

Our approach after disclosure

The Board’s approach to such disclosures is confidential and non-judgemental. To minimise the impact of regulatory processes on vets experiencing health conditions, the Board seeks to understand the individual circumstances and engage with empathy and clarity.

Health issues are managed separately from conduct and disciplinary matters. In most cases, the Board will have further conversations with the vet to obtain more information and better understand the context. Based on that information, sometimes the Board will decide to seek a report from a health practitioner.

Depending on the report, the vet may agree to temporarily change the way they practise and/or have conditions imposed on their registration. Any conditions imposed would be based on the individual circumstances. The main aim of such arrangements is to support vets to continue practising in a safe way while managing or recovering from a health condition, and to protect the public and health and wellbeing of animals.

Our approach to health issues continued

In rare circumstances, if the risks relating to a vet's health condition are considered significant, their registration may be suspended for a period.

Recent cases

In recent cases where vets with health issues agreed to restrictions on their registration, the Board carefully considered individual circumstances and the potential impact of its actions on the vets, while ensuring standards were maintained and safe care continued to be provided.

For their part in this two-way process, the vets showed professional accountability by complying with the restrictions placed on their practice and communicating openly with the Board.

After a period of regular communication and reporting, the restrictions on these vets' registration were able to be eased or removed.

Supporting respectful and effective regulatory processes

The Board continues to strengthen its approach to complaint management and registration processes. This includes:

- communicating in plain and empathetic language, so vets better understand our role and approach and feel confident about engaging with the Board – open, learning, and seeking early help
- considering the context of events and the vet's individual circumstances when making decisions. Relevant factors may include workload, systemic pressures, personal crises, grief, work and personal relationships, and availability of support.
- checking for signs where our regulatory processes may be contributing to distress and identifying what supports or adjustments may assist the vet
- further training for staff and Board members which emphasises the importance of considering context when assessing risk, communicating effectively, and recognising the impact regulatory processes can have on vets' mental health and wellbeing.

The aim is to support respectful, context-aware regulatory interactions that balance public protection with the wellbeing of veterinary practitioners, and contribute to safe and effective veterinary care.

ADVERTISING AFTER HOURS CARE

Clear, transparent communication about after-hours care is key to maintaining client trust and safeguarding animal welfare.

The Board has received complaints from clients who were led to believe a clinic offered '24/7 care,' only to discover that after-hours services were provided on an on-call basis – with no veterinary practitioner physically present overnight and limited care available when they arrived.

The term '24/7' can easily create an expectation of continuous, on-site supervision. If after-hours care is delivered via an on-call arrangement, this should be clearly communicated on websites, in advertising and in interactions with clients including recorded messages. This will ensure clients understand that a veterinary practitioner will not be in the clinic monitoring the patient overnight.

Being upfront about how after-hours care is provided helps set realistic expectations, enables informed decision-making, and supports better outcomes for animals when timely care is critical.

The Board encourages clinics to use plain language which clearly explains the difference between '24/7 care' and 'on-call' services so clients understand exactly what level of care is available.

Relevant Board Guideline: [G16 - Provision of veterinary services outside normal hours](#)

SOME REMINDERS

In previous newsletters we discussed how important it is to obtain informed consent from animal owners before undertaking dental procedures, particularly tooth extractions:

- [Managing the expectations of animal owners re dental procedures](#)
- [Obtaining consent to dental procedures](#)

We also discouraged proposing resolutions to clients which are conditional on them not lodging a complaint with the Board:

- [Clients have the right to make a complaint to the Board](#)

Missed our February issue? Key highlights:

- [Presenting care options to clients](#)
- [Prescription, supply and storage of compounded medicines](#)

APPLY TO BE A BOARD MEMBER

Closing date Sunday, 31 May 2026

The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action invites applications from suitably qualified registered veterinary practitioners for appointment as a registered veterinarian member (non-Executive Director) of the Veterinary Practitioners Registration Board of Victoria.

- Learn more and apply online via the [Boards Vic website](#).
- Closing: Sunday 31 May 2026, 11:59 pm
- More information: jain.mclaren@agriculture.vic.gov.au

PREPARE FOR 2026-27 RENEWAL

Commencing late May/early June

The registration renewal period for vets with general, specialist and non-practising registration is starting in late May/early June 2026.

We'll send renewal notifications to the email address on your account and your Australian mobile number. Check your contact details are up-to-date in your account at www.vetboard.vic.gov.au/myaccount

Renew your registration by 30 June to avoid additional late fees. Late fees will apply from 1 to 31 July.

Not renewing or not sure?

- If you do not intend to renew your registration, complete this form: [Surrender Vetboard Registration](#). We'll remove your name on 30 June.
- If you're on parental leave, retiring or taking a break from work, consider the information on our [registration renewal page](#).
- If you're thinking of moving to non-practising registration: [Non-practising registration](#).

In hardship?

- To discuss your financial circumstances, please [contact us](#) no later than 15 June 2026.

For employers & interstate registrants

- Vets who have moved from another state cannot renew their interstate registration. If they have NSW, Tasmanian or WA registration which expires on 30 June, they must apply to register here by 5 June so their Victorian registration can start on 1 July 2026. More information: [Registration in Victoria - What vets and employers need to know](#)

BOARD WEBINAR THIS WEEK

Veterinary practitioners are invited to the Board's next webinar at 7pm this Wednesday, 27 May 2026.

At the webinar we'll be discussing:

- proposed changes to CPD requirements (see below)
- law reform for the veterinary profession in Victoria
- a summary of recent complaints and investigation outcomes.

Register via the link below. Attendance will count as 0.5 unstructured points of CPD.

Date: Wednesday, 27 May 2026

Time: 7-8pm

Zoom registration: [Vetboard Victoria Webinar](#)

NOTE if you do not receive email confirmation, check your Spam or Deleted items.

COMING
SOON

STAY TUNED FOR
CPD GUIDELINE
CONSULTATION

Shortly, you'll be invited to participate in a consultation on a proposed new Board Guideline on Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

What's being proposed is a holistic and reflective approach different from the current points-based CPD system for veterinarians in Victoria.

Vets at all stages of their careers will be invited to complete a survey on the proposed Guideline on the Engage Victoria website. Look out for our email!

NEW VETERINARY SPECIALISTS

Congratulations to the veterinary practitioners newly endorsed as specialists since February 2026

- Dr Thomas Butler [V11332], endorsed in Small Animal Medicine
- Dr Simon Choi [V8715], endorsed in Veterinary Neurology
- Dr Samantha Gilbert [V10821], endorsed in Veterinary Neurology
- Dr Euan McLean [V9545], endorsed in Small Animal Surgery
- Dr Iresha Ambepitiya Wickramasinghe [V9441], endorsed in Veterinary Anatomical Pathology

STARTING A VETERINARY BUSINESS

Vets frequently ask the Board how to set up a veterinary business, including sole-owner mobile veterinary businesses.

This article provides general information as a starting point only, highlighting some issues to consider. It does not constitute legal or business advice. If you are considering setting up a business, we recommend you consult a legal practitioner or accountant and ensure you have business insurance.

The Board's regulation of businesses

Unlike in other States and Territories, the Board does not have powers under the *Veterinary Practice Act 1997* (the VPA) to register or directly regulate veterinary businesses.

Of course, all vets providing veterinary services in businesses must be registered as veterinary practitioners in Victoria. Those vets are expected to comply with the Board's guidelines issued under section 62(1)(e) of the Act, and their conduct is regulated under the VPA.

General information about starting a business

Business Victoria has many useful resources about starting a business. You'll find general information, tools, templates and training at business.vic.gov.au.

Consumer Affairs Victoria also has information about [obligations under the Australian Consumer Law](#) for businesses that sell products or services. Note also that false, misleading or deceptive advertising is prohibited under section 59 of the VPA.

You also need to be aware of requirements that may apply under business and taxation law, legislation administered by the Departments of Health ([radiation safety](#) and [medicines](#)) and Energy, Environment and Climate Action ([Animal Welfare Victoria](#)) and council, environment and planning regulations (zoning etc).

The Australian Veterinary Association provides business information to its members: [AVA membership benefits](#).

Board guidelines relating to businesses

These guidelines are particularly relevant to businesses, including for off-site or mobile work:

- [Guideline 6 - Veterinary facilities, equipment and assistance in the provision of veterinary services](#) - section 6.5 of this guideline, quoted in full in the next column on this page, covers off-site work
- [Guideline 20 - Biosecurity](#).

6.5 - A veterinary practitioner must take reasonable steps to ensure that the environment in which they provide veterinary services during an off-site consultation or house call:

1. is clean and hygienic during the delivery of veterinary services
2. does not provide significant risk to the safety of the veterinary practitioner, members of the veterinary team or other individuals assisting the veterinary practitioner
3. is suitable for the treatment or procedures being delivered and has appropriate equipment and amenities
4. has secure, safe and appropriate storage for drugs compliant with requirements under the *Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981*
5. has equipment or processes for the safe and appropriate disposal of sharps and clinical waste
6. does not impede appropriate biosecurity measures to be implemented (as required).

Veterinary medicines

For guidance on prescribing, storing and transporting veterinary medicines, refer to:

- [Guideline 14 - Supply and use of veterinary medications](#)
- [Guidance on access to and storage of pentobarbital](#) including when transported in a car
- our newsletter item on obligations under the Victorian Drugs Poisons and Controlled Substances Regulations 2017: [Clarification of prescription and supply obligations](#).

Medical records and veterinary certificates

Vets at a business must keep veterinary medical records, regardless of whether services are delivered on- or off-site: [Guideline 7 - Veterinary medical records](#).

Where vaccinations, euthanasia, de-sexing and other procedures are performed, refer to:

- [Guideline 18 - End of life veterinary services](#)
- [Guideline 19 - Veterinary certificates](#)
- [Good practice: clear and complete certification](#).

Keeping safe & healthy

Business owners also have obligations to provide a safe and healthy working environment - including ensuring their personal safety when working alone and using a vehicle:

- AVA [Great veterinary workplaces](#) policies and [THRIVE veterinary wellness initiative](#)
- WorkSafe Victoria: [Safety and wellbeing](#), [Psychological health](#), [Working from a vehicle](#)
- [Workplace wellbeing](#) - Business Victoria
- Board [Guideline 8 - Veterinary practitioner and veterinary team wellbeing and support resources](#).

News and information from other organisations

AVA WELLBEING SURVEY

Closing June 2026

The Board encourages all veterinary practitioners in Victoria to participate in the 2026 Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) and THRIVE Veterinary Community Wellbeing Survey.

This is an anonymous survey which collects information on the current state of mental health and wellbeing of the veterinary community.

The AVA is inviting everybody in the veterinary community to participate. Veterinarians can be in clinical practice or other industries, retired or not currently working. Veterinary team members and other stakeholders can also complete the survey, including vet nurses, practice managers, clinic administration staff and vet students.

The last survey of this kind led to important support programs, including the 'THRIVE mental health and wellbeing framework' and 'Cultivating safe teams program'. Survey results will help advocates, policy makers and THRIVE program managers to address the challenges and identify the strengths that protect the sector.

- **Survey link:** [AVA | THRIVE Veterinary Community Wellbeing Survey](#).
- **Ethics approval:** 34179, University of Melbourne
- **Closing:** Mid-June 2026 or until significant response received

SURVEYS FROM VETERINARY PEERS

The AVA advertises surveys conducted by national and international veterinarians and vet students.

Current surveys include enquiries on small animal surgery skills for veterinary graduates; dementia in dogs; barriers to pet owners accessing surrender prevention programs; withholding food and water before anaesthesia; and AI use re equine lameness.

You can help support your peers and advance veterinary science by completing the surveys:

- ▶ [Surveys for members of the profession](#)

NEW MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE



On 15 April 2026, The Hon. Michaela Settle MP was appointed as Minister for Agriculture (taking over from Ros Spence MP).

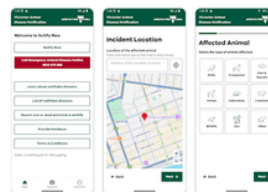
Minister Settle's responsibilities also include Regional Development. She has lived in regional Victoria for most of her life, having owned and operated a sheep farm in Ararat for over a decade.

SHARE EMERGENCY DISEASE INFORMATION WITH CLIENTS

The Board encourages all vets to share information about reporting emergency animal diseases with their clients, especially those with livestock.

You can promote the following resources to clients:

- A list of diseases that must be reported immediately: **Notifiable diseases**
- **1800 675 888** - the Emergency Animal Disease Hotline staffed by vets at Agriculture Victoria 24 hours a day, every day of the year.
- The **Notify Now** app which producers, vets and animal owners can use to submit geo-located photographs, property details and reports directly to the State's Chief Veterinary Officer:
 - ▶ Apple Store - [Notify Now - Victoria, Animal Disease Notification](#)
 - ▶ Google Play - [Notify Now Animal Disease Vic.](#)



- [outbreak.gov.au](#) website of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has info on how to identify signs of pests and emergency animal diseases including a field guide for vets, and steps for preventing and responding to outbreaks.

SUPPORT AND INFORMATION FOR VETERINARY PRACTITIONERS

VETBOARD VICTORIA RESOURCES

- [Registration](#) (Download proof of registration or update your contact details via [My Account](#))
- [Complaints](#)
- [Guidelines for appropriate standards of veterinary practice and veterinary facilities](#)
- [Newsletter archive](#)
- [Videos and factsheets about veterinary boards, how they handle complaints and how you can respond to or prevent complaints](#)
- [Veterinary Practice Act 1997](#)
- [Other laws relating to veterinary practice including Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981](#)
- [About the Board](#) and [Board members](#)
- [Annual reports](#)

MEDICINES, MICROCHIPPING, RADIATION

Medicines & Poisons Regulation (MPR)

Branch, Victorian Department of Health

- [Medicines and Poisons Regulation](#)
- [Legislative requirements for vets](#)
- [Factsheet – Key requirements for vets](#)
- [MPR Enquiry form](#)

Prescribing guidelines and resources:

- [AMR Vet Collective antimicrobial guidelines](#)

Microchipping

- [Authorised implanter course for veterinarians](#) - Victorian Division AVA
- Greyhound Microchip Registry 8329 1139

Radiation Safety Unit, Vic Health:

- [Individual use licences](#)
- [Management licences](#)

Disclaimer: Some links in this newsletter direct you to the websites of third-party organisations which are responsible for and/or may be able to assist you with the item's subject matter. The Veterinary Practitioners Registration Board of Victoria has no control over, and is not responsible or liable for any action you may take based on, the information on those websites.

SUPPORT FOR VETS

- **Australian Veterinary Association:** [telephone counselling service](#) 1300 687 327 **both** for AVA members **and** the vet professionals who work for them
- **AVA THRIVE** [veterinary wellness portal](#)
- **Lifeline** 13 1114 & [Get help](#)
- **Beyond Blue:** 1800 512 348 & [Get mental health support](#)
- **SANE** 1800 187 263 & [SANE services](#)
- **1800RESPECT** 1800 737 732 & [website](#)
- **Mensline Australia** 1300 789 978 & [website](#) (delivered by Lifeline)
- **Head to Health** [Australian Gov resources](#)
- **Mental health support** [Victorian Gov resources](#)

AGRICULTURE VICTORIA INFORMATION Emergency Disease Hotline

- 1800 675 888 to report suspected emergency diseases - staffed by vets 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Local animal health staff

- Call 136 186 to get in touch with Agriculture Victoria District Veterinary Officers and Animal Health Officers located throughout Victoria.

Avian flu

- EAD hotline 1800 675 888

General contacts

- Customer service line 136 186
- Email biosecurity queries or feedback to animal.biosecurity@agriculture.vic.gov.au
- Email animal welfare queries to pet.welfare@agriculture.vic.gov.au

General information

- www.agriculture.vic.gov.au
- [Biosecurity and animal diseases](#)
- [National biosecurity training hub](#)
- [VetWatch newsletter](#) – information about animal disease surveillance
- [Antibiotic resistant infections and information for veterinarians and veterinary staff](#)
- [Animal Welfare Victoria](#)
- [Livestock and animals](#)
- [Pet care](#)