

7<sup>th</sup> February, 2023

Committee Secretary  
Joint Standing Committee on Migration  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Committee Secretary,

The mission of AVBC, to ensure the quality of the Australian and New Zealand veterinary profession, is executed through

- the accreditation of veterinary programs,
- the Australasian Veterinary Examination for overseas graduates,
- by advising boards on criteria for recognition of qualifications for registration and
- by standardisation of occupational regulation.

#### *Skills Assessment*

As you will be aware, AVBC is gazetted as the skills assessing authority for the occupation “Veterinarian.” Since taking on this role in 1999, the proportion of overseas-trained veterinarians being required to sit the Australasian Veterinary Examination to gain a skills assessment has dropped markedly. This is largely due to the international work towards accreditation of a broader range of overseas qualifications by AVBC.

#### *International Cooperation*

AVBC co-founded the International Accreditation Working Group (IAWG) in 2009 and this group enables veterinary accreditation bodies in USA, UK, South Africa and Europe to conduct joint accreditations. Joint accreditation site visits minimise costs to universities and build confidence towards the establishment of mutual recognition of veterinary qualifications and MRAs. More recently, AVBC continues to provide mentorship since the successful completion of a World Organisation for Animal Health (previously OIE) sponsored twinning arrangement with the ASEAN Veterinary Statutory Bodies Network to boost the standards of veterinary practice and encourage professional mobility in the ASEAN region.

#### *Response to increasing attrition from the veterinary profession*

In recent years, the ability of AVBC and its members to ensure a fit-for-purpose veterinary profession has been strained by a perfect storm of factors I understand have been described in detail by other veterinary contributors. Several of these factors have impacted all professions but many have been unique to this workforce.



AVBC has focused its resources on appropriate regulation to ensure the workforce can continue to serve the community without compromising the standard of care required by the public and to support animal welfare.

A collaborative effort focusing on innovation, diversity, accessibility and strategic thinking has resulted in a clearer plan of action to address the high attrition rate from the profession.

Priorities for AVBC include:

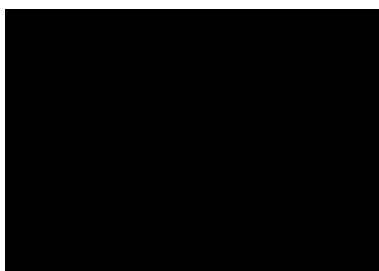
- new graduate transition to career and career progression,
- harmonisation of legislation and regulation,
- continuing professional development,
- ethical, social, and environmentally responsible practice,
- education for prevention and handling concerns and complaints,
- free movement of veterinarians in the mutual recognition zones,
- improved data collection for evidence-based regulation, quality assurance and to ensure any initiatives are effective, and
- veterinary nurses and technicians regulation and the evolution of the “veterinary team”.

The majority of the listed projects will provide for sustainability of veterinary services to the community in the long term.

I write to the committee in this instance to support the efforts of the veterinary community to *urgently* supplement the Australian veterinary workforce by improving the efficiency of visa provision for those immediately acceptable for the purpose of registration in the occupation Veterinarian in Australia and for those who qualify under VETASSESS as veterinary nurses.

I understand addressing “low hanging fruit” such as the Australian Veterinary Association proposals for Temporary Skill Shortage Visa (482), the Working Holiday Visa (Subclass 417)/ Work and Holiday Visa (Subclass 462) and the extension of visas for veterinary nurses will clear significant barriers to the inflow of desperately needed personnel. The AVBC supports the efforts of the Australian Veterinary Association to ensure the public continues to receive high quality veterinary services in the near and distant future.

Your sincerely,



Dr Peter Gibbs  
Chair AVBC