



# Review of the Tasmanian Veterinary Service Standards

ENSURING A HIGH STANDARD OF VETERINARY PRACTICE IN  
TASMANIA

PUBLIC CONSULTATION PAPER

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## Background

The Veterinary Board of Tasmania (VBT) is tasked with registering veterinarians and veterinary specialists and regulating veterinary practice in Tasmania.

The regulatory aspects aim to protect the public and animal health and welfare in Tasmania by setting and maintaining standards for veterinary education and professional behaviour, and where necessary apply disciplinary measures.

The VBT may declare veterinary service standards (VSS) specifying the standards of service and rules of conduct that apply to registered veterinarians and veterinary specialists.

VSS are aimed to assist and support veterinarians deliver appropriate and effective services within an ethical framework. Veterinarians therefore have a professional responsibility to be familiar with the VSS and apply them in their practice.

## VSS Review Project history to the public consultation stage

While other Australian jurisdictions have standards in varying formats (developed between 2012 and 2020), most are similar in length and content to the current Tasmanian Standards and confirm that the current standards are, for the most part, relevant and appropriate. However, several new and emerging issues needed consideration and there were also some existing standards that would benefit from strengthening or clarification. The VBT commenced a formal and comprehensive review of the VSS in 2021 including a two-stage consultation process.

Stage 1 consultation commenced in September 2021 with a survey of the profession and other stakeholders. The survey was aimed at understanding priorities and particular issues and concerns with the current standards, as well as specific areas of legislation directly impacting veterinarians. A report on survey responses was presented to the VBT in early 2022. Further development of new VSS has been subsequently undertaken culminating in the draft VSS which are now open for public consultation (Stage 2).

Note the Tasmanian State Government Department concerned with review of the legislative aspects of veterinary service regulation (primarily the *Veterinary Surgeons Regulations 2012*) has advised that review process is now scheduled for 2023.

Throughout and particularly during the final development of the VSS prior to this public consultation stage, other veterinary boards across Australia and New Zealand have been consulted in an effort to explore different and contemporary approaches to professional regulation and improve harmony and effect in professional standards between jurisdictions.

## Literature review

The following resources have been reviewed to assess the approach to and content of professional standards documents in other jurisdictions, to inform this review:

- Guidelines of the Veterinary Practitioners Registration Board of Victoria – 2021
- Veterinary Council of [New Zealand](#) Code of professional Conduct – 2020
- Veterinary Surgeons Board of South Australia Code of Professional Conduct – 2015
- Veterinary Board of Northern Territory Code of Conduct – date unknown
- Veterinary Board of NT Standards on minimum standards for veterinary premises - 2020
- Veterinary Board of NSW self-assessment checklist for veterinary practices - 2017

- Veterinary Surgeon’s Board of Western Australia – Authorisation of a lay person to carry out pregnancy testing of cattle by ultrasound using a rectal probe – June 2020
- Veterinary Surgeon’s Board of Western Australia – Standards to professional conduct
- RCVS [Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Surgeons online](#) – accessed October 2020
- The College of Veterinarians of Ontario – Outcomes Focussed Regulation Paper – 2019
- The College of Veterinarians of Ontario – Professional practice standards
- Veterinary Surgeons Amendment Regulation 2012 Discussion Paper
- Regulation of the Veterinary Profession Position Paper FVE 2015
- Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Nurses VNCA
- AVA Member’s Code of Professional Conduct
- WA Veterinary Practice Bill 2020 Consultation Summary Report

The intent and content of the Codes or Standards considered in the literature review included similar themes across most jurisdictions. The most recent and comprehensive examples are the [New Zealand](#) and [Victorian](#) Standards, which are formatted into a single document (or are web based). They include extensive contextual or explanatory notes. Similarly, the RCVS also includes guidance notes with respect to its professional standards.

### Public consultation (Stage 2) objectives

1. Identify issues relating to accessibility, practicality, relevance and comprehension for users of the new VSS
2. Identify any challenges the new VSS may present that are contrary to contemporary expectations of both veterinary service users, the veterinary profession and the community
3. Incorporate necessary changes and complete the VSS for the declaration process in early 2023.

### How and when to submit feedback

Email your comments on the attached draft VSS to [vetstandards22@gmail.com](mailto:vetstandards22@gmail.com). The preferred format for submissions is as a Microsoft Word attachment to the email. Please title the email ‘Public Consultation: Review of VSS’

**The closing date for submissions is 7 December 2022.**

Submissions may also be made by post and should be addressed to:

The Registrar, Veterinary Board of Tasmania, PO Box 909, Sandy Bay TAS 7006.

### How the Board will treat submissions

Other than indicated below, submissions received in this public consultation, which will be a broad consultation open to veterinary surgeons, industry and the community, will be treated as public information and will be published on our website at <https://dpiwve.tas.gov.au/biosecurity-tasmania/animal-biosecurity/veterinary-board-of-tasmania> once consideration of the submissions has concluded.

**With respect to this Public Consultation, your name (or the name of the organisation) will be published unless you request otherwise.**

In the absence of a clear indication that a submission is intended to be treated as confidential (or parts of the submission), the Board will treat the submission as public.

If you would like your submission treated as confidential, whether in whole or in part, please indicate this in writing at the time of making your submission, clearly identifying the parts of your submission you want to remain confidential and the reasons why. In this case, your submission will not be published to the extent of that request.

Copyright in submissions remains with the author(s), not with the Board.

The Board will not publish, in whole or in part, submissions containing defamatory or offensive material. If your submission includes information that could enable the identification of other individuals, then either all or parts of the submission will not be published.

### *The Right to Information Act 2009 and confidentiality*

Information provided to the Government may be provided to an applicant under the provisions of the *Right to Information Act 2009* (RTI). If you have indicated that you wish all or part of your submission to be treated as confidential, your statement detailing the reasons may be taken into account in determining whether or not to release the information in the event of an RTI application for assessed disclosure. You may also be contacted to provide any further comment.

### **Queries about making submissions**

Please direct any enquiries to [vetboardtas@gmail.com](mailto:vetboardtas@gmail.com)