



**VETERINARY COUNCIL
OF NEW ZEALAND**
Te Kaunihera Rata Kararehe o Aotearoa



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Between the following parties:

New Zealand Veterinary Association (“NZVA”)

and

The Veterinary Council of New Zealand (“VCNZ”)

PREAMBLE

NZVA and VCNZ are two distinct and separate organisations with separate and distinct functions:

- A. NZVA is a not-for-profit organisation formed in 1923 to represent New Zealand veterinarians. Approximately 80% of New Zealand veterinarians belong to the NZVA (around 1800 members) and these members work in a range of areas including the public sector (mainly in biosecurity and food safety), clinical practice, the pharmaceutical industry, research, teaching and wildlife.

Veterinarians pay an annual subscription to become a member of the NZVA and the Association works as a collective voice for members and the wider profession. Its commitments include:

- ensuring the New Zealand veterinary profession's skills, high standards and contribution to the country's economy and animal welfare are recognised and valued by key stakeholders and influencers and the public
- keeping veterinarians connected to people in the animal-based industries, and to each other
- providing a range of services to members, including continuing education through conferences, workshops and seminars, online courses and publications

NZVA has 14 Special Interest Branches to which its members can choose to belong, and 15 Regional Branches.

NZVA is governed by a Board and managed by a Chief Executive Officer, and is supported by staff in both its Wellington and Palmerston North offices.

- B. VCNZ is the independent regulatory authority for veterinarians established under the Veterinarians Act 2005. The Council's primary purpose is to protect the public interest by ensuring that veterinarians are competent and fit to practise. To achieve this purpose the Council has the following key statutory functions:
- registering veterinarians
 - setting and implementing minimum standards for veterinary practice
 - promoting high standards of veterinary education and conduct
 - recognising qualifications for registration by accrediting or approving the institutions which offer them
 - recertifying veterinarians competence and fitness to practise through the issue of annual practising certificates

- reviewing and acting, where necessary, in circumstances where concerns about a veterinarian's performance, professional conduct or health have been raised
- advising and making recommendations to the Minister and Massey University

VCNZ is funded by the registration and annual practising fees paid by veterinarians. The work of the seven member Council is supported by the Wellington based CEO/Registrar and staff.

- C. NZVA and VCNZ have strong joint interests in promoting and maintaining high standards of veterinary performance, conduct and education and in ensuring veterinarians do not practise in isolation. It is in the best interests of the wider community and the public that both parties work in good faith and accord in matters of joint interest and/or responsibility. From time to time this will involve assisting one or the other by committee representation, discrete projects and longer term partnerships
- D. The parties wish to record their understanding of this collaboration in this Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU"). The primary objectives of the MOU are to enhance the way the parties work together, to clarify roles and responsibilities, to provide clear lines of communication and to avoid any duplication of effort.

THE PARTIES HAVE REACHED THE FOLLOWING UNDERSTANDINGS:

Collaboration and Support

The parties, while accepting the differences between the two organisations, believe it is important that a culture of cooperation is maintained, particularly on issues of mutual concern. The parties, recognising that working together will lead to better outcomes and avoid duplication of effort, agree to:

- work in a collegial and open manner
- maintain an alertness to each party's interests and needs
- adopt a 'no surprises' approach
- meet (at Executive/Council level) at least annually to share information, review projects and issues and review this MOU
- hold annual meetings between VPIS and CAC representatives
- hold regular meetings, at least every six months, between respective CEOs to ensure continued coordination and cooperation on issues of shared interest
- consult early with the other party when policy, legislative or operational matters which could impact on the other party are being developed
- provide and be open to constructive feedback

Professional Standards

VCNZ has statutory responsibilities to prescribe minimum standards for practising as a veterinarian and to promote and encourage high standards of professional education and conduct.

VCNZ recognises that standards must be developed in close consultation with the profession and that NZVA continues to be the key contributor to veterinary professional standards. VCNZ acknowledges NZVA's invaluable work in this area.

To maintain and enhance this collaboration the parties agree:

- to work within the provisions of the Policy Guideline on the VCNZ framework for Professional Standards

- on the desirability of the NZVA representative on the VCNZ Professional Standards Committee being the Chair or a member of the NZVA Professional Standards Committee
- to ensure NZVA's active involvement in all reviews of the VCNZ Code of Professional Conduct
- to abide by the agreed funding arrangements set out below

Workforce Issues

VCNZ will collect, analyse and publish information on the veterinarian workforce on an annual basis.

NZVA will have the primary role of addressing and advocating on workforce issues but this does not preclude VCNZ involvement where appropriate.

Where either party is recommending changes to the current status of veterinarians on the Occupational Shortages lists maintained by the Department of Labour, it will consult with the other party before finalising its submission.

Appointments

VCNZ will seek nominations from the NZVA when appointing veterinarians to serve on the Competence Assessment or Complaints Assessment panels or to act as mentors or supervisors for other veterinarians.

The membership of the VCNZ Professional Standards Committee will include a NZVA nominee.

Continuing Professional Development

The parties have agreed on the introduction of compulsory continuing professional development requirements for the issue of an annual practising certificate.

The parties agree:

- to NZVA participation on the VCNZ working group which is developing proposals for the future CPD framework
- to early consultation and response on the proposed CPD framework

Health impaired Veterinarians

NZVA and VCNZ both acknowledge the importance of identifying and supporting health impaired vets.

Funding arrangements and cost sharing

The parties agree to the following funding and cost sharing arrangements:

- In relation to the involvement of members (not paid staff);
 - where VCNZ seeks NZVA nominations for membership of a VCNZ committee or working party VCNZ will pay fees (at VCNZ member rate) and reimburse the travel and accommodation costs of one NZVA nominee
 - where NZVA seeks VCNZ nominees for membership of an NZVA committee or working party NZVA will pay fees and reimburse the travel and accommodation costs of one VCNZ nominee
 - Where NZVA seeks VCNZ participation in NZVA conference activities (eg plenary sessions) NZVA will pay fees and reimburse the travel and accommodation costs of VCNZ nominees

- In situations where VCNZ representatives are invited on a one off basis to attend NZVA Board, Committee and working party meetings, and vice versa, each organisation will meet the costs of their representatives
- In relation to professional standards:
 - NZVA will not charge VCNZ for existing material which is considered important enough (from a public interest viewpoint) to be in the public domain (ie available to all veterinarians)
 - VCNZ will meet the reasonable costs of developing or amending existing NZVA professional standards material for the public domain in negotiation with the individual(s) undertaking the work
- VCNZ will share on a 50/50 basis the agreed contracted annual SEED administration costs and make an additional contribution of 50% of counselling costs (up to a maximum of \$1000 in any one year)
- Where specific projects or partnerships that are in place or wish to be developed the payment for this work will be outlined as a discrete project

Projects for 2010/11

A number of projects with strategic significance to both organisations have been identified for the 2010/11 period. These include, but are not limited to:

- Vets in Stress
- Regulation of para professionals/review of Veterinarians Act
- Development of compulsory CPD requirements
- Support for Undergraduates - Prelude to Practice, Cross Roads and In-Practice. - 2010 programme to be worked up with VCNZ by December 2009
- Support for recent graduates

Confidentiality

NZVA and VCNZ will respect and protect, where requested, the confidentiality of the information that passes between the two organisations.

Conflict of interest and disputes management

In collaborating on areas of joint interest/responsibilities the parties will act in good faith and in a spirit of openness and fairness. The individuals involved will disclose any financial, professional or personal interests which conflict (or might conflict or might be perceived to conflict) with the matters being considered. It will be the responsibility of the forum in which these issues are raised to determine whether the interest constitutes a material direct or indirect interest and if so how this conflict should be managed

Where the parties have differing views these will be dealt with promptly and in the spirit of this Memorandum. Disputes and differences should normally be settled, in the first instance by the respective CEOs. If the dispute or difference cannot be settled in this way the matter will be referred to the VCNZ Chair and NZVA President. Where settlement is not reached the matter may be referred to a forum mutually agreed to by the parties.

NZVA accepts that members of VCNZ and its committees have statutory responsibilities under the Veterinarians Act and that nothing in this MOU can be taken to supersede or modify these responsibilities and obligations.

TERM

This MOU comes into force on 1 December 2009 and shall continue until such time as it is terminated in writing. Any party may terminate this MOU upon 3 months written notice to the other parties without penalties or liabilities, recognising the need to fulfil any existing or ongoing obligation at the time

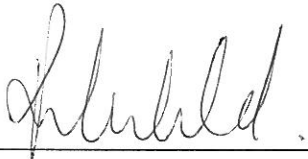
The Memorandum shall be reviewed annually to ensure that it is fulfilling its purpose and at any time may be varied in writing if both parties agree amendments are necessary.

AUTHORISED OFFICERS:

**Richard Wild
President NZVA**

**Ron Gibson
Chairperson
VCNZ**

FOR NZVA



FOR VCNZ



As witness to their consent to this Memorandum of Understanding, the appropriate authorities hereunto provide their signatures.

Dated this first day of December 2009