



VETERINARY COUNCIL  
OF NEW ZEALAND  
Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri o Aotearoa

# Annual Report

for the period ending 31 March 2015

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## 2014/15: The year at a glance

- For the first time, veterinarians were able to renew their 2014/15 Annual Practising Certificates online
- The NZNVE examination was held for the final time in New Zealand in 2014, with future examinations to be held in Australia and under the jurisdiction of AVBC
- There have been continued improvements in the time taken to deal with complaints and notifications
- A successful continuing professional development (CPD) pilot audit was held, clearing the way for the audit process to be implemented in the 2016/17 APC round
- The Council committee system was streamlined and two committees – health and registration – were disbanded
- The Professional Advisor role has seen greater emphasis on communication with the profession
- VCNZ participated in regional roadshows with NZVA and MPI's Agricultural Chemicals and Veterinary Medicines Group (ACVM) with the focus on professional standards
- Q&A sessions for veterinarians were introduced as a permanent communication tool with the profession
- Guidelines were drawn up for veterinarians to allow them to use social media to the benefit of their practice, while avoiding the potential pitfalls
- Three disciplinary cases were heard, with the charges of professional misconduct established in two of them
- Revised risk reporting framework put in place
- A record number of veterinarians registered in the year ending 31 December 2014; 143 international veterinarians and 91 Massey graduates
- Total numbers of registered and practising veterinarians increasing from 2608 at 30 June 2013 to 2710 at 30 June 2014.

## Council role and functions

The Veterinary Council of New Zealand (VCNZ/the Council) is the statutory body set up under the Veterinarians Act 2005 (the Act) to regulate the veterinary profession.

The primary purpose of the Council is to protect the public interest. It does this through the exercise of its statutory functions, which include:

- registering veterinarians who are properly trained and qualified
- setting and monitoring the standards veterinarians must meet
- promoting high standards of veterinary education and conduct
- accrediting and monitoring the institutions which train veterinarians
- annually re-certifying veterinarians' competence and fitness to practise
- 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 for Primary Industries and Massey University on matters related to veterinarians, veterinary education and the practise of veterinary science.

## Council membership

There are seven Councillors, three of whom are elected by veterinarians. Three other members of the Council are appointed by the Minister for Primary Industries. Two of these appointees are lay members and the Council cannot meet without at least one of these lay members being present. The Academic Director of the Veterinary Science programme at Massey University is also a member of the Council. The Chair and Deputy Chair are elected by Council members at the first Council meeting of each year.

Council members during 2014/15 were:

- Dr David Bayvel (Ministerial veterinary appointee) Chair (February 2014–February 2015)
- Dr Nick Twyford (elected veterinary member) Deputy Chair (February 2014) Chair (from February 2015)
- Mrs Barbara Benson (Ministerial non-veterinary appointee)
- Dr Jeff Grimmett (elected veterinary member)
- Ms Sue Ineson (Ministerial non-veterinary appointee)
- Professor Tim Parkinson (Massey University Academic Programme Director)
- Dr Ian Robertson (elected veterinary member)

The Council appoints standing committees and working parties to undertake functions on its behalf, to provide it with advice, and to make policy recommendations. The business and membership of the Council's standing committees and working parties is reported on in the relevant sections of this report.

## **Council staff**

The Council receives executive and administrative support from a small Wellington based office led by the CEO/Registrar.

Staff members are:

- CEO/Registrar Janet Eden
- Deputy Registrar (Operations) Despina Arathimos
- Deputy Registrar (Standards) Helen Arbuckle
- Professional Advisor Helen Beban
- Executive Officer (Finance and Administration) Margriet Philipsen
- Executive Officer (Registration and Examinations) Kelly Etuata
- Accounts and Administration Officer Denise Meuli
- Team Coordinator Helen Shanks

## **Strategic goals**

Under its 2013–2016 Strategic Plan, the Council has identified three key goals to ensure it meets its statutory obligations to regulate the veterinary profession in the public interest.

These are to:

- continue to develop Council policies and processes so that the functions of the Act are fully implemented and based on proven regulatory practice
- achieve best practice in Council governance and management
- work with stakeholders to enable Council to more effectively deliver on its functions by updating and implementing cross-sector communication strategies.

The initiatives and activities reported in this document serve to progress these key goals in the period 1 January 2014 to 31 March 2015.

## Chair's report

This Annual Report is the first under a new 1 April to 31 March financial year and to reflect the changeover, this particular report covers a 15 month rather than a 12 month period. The date change means VCNZ staff will be able to better spread their workload through the year since, under the calendar year reporting system, the preparation of annual accounts and audits coincided with the APC renewal round.

### **Tribute to David Bayvel**

It is with great sadness that I record the death of David Bayvel who was our Chair between February 2014 and February 2015.

David joined VCNZ in 2012 as a ministerial appointee and the Council was privileged to have one of the world's most distinguished animal welfare experts join our ranks. Not only that, his active involvement with international bodies such as the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) reinforced New Zealand's important role on the international stage. It led to deepened relationships with similar bodies internationally and, in particular, the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons and the Veterinary Council of Ireland.

David stepped in as caretaker VCNZ chair following the retirement of our long-serving chair, Ron Gibson, before formally taking on the position. It was there he displayed his strong leadership skills, his courteous approach with people and his quick wit around the Council table.

When he took over as Chair, David put particular emphasis on ensuring the Council raise its profile and standing among the profession, an emphasis that can be seen in VCNZ's recent initiatives to improve communication and build on relationships within the veterinary community.

### **Workforce issues**

Following on from the workshop we hosted in late 2013 on workforce development, the Council has continued to focus on this important area for the future of the veterinary profession and veterinary services. That workshop highlighted the need for workforce planning based on good data and we have been working with various stakeholders since then to discuss what might happen next. There has been some pressure for VCNZ to take a lead in this work but our mandate under the Act precludes this. However, we are working with others in the area and, in particular, the New Zealand Veterinary Association (NZVA), to ensure this issue is not neglected in the longer term.

### **NZNVE**

In November, the final New Zealand National Veterinary Examination (NZNVE) was held at Massey. From now on, veterinarians who do not hold recognised qualifications but want to practise in New Zealand will need to go to Australia to sit the exam. Demand for the exam has been decreasing steadily in recent years and it was no longer viable for VCNZ to continue to offer it locally. Massey University's decision to offer an alternative route to qualification for these vets was another important factor in the decision. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr Nicola Smith for her work as Chief Examiner for the final NZNVE and our appreciation goes to Massey University staff who have given their time over the past 20 years to help us run a fair and transparent examination process.

### **Review of the Veterinarians Act 2005**

The Council has continued to promote the need for a revision of the Act to ensure it is fit for purpose. During the past 15 months we have continued to raise the issue

with the Ministry for Primary Industries but it is clear it is a low priority against the Ministry's other legislative and policy commitments. We have developed fact sheets on the reasons why change is needed and will continue to focus on mounting as strong a case as possible for change while also arguing the need to regulate veterinary allied professionals to bring New Zealand into line with international requirements.

### **Financial Results**

Council ended this 15 month period with a deficit of \$28,207. This is, in fact, a pleasing result as there were three Judicial Committee disciplinary hearings in this period, only two of which were budgeted for.

### **New veterinary members join Council**

In February 2014, we welcomed two new veterinary members. Jeff Grimmitt and Ian Robertson were elected in VCNZ elections held in late 2013. Both bring valuable expertise to the Council deliberations.

Jeff Grimmitt spent most of his veterinary career in rural mixed practice based in Matamata, first as a general practitioner and latterly as a specialist in equine reproduction. Most recently he was practice manager at Town and Country Vet in Richmond, Nelson. His career has included working in academia in the US and serving as a Fellowship Examiner for the Australian College of Veterinary Scientists; on the Board of Veterinary Professional Insurance Society and on the executive of the NZ Equine Veterinary Association.

After 15 years as a clinical veterinarian and practice owner, Ian Robertson completed a law degree and joined the Prosecutions Team within the Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI). He was involved in work to develop the revised Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinarians in 2011 and was part of the Working Group that produced the *Guidelines to assist veterinarians to deal with actual or suspected animal abuse and family violence*.

### **Medical Advisor steps down**

In February 2015, Dr Tom Flewett stepped down as the Council's Medical Advisor. The position requires the advisor to assist with the more complex veterinarians' health cases that face us – issues such as addiction or dependence, mental health disorders and physical deterioration. Dr Flewett was well qualified to advise us on those issues and helped us establish the robust and rehabilitative processes now in place. I would like to thank him for his 10 years of service to VCNZ. We welcome his replacement, Dr Jeremy McMinn and look forward to working with him in this important area of the Council's work.

### **Thanks**

I extend the Council's thanks to those who have assisted our work over the last 15 months – whether in an assessment, supervisory or mentoring capacity or through Committee or working party roles. Your contributions are valued and appreciated.

Finally, my thanks to my fellow Council members for their time and effort; and to Council staff for their dedication; during the past 15 months and their contribution to our achievements for the period.



Nick Twyford  
**VCNZ Chair**

## Report from the CEO/Registrar

One of the major achievements of the reporting year for VCNZ staff has been the successful implementation of online recertification for veterinarians renewing their Annual Practising Certificates (APCs) in the 2014/15 and 2015/16 rounds. We devoted a lot of time to developing and testing the system before it went live and it proved time well-spent. Feedback from the profession has been positive; with veterinarians who used the facility telling us they found it a trouble-free process. Another pleasing aspect is that we reached a point where there were no outstanding APCs to report, at a much earlier point in the year. We are putting this down in part to the online renewal but also our campaign to encourage veterinarians to renew on time and pointing out the penalties for not doing so.

### Speedier complaints process

Since 2012, we have been working to improve the turnaround times for complaints and notifications of concerns. At one stage, in 2011, the average time taken to complete complaints cases was 10 months. The situation was helped when we set up the alternative notification process, which allowed the public to raise concerns about treatment or behaviour without making a formal complaint, but we have also been concentrating on better processes. This is now showing results. In 2014, 23 of the 30 notification cases dealt with were resolved within four months – meaning 96% of cases were resolved within the target period.

In the case of complaints considered by CACs, 14 of the 27 cases opened over the course of the 12 months were resolved within six months, while two cases took longer than that – representing 87.5% cases meeting the target. This has been a major shift and I want to acknowledge the efforts of staff, Council and, above all, CAC and NRG members in achieving such a satisfactory result.

### Staff appointments

Dr Helen Beban, a veterinarian with more than 30 years experience, was appointed to the new role of Professional Advisor and joined VCNZ staff in May. The role was established to provide professional advice and support to Council staff, veterinarians and members of the public. The other key components of the role are to assist Council in meeting its strategic communication and professional standards objectives.

Helen's appointment has allowed us to significantly improve our communication with the veterinary profession. This has included more face-to-face time and more electronic communications using our regular *NewsBrief* newsletter interspersed with email updates where required. Regular VCNZ updates in the NZVA printed monthly newsletter *VetScript* were initiated from July 2014. We have also developed a revised communications strategy that is being gradually rolled out.

During the reporting period Council also approved a new appointment to the VCNZ staff, in recognition of increased office workloads as a result of major initiatives such as the full implementation of the CPD and compliance monitoring framework; and more delegation of decision making on registration, recency of practice and health cases to the Registrar. This has been an important move to ensure Council has adequate time for its main role of governance and ensuring it meets its statutory commitments, rather than concerning itself with matters that belong with day-to-day operations.

### **Question and Answer sessions**

In 2013 we piloted the idea of Q&A sessions with veterinarians to coincide with Council meetings held outside Wellington. The pilot in Wellington was successful and we will now be including these sessions in our annual meeting programme. In 2014 we held the first of these in Christchurch. They are proving to be a valuable chance for the profession to have their questions answered at a time when VCNZ is introducing a number of changes to uphold the requirements of the Act. The sessions let Council members and senior VCNZ staff hear first hand the concerns of veterinarians and understand the impact of their decisions.

### **Acknowledgements**

Finally, I would like to add my tribute to our late Chair, Dr David Bayvel, for the contribution he made to VCNZ during his tenure.

I would also like to thank Council members and the great VCNZ office staff for their commitment and contributions during this very busy and productive 15 month period.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Janet Eden', with a stylized, cursive script.

**Janet Eden**  
CEO/Registrar

## Registration and recertification

The Council's Registration Committee is responsible for ensuring all applicants for registration meet the standard required for safe and competent practice, so meeting the Council's statutory requirement to protect the public interest.

In doing so the Committee:

- ensures statutory registration requirements are met
- ensures registration processes are fair, equitable, transparent and timely
- approves limited and specialist registration applications under delegated authority from the Council.

In 2014 the Committee members were:

- Norman Williamson (Chair)
- Nicola Smith (Chief Examiner of NZNVE and member of the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council (AVBC) Board of Examiners)
- Joe Mayhew (Massey University)
- Paul Wiseman (Totally Vets)
- Chris Mawson (Ministry for Primary Industries)
- Gary Duggal (Swanson Road Veterinary Clinic)
- Barbara Benson (Council lay member)
- Tim Parkinson (Massey University; Council representative on AVBC Veterinary Schools Accreditation Advisory Committee).

In December 2014, Council decided to disband the Registration Committee. This decision followed discussions with the Chair and committee members and recognises that the work of the committee would be greatly reduced by the transfer of the administration of the New Zealand National Veterinary Examination (NZNVE) final to the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council (AVBC) in 2015.

Many of the duties of the committee – including approval of specialist and limited registration applications – have been delegated to the Registrar, who works in consultation with a Registration Advisory Group consisting of Norman Williamson, Tim Parkinson, Barbara Benson and Chris Mawson. Two members of this group select and audit the documentation of 10% of all registration applications approved by the Registrar in each quarter.

The decision to decline a registration application remains the Council's.

Consideration of recency of practice cases has also been delegated to the Registrar in consultation with a Recency of Practice group that must include a veterinary educator. In this reporting period, the group members were Norman Williamson, Nick Twyford and Barbara Benson.

### **Annual Practising Certificate (APC) declarations**

In the 2014 APC renewal round, apart from those who declared they were the subject of a complaint to Council or under investigation, there were only two declarations involving conduct issues. Both of these related to first convictions for driving under the influence of alcohol. The convictions and charges were considered, taking all the relevant circumstances into account, and practising certificates were

issued to the veterinarians concerned with recommendations and advice as appropriate.

Another 77 veterinarians declared a new or existing mental or physical condition with the potential to affect their fitness to practise. These are discussed in more detail in the section on veterinarians' health on page 18.

### **Online practising certificate renewal**

In 2014, VCNZ offered the profession the option of renewing their practising certificate online for the first time. The system was subject to rigorous pre-testing by VCNZ staff, as well as Council and committee members, before going live on 10 February 2014. More than two-thirds of veterinarians chose to use this option, although a number of larger employers preferred to have their veterinarian staff continue to apply manually. Anecdotal feedback suggests vets found the new system user-friendly and liked being able to update their contact details online.

The online process, the the discounted early payment option and enhanced reminder systems about the obligation to renew APCs and the sanctions for not doing so, appears to have promoted much earlier renewal by the majority of veterinarians.

As expected, the new system produced significant savings in printing, postage and data entry costs, but the cost of bank merchant fees was significantly higher than expected because of the larger number of vets opting to pay by credit card. We will be promoting the alternative option of direct credit, before considering how to address this increased cost.

### **Recency of Practice**

The Council's Recency of Practice Policy requires veterinarians to seek approval before resuming work after a break of three or more years, or if they are proposing to switch to a field they have never practised in or have not practised in during the previous three years. This is to make sure that sufficient support is in place to allow them to refresh and develop the skills required and to make a smooth return to practice.

In 2014 there were 36 new recency-of-practice issues raised in APC declarations, with a further ten raised during the year. Of the recency of practice issues raised:

- Sixteen were approved or the veterinarians advised of the information Council required in the event they went ahead with their plans. This figure includes veterinarians engaging in MPI induction training as well as those who were issued with a short-term APC to enable them to complete the practical, supervised component of the NZVA Companion Animal Society Refresher course.
- Nineteen were approved with advice or agreements around collegial oversight, relevant continuing professional development and staying within competence boundaries.
- Eleven were approved subject to formal conditions on practice or voluntary undertakings with the Council, including supervision and reporting, a graduated return-to-work programme, educational requirements and/or restrictions on the scope of work.

## Registration statistics

### Number of veterinarians with practising status at 30 June

2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
2710	2608	2521	2425	2392	2360	2312	2275	2171	2122	2047

### New registrations by country where primary degree obtained

Country of origin	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2008	2002
UK	57	47	48	56	42	38	48
Australia	23	30	19	14	11	18	15
USA	15	13	23	13	14	21	12
Netherlands	10	8	7	2	4	7	11
Ireland	12	5	12	8	8	4	2
South Africa	6	8	4	5	4	9	14
Costa Rica	1	-	1	-	-	-	-
Canada	7	5	8	2	4	3	2
Iraq	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
India	2	2	1	1	4	2	-
Italy	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Czech Republic	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Egypt	-	1	-	-	1	-	-
Mexico	1	-	-	-	-	1	-
Denmark	1	-	1	-	-	1	-
Romania	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Zimbabwe	-	-	-	-	-	1	2
Germany	3	3	1	4	3	-	-
Brazil	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Belgium	-	1	1	1	1	-	-
Finland	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Serbia	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Spain	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Switzerland	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Cayman Islands	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Israel	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nepal	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nigeria	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Pakistan	-	-	1	1	-	-	-

<b>Country of origin</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2002</b>
West Indies	-	1	-	1	-	-	-
Estonia	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Chile	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Japan	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Norway	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Russia	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
<b>New Zealand</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>191</b>
<b>Total overseas</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>111</b>

### **Limited registration**

Sections 13 and 14 of the Veterinarians Act provide for limited registration for individuals who would not otherwise be eligible without undergoing further examination. The provisions provide the Council with some flexibility in its registration policy in circumstances where there is a particular need that cannot be met by the appointment of a New Zealand-registered veterinarian.

The following seven categories of limited registration are available:

- Biosecurity or other emergency scope
- Postgraduate training scope
- Academic scope
- Industry scope – laboratory & diagnostic
- Particular skills for a restricted period
- Restricted purpose scope
- Time-limited scope for New Zealand-based NZNVE candidates.

During 2014, four applications for limited registration were approved – three in the academic scope and one in the industry scope.

As at 1 January 2015, a total of 13 veterinarians were registered in limited scopes of practice in New Zealand. Of these:

- two were in the industry scope
- six were in the academic scope at Massey University
- two were in restricted scopes
- three were in the time-limited temporary scope.

### **Accreditation of veterinary qualifications**

The Council and the equivalent Australian veterinary jurisdictions which together make up the membership of the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council (AVBC) have, since 1999, recognised for registration, without further examination purposes, primary degrees from those veterinary schools which have been assessed and approved by an internationally recognised 'authority' having rigorous assessment and review processes. To date the following accreditation authorities are recognised by VCNZ and Australian jurisdictions: AVBC, the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) and the South African Veterinary Council (SAVC).

During 2014/15 veterinary science degrees from the following academic institutions were recognised (or confirmed) for general registration purposes, following consideration of positive accreditation reports:

- VetAgro Sup Campus Vétérinaire du Lyon, France (recognised from the date of accreditation by AVMA)
- University College Dublin, Ireland (AVMA)

Meanwhile, a joint accreditation team of representatives from AVBC, AVMA, RCVS and SAVC visited the Massey programme in May 2014. The Council was very pleased to re-confirm its recognition of the NZ degree programme on the basis of the team's very positive report. It was also pleased to note that Massey had begun a review of its current (grade based) student selection criteria.

### **Specialist registration**

New Zealand specialist registration is part of an Australian and New Zealand initiative which enables New Zealand specialists to be automatically recognised for registration as Australian specialists (and vice-versa) under the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition provisions, provided the applicant satisfies the legal requirements of the local registration authority.

To ensure harmonisation of specialist registration standards, all applicants for specialist registration have their qualifications, training and experience assessed by the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council (AVBC) Advisory Committee on Registration of Veterinary Specialists (ACRVS). ACRVS undertakes this role on behalf of the eight Australian Veterinary Boards and VCNZ.

Professor Chris Riley is New Zealand's representative on ACRVS.

In 2014, four specialist registration applications were approved; one each in equine medicine, veterinary anatomic pathology, veterinary clinical pathology and small animal surgery.

## Veterinary registration examinations

One pathway to registration, for those veterinarians who don't hold prescribed qualifications, is to sit and pass a VCNZ approved examination or assessment programme.

The New Zealand National Veterinary Examination (NZNVE) was one such programme, along with the Australian National Veterinary Examination (NVE) and those offered by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons in the UK, the American Veterinary Medical Association and the Canadian National Examining Board.

Since 2012, the preliminary examination part of NZNVE has been administered by the AVBC, which also conducted the preliminary exam and the final practical component of the NVE for all of the Australian Veterinary Boards.

In March 2014, AVBC also agreed to take over the running of the final examination from VCNZ.

The decision to hand the NZNVE over to Australian administration follows a decline in the numbers in New Zealand wanting to take the final examination, meaning cost recovery through the exam fees was no longer feasible. The recent decision by Massey University to offer an alternative route to qualification for these vets through entry to the third year of the BVSc was another factor in the decision to move the final examination to Australia.

As a result, the NZNVE was held under New Zealand stewardship at Massey University for the final time in November 2014.

Three candidates sat the exam. Of these, one passed, one failed and a third candidate was awarded a supplementary pass and will need to sit and pass the sections he failed before being eligible for registration. VCNZ will administer these supplementary papers in late 2015.

Although administration of the exam moves to the AVBC, New Zealand will continue to participate. Dr Nicola Smith of Massey University, who has been Chief Examiner for the NZNVE, will continue her involvement through her participation on the AVBC Board of Examiners.

## Professional standards

The Professional Standards Committee (PSC) assists Council in meeting its statutory functions of setting minimum practising standards and promoting high standards of professional education and conduct. It does this by:

- advising the Council on professional standards issues including continuing professional development
- reviewing professional standards documents developed by NZVA, MPI and other bodies and providing advice to Council on which standards and guidance should receive Council endorsement
- making recommendations to Council when the development of Council statements or policies on professional standards issues are indicated
- advising the Council on matters of policy, changes in legislation or recommended changes to defined professional standards
- recommending appropriate changes to the VCNZ *Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinarians*.

Committee members in 2014 were:

- Nick Twyford , Chair (Council Member)
- Tony Zohrab (MPI)
- Matthew Stone (MPI)
- Ian Robertson (Council member)
- Caroline Robertson (NZVA)
- Callum Irvine (NZVA)
- Kate Gloyn (veterinarian)
- Barbara Benson (Council lay member)

### **Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Framework roll-out**

The new requirements for veterinarians to record the professional development activities they have undertaken each year came into full operation in the second half of 2014. The framework provides for compliance monitoring and a pilot audit was carried out in September and October. The CPD records of 64 veterinarians were chosen at random along with five veterinary members of the Council. Around 75% of the audited vets were found to be well in excess of the required 60 points over a three-year period for activities in collegial learning, formal continuing veterinary education, and self-directed learning. Rather than being sanctioned, those who did not meet the requirements were offered support and advice on how to best meet their CPD obligations. No serious issues arose in the course of the pilot audit and, as a result, the CPD audit processes have been confirmed as an ongoing part of the CPD framework.

Feedback was invited from the audited veterinarians and a report on the audit findings was carried in the December 2014 issue of *Newsbrief*. It included tips for veterinarians and practices on ensuring they have the right information available should they be chosen for a future audit and, in particular, to record CPD activities regularly, rather than waiting until they are required. The guidance document for CPD – *CPD Information for Veterinarians* – has been updated to reflect this advice. The guide is available at [www.vetcouncil.org.nz/documentation/CPDInformationforVets.pdf](http://www.vetcouncil.org.nz/documentation/CPDInformationforVets.pdf)

The *Newsbrief* article was one of several about the CPD Framework published in the Council publication and in the VCNZ updates in NZVA's *VetScript* during the year to ensure veterinarians are informed about the process and the role CPD plays in maintaining high standards in the profession.

In preparation for the pilot audit, a training day was held for six CPD auditors and the Auditors' Handbook was updated to include information gained from the pilot.

### **Minimum practising Standards**

The Council had planned to introduce minimum practising standards checklists (MPS) against which veterinarians would be required to formally declare compliance as part of the APC renewal process for the practising year commencing 1 April 2016. The implementation has now been delayed for twelve months to allow time for VCNZ to liaise with the Industry and the Food Safety, Animal Welfare and Biosecurity branches of NZVA on checklists to cover non-clinical practitioners and to make minor amendments to ensure MPS checklists fully reflect the intent of the *Code of Professional Conduct*.

### **Review of Code of Professional Conduct**

The Council has been implementing a rolling review programme for the *Code of Professional Conduct*. During the report period the professional relationships section of the code was reviewed, and a revised version prepared for consultation.

The *VCNZ Statement on Induction of Dairy Cattle* was revised during the year to take into account the phasing out of routine inductions in 2015/16 and the need for veterinarians to obtain permission from their clients to report induction activities to Dairy NZ.

A new policy was also developed on *Human health practitioners undertaking surgical procedures on animals*. This outlines the circumstances under which it could be acceptable for doctors and dentists to carry out significant surgery on an animal.

### **Guide to social media**

VCNZ and NZVA have jointly developed a guide for the profession on using social media. It was developed in response to the increasing use by New Zealanders of social media and the opportunities and risks inherent in using these tools professionally. The guide contains tips on the responsible use of social media and how it can be leveraged for veterinary practices. It also outlines sections of the *Code of Professional Conduct* relevant to social media use and gives examples of the pitfalls associated with its use. The guide was publicised in *Newsbrief* and is available on the VCNZ website.

### **New competence assessors appointed**

Six new members were appointed to the Competence Assessment Panel during the reporting period. They are:

- Christine Rogan – an experienced lay assessor for the Medical and Dental Councils of New Zealand.
- Dr Peter Anderson of Marlborough Vet Centre – an experienced production animal sheep and beef practitioner.
- Dr Ivan Aleksic of CareVets Chartwell – companion medicine and surgery
- Dr Clive Hambly of Taradale Veterinary Hospital – companion animal and surgery
- Dr Nicola Hagland of Chapel Street Veterinary Centre, Masterton – companion animal medicine and surgery
- Dr Craig Hassell of Taranaki Veterinary Centre, Stratford – dairy cattle and deer.

A training day was held for the new members in November 2014.

## Veterinarians' health

VCNZ's role is to protect the public interest by ensuring veterinarians are fit and competent to practise and the Council understands the importance good physical and mental health plays in this. The emphasis of the Council's health processes is on early intervention and rehabilitation and to separate health issues from those of discipline. The approach is non-judgmental and confidential with a focus on rehabilitation.

Until the 2014/15 year, a Health Committee oversaw this area of the Council's work. It managed situations where veterinarians are affected by health conditions that impact on their fitness to practise to such a degree that an independent medical assessment is justified. It also monitored any conditions imposed after such an assessment.

The Health Committee was disbanded during 2014 with operational decision making in this area delegated to the Registrar, working in consultation with the Council's Medical Advisor, Layperson and Professional Advisor. In 2014, the members of this Health Advisory Group were:

- Janet Eden (Registrar)
- Tom Flewett (Medical Advisor)
- Sue Ineson (Lay Council Member)
- Helen Beban (Professional Advisor)

This group has the authority to enter into voluntary agreements with health impaired veterinarians to undergo medical assessments and to comply with any requirements considered necessary to ensure their safe practice.

The Council only becomes involved in situations where the veterinarian lacks insight or is uncooperative; and the exercise of the Council's statutory powers is needed.

VCNZ works closely with NZVA on health issues and the Professional Advisor is participating in a joint project group that has been convened to develop a wellness initiative for veterinarians.

### Health-related declarations

As noted on page 11 of this report, during the 2014/15 practising certificate renewal process 77 veterinarians declared a new or existing mental or physical condition with the potential to affect their fitness to practise. Of these, 54 related to conditions that had previously been declared and remained unchanged.

Of the 23 new health conditions declared: 13 related to an episode of depression or stress; five involved musculoskeletal issues or injuries; and five were medical conditions.

Practising certificates were issued in all cases, some after GP confirmation of fitness to practise and in one case, after an agreement was drawn up with the veterinarian involved to continue treatment and with reporting requirements attached.

Subsequent to the 2014 renewal round one veterinarian declared a new health condition, involving an injury. The veterinarian's fitness to practise was accepted on the basis of their health practitioner's advice and on the understanding that they would undertake a graduated return to practice.

## **Referrals to the Health Advisory Group**

In 2014 there was one new referral to the Health Advisory Group. This related to a veterinarian with addiction issues. In cases of addiction, the Council follows a monitoring and testing regime to ensure that, where appropriate, veterinarians diagnosed with alcohol and/or substance abuse problems are able to continue to practise safely. Veterinarians with addiction issues are monitored for a minimum of five years.

During the year the Council monitored three veterinarians with a history of drug addiction, (including the new referral). One veterinarian was released from the requirement for health monitoring after satisfactorily complied with the requirements of the five-year programme.

The Council has developed an evaluation form for veterinarians being released from the VCNZ health monitoring programme. This is aimed at improving the health assessment and monitoring process offered to rehabilitate veterinarians with health and related issues. The form is being tested by a veterinarian who has recently been released from his voluntary undertaking and five-year monitoring programme.

## **Workforce issues**

In November 2013, VCNZ hosted a one-day workshop on workforce development. The overriding issue identified was the need for workforce planning, including the need to quantify exactly how many veterinarians are needed, predict what the demand will be over the next 15 to 20 years and understand the international movements of veterinarians so that immigration policies might be adapted in response.

Consultations were held with the profession and stakeholders on the issues raised and the Council has devoted time to discussing workforce planning during the 2014/15 year.

VCNZ's role in this area has also been discussed in view of suggestions the Council should take the lead in any initiatives. Legal advice was that VCNZ would be acting outside its functions under the Act if it took any substantive action on workforce issues. As a result, the Council decided that it can continue to be engaged in identifying and addressing workforce issues as part of its statutory function to inform the Minister on issues affecting veterinarians and veterinary practice; but it has neither the resources, nor the statutory mandate to take on a leadership role in this area. Legislative change would be required for this to happen.

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) currently administers the rural bonding scheme for new graduates. Council continues to work collaboratively with NZVA in promoting changes to the eligibility criteria of this scheme; and in seeking for MPI to adopt a more holistic approach to the veterinary workforce and extend, or outsource, its current policy and modelling work to focus on the long term sustainability of the entire veterinary workforce.

## 2013-2014 Workforce survey

The annual workforce survey has continued to be well supported with a response rate of more than 90% of veterinarians completing the questionnaire.

### The workforce survey at a glance

Outcome	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
Size of workforce <sup>a</sup>	2,710	2,608	2,521	2,425	2,392	2,360	2,312
Vets per 100,000 population <sup>b</sup>	60	58	56	55	55	55	54
Percent IVG FTEs <sup>c</sup>	29	28	28	28	28	27	-
Percent women FTEs <sup>d</sup>	45	47	45	43	43	42	-
Percent specialist FTEs	2.8	3.0	2.9	2.6	2.7	-	-
Median age (years)	42	43	43	43	43	43	-
Median routine work hours <sup>e</sup>	40	41	41	41	42	42	-

<sup>a</sup> Numbers of practising veterinarians with an APC on 30 June of respective year.

<sup>b</sup> Population counts from Statistics New Zealand

[http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse\\_for\\_stats/population.aspx](http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/population.aspx).

<sup>c</sup> IVG: international veterinary graduate full time equivalents.

<sup>d</sup> Number of women FTEs divided by the total number of practising veterinarian FTEs.

<sup>e</sup> Median routine work hours per week, includes activities carried out as a veterinarian during business hours as well as veterinary work done while on call.

Some of the other findings are:

- The veterinary workforce grew by 102 in the survey period, continuing the upward trend in the size of the workforce since the survey began in 2008.
- The survey sees a continuation in the trend – beginning in 2009 – away from veterinarians working solely with beef cattle or companion animals or dairy cattle and a substantial increase in those working with multiple species (238 in 2009 compared with 391 in 2013).
- There has been a marked drop in the percentage of veterinarians reporting no on-call hours in their work week – 17% in 2013/14 compared with 55% in the 2012–2013 workforce survey.

## Complaints, notifications and disciplinary action

Complaints Assessment Committees (CACs) investigate complaints against veterinarians. They consider what action should be taken following an investigation and make recommendations to Council accordingly. The available actions include:

- taking no further action
- providing advice to the veterinarian and/or complainant
- recommending medical or competence assessment
- facilitating mediation between the parties
- laying charges of professional misconduct against a veterinarian.

There are two standing CACs. As at 31 December 2014 the members of those committees were:

CAC1:

- Rob Mills (Chair and veterinarian)
- Mary Ruth Doole (veterinarian)
- Tania Turfrey (representative of the public).

CAC2:

- Victoria Hinson (Chair and representative of the public)
- Mark Simpson (veterinarian)
- Neil Houston (veterinarian) replaced Liam MacGillivray in July 2014.

If members of the two standing Committees declare a conflict of interest or are unavailable to sit on the Committee, other members from a panel the Council maintains may be appointed or a new Committee established.

### Complaint statistics

The number of complaints received in 2014 – at 27 – was the same as in 2013. The Council attributes the sustained reduction in complaints cases as demonstrated in the table below to the introduction of its concerns notification policy in 2010. This avenue was actively promoted in 2013 and 2014, including offering those with concerns to complete a notification form online.

## Complaints Summary 2007–2014

	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
<b>Complaint Category</b>							
Behaviour	15	12	10	18	20	14	33
Unsatisfactory treatment	12	15	27	18	33	43	21
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Species/Type</b>							
Cat	2	5	11	10	10	16	14
Dog	14	14	17	10	22	23	17
Horse	2	3	5	6	6	5	4
Other	8	2	1	3	2	3	5
Veterinary medicines	1	-	1	4	2	1	2
N/A	-	3	2	3	11	9	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Complaint Outcome</b>							
No further action	6	11	16	23	23	21	26
No further action with education or follow up	4	6	15	4	13	19	11
Charges laid	1	2	-	-	1	-	-
Did not reach criteria/withdrawn	5	6	4	7	14	16	15
Referral to Council on grounds of health	-	-	-	-	2	1	2
Referral to Council on grounds of competence	-	2	2	2	-	-	-
Incomplete at reporting time	11	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>54</b>
Mediation attempted	-	-	1	-	1	1	1

Note: Figures for charges laid relate to the year in which the original case was notified, not the year in which the charge was laid.

### Times to completion of investigation

< 1 month	-	-	-	-	4	2	1
1–3 months	4	10	3	4	18	27	27
4–6 months	10	12	10	7	11	15	15
7+ months	2	5	24	25	20	13	11
Incomplete at reporting time	11	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>54</b>

### Complaint/investigation originated by

Client	12	15	30	23	39	46	32
Another veterinarian	4	4	2	4	4	8	12
Referral from Council	6	6	1	4	5	1	3
Other	5	2	4	5	5	2	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>54</b>

Note: Variations in the figures can arise under complaint category and complaint outcome because some complaints cover more than one issue, have been lodged against two or more veterinarians, or are carried over from previous years.

### Notifications Review Group (NRG)

This was formerly known as the Preliminary Assessment Committee but the name was changed early in 2014 to better reflect its triaging role in considering notifications about a veterinarian's actions where the complainant does not wish to make a formal complaint.

The NRG is delegated by Council to:

- consider issues raised about a veterinarian's conduct, performance or health
- where indicated, make appropriate referrals to the Council to consider the matter under its competence or health processes
- where necessary, make inquiries and refer matters to a CAC under Section 39 of the Veterinarians Act 2005.

Members of the NRG in the report period were:

- Stuart Burrough (Chair and veterinarian)
- Emma Cuttance (veterinarian)
- Ruth Renner (lay member)
- Craig Hunger (veterinarian) who replaced Nick Twyford October 2014.

**Notifications Summary 2013–2014**

	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>
<b>Concern category</b>		
Behaviour	14	15
Unsatisfactory treatment	16	12
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Species/type</b>		
Cat	6	3
Dog	16	13
Horse	3	3
Other	1	4
Veterinary medicines	0	1
N/A	4	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Concern outcome</b>		
	1	4
No further action	11	11
No further action with education or follow up	4	8
Refer to CAC	5	5
Did not reach criteria/withdrawn	3	2
Mediation attempted		
Referral to Council on grounds of health	0	0
Referral to Council on grounds of competence	2	1
Incomplete at reporting time	5	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Times to completion</b>		
< 1 month	2	-
1–3 months	22	20
4–6 months	1	7
7+ months	0	0
Incomplete at reporting time	5	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Notifier</b>		
Client	22	14
Another veterinarian	5	6
Referral from Council	-	-
Other	3	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>27</b>

### **Faster turnaround of complaints and concerns**

In 2012, the Council decided that the time taken to process complaints and concerns was unacceptable and specified in its Annual Plan that this needed to improve. It set targets for 2013 specifying that, in 80% of complaint cases, the final CAC decision should be issued within six months of receipt and that 80% of notifications should be finalised by the NRG within four months.

By the end of 2013, 70% of final decisions on complaints and notifications were completed within these timeframes. This shows considerable improvement on figures for 2012 when 59% of complaint decisions were issued within six months. That was already an improvement on 2011, when the average time taken to complete complaints cases was 10 months.

At the end of 2014, 11 of the 27 CAC cases opened during the year remained open. Of the 16 closed, 14 were resolved within 6 months, with two cases taking longer than the target (equating to approximately 87.5% of closed cases being resolved within 6 months).

Of the 24 NRG cases notified in 2014 and closed by the end of the year, all were resolved within the target time of four months except one case, which took four-and-a-half months. This equates to 96% of cases resolved within the target period.

### **Other initiatives**

CAC decisions, edited to preserve anonymity, continue to be published on the VCNZ website. This is in line with Council's policy to post all CAC decisions on the website except those where it is not possible to edit out details that could lead to the identification of any of the parties.

The annual training day for members of the NRG and CACs was held in August 2014, providing opportunity for general discussion, case studies and input from Council staff, the Council Chair and legal advisors on processes, outcomes and mediation.

### **Judicial Committee**

A Judicial Committee is formed to hear any charges of professional misconduct brought against a veterinarian by a CAC. It must consist of at least four members, including an experienced solicitor or barrister of the High Court, a lay person, a member of the Council and a veterinarian with relevant experience in the area of practise that is the subject of the original complaint.

Three cases of professional misconduct were referred by CACs to a Judicial Committee for a disciplinary hearing in 2014/15. Two of these cases related to complaints originally raised in 2013; and one related to a complaint raised in 2014.

In one case, the charges of breaching the Code of Professional Conduct were upheld and the vet in question was censured and ordered to pay 25% of the costs of the CAC and Judicial Committee proceedings. The charge related to the alteration of practice electronic records without authorisation after the withdrawal of an offer of practice ownership. The Committee noted the significant contrition shown by the veterinarian in question and his name was suppressed, along with the names of other interested parties. This case highlighted important issues for all veterinarians about the consequences of interfering with veterinary records.

In the second case, the veterinarian was cleared of charges that he had caused injury to a pet sheep that its owner had reported as having trouble lambing. The owner complained that the vet had caused a rectal prolapse when he initially examined the animal. The five charges laid by the CAC included that the vet: had performed an unnecessary rectal procedure; had inadequately treated a prolapsed vagina; and, had failed to recognise his lack of experience in this area of veterinary medicine. The Judicial Committee dismissed all the charges.

In the third Judicial Committee hearing, the veterinarian was found guilty of professional misconduct and had his registration cancelled and name removed from the Register. The hearing related to the veterinarian's purchase of restricted veterinary medicines; including controlled drugs and anabolic steroids at a time when he was operating a limited veterinary practice. The charges included purchasing these products for the purpose of selling them to unnamed people and/or without performing or recording any consultations on animals; failing to maintain or keep clear and accurate clinical records of consultations and failing to meet the specific requirements around the sale, use and recording of controlled drugs. Had the vet not been in receipt of legal aid, he would have been ordered to contribute 50% of the costs of the hearing and the CAC investigation.

The Judicial Committee's full decisions on these cases are available on the VCNZ website at <http://www.vetcouncil.org.nz/committeeFind.php>

## Stakeholder relations and communication

### Communication with the profession

The Professional Advisor has specific responsibility for assisting VCNZ in meeting its strategic communications objectives. Since taking up her appointment in May 2014, Dr Beban has developed a revised communications and liaison strategy which will continue to be rolled out over the next year.

Activities during the report period included a presentation to the Companion Animal Branch of NZVA in August, NZVA Auckland branch in September and to the Association's Industry and Food Safety and Animal Welfare and Biosecurity branches in November.

VCNZ staff were also involved in presenting to veterinary students and participating in the VetStart programme for students recently selected into Massey's veterinary programmes.

In 2013, the Council piloted a Q&A session for Wellington veterinarians, and in view of the success of that event, a session was held in 2014 in Christchurch following a VCNZ Council meeting there. More of the Q&A sessions will be held in other centres in future.

The Council's regular email newsletter, *Newsbrief*, was produced in June, August and December and was supplemented by email advisories. Articles were also provided to NZVA's *Vetscript*, with topics including professional standards, CPD compliance monitoring and a preview of the first online APC renewal.

### VCNZ out and about

The Council mounted a stand at the NZVA Conference held in Hamilton in June. As well as being able to learn about the work of VCNZ, veterinarians who visited the stand were also invited to trial questions for inclusion into the Australasian National Veterinary Examination.

The Council also partnered with NZVA and MPI's Agricultural Chemicals and Veterinary Medicine (ACVM) in a joint NZVA/ regional roadshows held in Southland, Christchurch, Nelson, Palmerston North, Hamilton and Whangarei in February and March 2015. The event focused on professional standards, including the MPS checklists, BESTPractice, CPD and revised ACVM performance and technical standards.

### Regular meetings with key stakeholders

VCNZ staff and Council members held regular meetings with key stakeholders during the Report period. These included:

- NZVA
- The new Director-General of MPI and other MPI officials
- The Minister of Agriculture

VCNZ has also worked with MPI to develop a document to publicise what veterinarians need to do in suspect exotic disease or pest cases, with this information now included in the registration packs of all newly registered veterinarians.

Council collaborated with others to ensure a workable definition of significant surgical procedures was included in the revised Animal Welfare Act 2015; and

Council Chair, Nick Twyford, is a member of the MPI working party which is developing regulations to accompany the new Act. These will provide more clarity around significant surgical procedures – an area of particular concern to the Council.

#### **Liaison with other occupational regulators**

Staff have held regular meetings with representatives from other regulators – including the Teachers, Medical and Pharmacy Councils and the Health Practitioners' Disciplinary Tribunal. Staff also took part in an online seminar on continuing competency with health regulatory staff.

The Deputy Chair and the Chair of the Finance and Risk committee along with VCNZ staff also attended the Health Regulatory Authorities conference held in May 2014.

During his time as Chair, David Bayvel held productive meetings with the CEO of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons and the Chair of the Irish Veterinary Council.

#### **Australasian Liaison**

The Australasian Veterinary Boards Councils (AVBC) runs the Veterinary Registration examination process for international veterinarians not holding recognised qualifications; conducts accreditation visits to Australasian veterinary schools; and assesses applications for specialist registration.

Council maintains strong links with its Australian counterparts, through its active participation on AVBC. The following New Zealand representatives continue to be members of the following AVBC committees:

- Chris Riley (Advisory Committee for Registration of Veterinary Specialists)
- Tim Parkinson (Veterinary Schools Accreditation Advisory Committee)
- Nicola Smith (Board of Examiners)

During the year Council representatives also participated in the work of an AVBC group set up to develop guidance on measures to ensure veterinarians maintain and develop their skills and knowledge. VCNZ was able to share its experiences of setting up its Continuing Professional Development framework and learn from the review of current best practice in this area.

## **Governance**

### **Membership changes**

There were several changes to the make-up of the Council during the 15 months covered by this report.

David Bayvel was appointed Chair and Nick Twyford as Deputy Chair in February 2014 and both served in those positions until February 2015, when Dr Bayvel stepped down due to ill-health and Dr Twyford took over as Chair.

It is with deep sadness we record the death, in April 2015, of Dr Bayvel.

Two new members participated in their first Council meeting in February 2014. Veterinarians Jeff Grimmett and Ian Robertson were elected for a three-year term in VCNZ elections held in November 2013.

### **Training opportunities**

A one-day induction course was held for the new Council members in January 2014 and other training opportunities were offered during the year.

The Deputy Chair attended an Institute of Directors course and a team building session was held for the full Council at the May meeting.

### **Succession**

The Council has been aware of the need to encourage younger veterinarians to be represented on VCNZ committees while at the same time maintaining a depth of experience across the membership. It has been actively working to diversify the age and gender profile of its various committees to provide a training ground for the next generation of Council members by inviting potential candidates and encouraging them to stand. As a result, in 2014, younger female veterinarians were appointed to the PSC and NRG committees.

### **Review of Committees**

In 2014, all Council committees were reviewed to see if they were still needed. It was part of a regular review of the Terms of Reference of the various VCNZ committees. As noted elsewhere in this report, the Registration and Health Committees were disbanded, with decision making delegated to the Registrar and several Council members or advisors named to provide oversight and advice, where needed.

This reporting year saw the introduction of a rolling programme of policy review instead of a three-yearly review. The change is designed to keep the content fresh and at the front of the minds of Council members and staff alike. During the 15 month period, 50% of policies were reviewed, including those covering:

- Registration
- Recency of practice
- Health

As a result of the review, policies were amended as required.

## Finance and risk

Council's fiduciary role is to approve the business plan and budget, monitor organisational and financial performance, ensure sound financial management practices are in place, monitor risks and protect its assets.

The Council's Finance and Risk Committee assists the Council in discharging these responsibilities with respect to overseeing all aspects of financial management and reporting, control and audit functions and monitoring and reporting on risks.

In 2014/15 the committee members were:

- Sue Ineson (Chair, Council lay member)
- Jeff Grimmett (veterinarian, Council member)
- Richard Wild (veterinarian)

### Managing Risk

Council held a generative session in August to review the main risks it faces and to develop mitigation strategies.

A revised risk and mitigation framework was developed which the CEO is implementing.

### VCNZ Disaster Preparedness

During the reporting period, the Council Office Disaster Preparedness and Business Continuity Plans were finalised and implemented.

Council is continuing to monitor the compliance of its Wellington building for earthquake risk. Remedial work is being carried out which the owners consider will increase the building's current rating of 88% compliant to over 100%.

### Financial Summary

The Council ended the 15 month period with an operating deficit of \$28,207. This was a positive result, given that one of the 3 disciplinary hearings held was unbudgeted.

The Council's total funds in cash and investments at period end stood at \$679,594.

### 2015/16 APC Fee

The APC fee for 2015/16 will increase by 5% to \$510. There will again be a reduced fee for early payment and that has been set at \$485. The increase allows VCNZ to maintain the minimum acceptable reserve level in the face of disciplinary hearing costs, especially relating to one 2013 disciplinary hearing, which cost in excess of \$127,000 and three further disciplinary cases in 2014/15.

The fee increase compares favourably with those charged by other professions with similar registrant numbers.

## **INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT To the Members of The Veterinary Council of New Zealand**

We have audited the financial statements of The Veterinary Council of New Zealand on pages 32 to 39, which comprise the statement of financial position as at 31 March 2015, and the statement of financial performance and statement of movements in equity for the period then ended, and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information.

### ***Council's Responsibility for the Financial Statements***

The Council is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with generally accepted accounting practice in New Zealand and for such internal control as the Council determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

### ***Auditor's Responsibility***

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (New Zealand). Those standards require that we comply with ethical requirements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Other than in our capacity as auditor we have no relationship with, or interests in, The Veterinary Council of New Zealand.

### ***Opinion***

In our opinion, the financial statements on pages 32 to 39 present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of The Veterinary Council of New Zealand as at 31 March 2015 and its financial performance for the period then ended in accordance with generally accepted accounting practice in New Zealand.



7 August 2015  
Staples Rodway Wellington  
Chartered Accountants  
Wellington

**The Veterinary Council of New Zealand**  
**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE**  
**FOR THE 15 MONTHS ENDED 31 MARCH 2015**

	Note	15 MONTHS 2015 \$	12 MONTHS 2013 \$
<b>Income</b>	1		
Practising Fees		1,454,356	1,053,162
Application Fees		86,206	58,825
Specialist Application Fees		-	1,092
Letters of Good Standing		2,974	2,687
Examination Fees		19,330	23,909
Interest		51,426	35,242
Judicial Hearing Cost Recoveries		2,200	78,566
CAC		2,200	-
Miscellaneous Income		2,303	3,522
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>1,620,997</b>	<b>1,257,004</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
<b>Employment Expenses</b>			
Salaries		671,041	460,232
Kiwisaver Employer Contributions		18,178	10,974
ACC Levies		1,500	1,639
Staff Appointment Costs		6,217	-
Sundry Personnel Costs		16,462	125
Consultancy		18,034	14,536
Payroll Costs		2,502	1,892
		<b>733,934</b>	<b>489,398</b>
<b>Operating Expenses</b>			
Accounting Fees		6,867	5,863
Archive Backup and Storage		1,571	1,051
Audit Fees		9,075	6,377
Bank Fees		2,068	1,160
Merchant Bank Fees		33,501	12,052
Cleaning		4,055	3,226
Computer Support		22,026	6,586
Depreciation	3	36,757	16,106
Insurance		9,577	4,311
Interest Payable		3	41
Loss on Sale of Fixed Asset		-	16
Repairs and Maintenance		583	530
Memberships		2,786	1,422
Miscellaneous Costs		2,256	2,339
Photocopying		14,714	9,754
Postage		5,016	5,206
Property Rental		90,730	71,858
Publications		7,081	5,004
Stationery		6,232	4,635
Telephone, Tolls & Internet		10,048	7,938
Website		2,276	2,019
Training		7,261	4,546
Utilities		2,870	2,979
		<b>277,352</b>	<b>175,019</b>
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>		<b>1,011,286</b>	<b>664,417</b>
<b>NZ Veterinary Exams</b>			
Preliminary		-	-
Final		23,587	33,096
		<b>23,587</b>	<b>33,096</b>
<b>AVBC Inc</b>		<b>92,845</b>	<b>74,457</b>
		<b>92,845</b>	<b>74,457</b>

# The Veterinary Council of New Zealand

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE FOR THE 15 MONTHS ENDED 31 MARCH 2015

	15 MONTHS 2015 \$	12 MONTHS 2013 \$
<b>Council</b>		
Attendance Reimbursement	66,318	44,050
Travel	18,738	11,759
Accommodation & Meals	10,742	11,842
Telephone & Tolls	218	274
Consultancy	108	97
Administration	603	260
Discretionary spending/Veterinarians Act	1,342	2,717
Legal Costs	25,511	13,910
	<u>123,581</u>	<u>84,909</u>
<b>Health Committee</b>		
Attendance Reimbursement	1,200	1,446
Telephone & Tolls	-	37
Vets in Stress	3,440	3,000
Legal Costs	250	-
Consultancy	4,363	-
VU Fees	6,356	1,964
	<u>15,609</u>	<u>6,447</u>
<b>Complaints Assessment Committee</b>		
Attendance Reimbursement	39,295	40,887
Travel	4,306	8,116
Accommodation & Meals	2,678	1,752
Telephone & Tolls	2,821	1,864
Administration	1,151	661
Legal Costs	53,417	30,449
Training	2,306	5,267
Consultancy (Mediation)	259	5,721
	<u>106,234</u>	<u>94,717</u>
<b>Judicial Proceedings</b>		
Attendance Reimbursement	50,964	29,954
Travel	17,500	5,970
Accommodation & Meals	12,972	4,094
Consultancy	1,908	-
Legal Costs	75,299	72,935
Publicity	517	-
Stenographer	12,516	8,707
Telephone & Tolls	113	349
Administration	14,078	5,613
	<u>185,866</u>	<u>127,620</u>
<b>Registration Committee</b>		
Attendance Reimbursement	1,197	3,821
Travel	534	209
Accommodation & Meals	-	334
Telephone & Tolls	138	560
Administration	265	92
Consultancy (Examiners Manual)	-	1,100
Legal	600	1,350
	<u>2,735</u>	<u>7,466</u>
<b>Competence Assessment</b>		
Attendance Reimbursement	4,861	4,441
Attendance Reimbursement PCI	877	-
Travel	1,764	1,288
Accommodation & Meals	303	141
Telephone & Tolls	58	-
Administration	422	5
Consultancy	1,427	74
Training	10,030	1,071
Legal Costs	1,460	5,460
	<u>21,202</u>	<u>12,480</u>

# The Veterinary Council of New Zealand

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE FOR THE 15 MONTHS ENDED 31 MARCH 2015

	15 MONTHS 2015 \$	12 MONTHS 2013 \$
<b>Professional Standards Committee</b>		
Attendance Reimbursement	2,107	2,795
Travel and Accommodation	794	559
Telephone & Tolls	539	459
CPD	7,290	43
Preliminary Assessment Committee	-	5,412
	<u>10,730</u>	<u>9,268</u>
<b>Communications</b>		
<b>Brochures</b>	348	
Newsbrief	870	100
Miscellaneous	3,758	1,375
	<u>4,975</u>	<u>1,475</u>
<b>Council Planning &amp; Training</b>		
Attendance Reimbursement	-	290
Accommodation & Meals	-	919
Training	7,490	-
Consultancy	900	2,207
	<u>8,390</u>	<u>3,415</u>
<b>Annual Practising Certificate</b>		
APC Documentation/Postage	945	9,395
Payment Processing	3,118	-
APC Temporary Staff	1,475	4,755
Online Hosting/Processing	270	-
Workforce Survey	7,893	2,604
	<u>13,701</u>	<u>16,754</u>
<b>Liaison</b>		
Secretariat	9,674	-
Council	7,257	3,239
Miscellaneous	558	-
	<u>17,489</u>	<u>3,239</u>
<b>VCNZ Elections</b>		
Printing & Stationery	-	809
Postage	-	2,196
	<u>-</u>	<u>3,005</u>
<b>Notifications Review Group</b>		
Attendance Reimbursement	9,013	-
Training	672	-
Travel	1,292	-
	<u>10,977</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>1,649,204</b>	<b>1,142,766</b>
<b>NET OPERATING (DEFICIT) / SURPLUS</b>	<u><b>(\$28,207)</b></u>	<u><b>\$ 114,238</b></u>

This Statement should be read in conjunction with the notes to the Financial Statements



# The Veterinary Council of New Zealand

## STATEMENT OF MOVEMENTS IN EQUITY FOR THE 15 MONTHS ENDED 31 MARCH 2015

	2015	12 MONTHS
	\$	2013
		\$
Net (Deficit) / Surplus for the year	(28,207)	114,238
<b>Total Recognised Revenues and Expenses for the Period</b>	<u>(28,207)</u>	<u>114,238</u>
Equity at the start of the year	707,801	593,563
<b><u>EQUITY AT THE END OF THE YEAR</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 679,594</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 707,801</u></b>

*This Statement should be read in conjunction with the notes to the Financial Statements*



The Veterinary Council of New Zealand

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION  
AS AT 31 MARCH 2015

	NOTE	31-Mar 2015 \$	31-Dec 2013 \$
<b>EQUITY</b>		<b>\$ 679,594</b>	<b>\$ 707,801</b>
<i>Represented By:</i>			
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Bank		520,299	131,246
Receivables & Accrued Income		17,490	18,342
Prepayments		56,383	-
Deposits -On Call and Term	2	1,325,865	767,119
Interest Receivable		11,622	7,509
		<u>1,931,659</u>	<u>924,215</u>
<b>Less CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Accounts Payable & Accruals		201,474	138,794
GST Payable		42,944	(10,424)
Fees Received in Advance	1	1,170,808	275,842
		<u>1,415,226</u>	<u>404,212</u>
<b>WORKING CAPITAL SURPLUS</b>		<b>516,433</b>	<b>520,003</b>
<b>NON CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Receivables & Prepayments		49,458	71,958
Property, Plant & Equipment	3	113,703	115,840
		<u>163,161</u>	<u>187,798</u>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<b>\$ 679,594</b>	<b>\$ 707,801</b>



Chair of the Veterinary Council



Chief Executive Officer

7/8/2015

Date

# The Veterinary Council of New Zealand

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE 15 MONTHS ENDED 31 MARCH 2015

### 1. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING POLICIES

#### Reporting Entity

The Veterinary Council of New Zealand is governed by the Veterinarians' Act 2005.

The Council prepares financial statements in accordance with its reporting requirements and New Zealand Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (NZ GAAP). They comply with Financial Reporting Standards (FRS). New Zealand equivalents to International Financial Reporting Standards (NZIFRS) have not been adopted.

#### Disclosure Exemptions Under Differential Reporting

The Council is a qualifying entity within the New Zealand Institute of Chartered Accountants differential reporting framework.

The Council qualifies under the public accountability and size criteria.

The Council has taken advantage of all exemptions available to it.

#### Measurement Base

The accounting principles recognised as appropriate for the measurement and reporting of income and expenditure on an historical cost basis have been adopted, insofar as they apply to the Council.

#### Specific Accounting Policies

The following specific accounting policies which materially effect the measurement of the financial performance and financial position have been adopted.

#### Change of Balance date and Comparatives

The Council has changed its balance date from 31 December to 31 March. As such the financial statements show the results for the period 1 January 2014 to 31 March 2015, a fifteen month period. The comparatives are for the period 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2013, a twelve month period.

#### Annual Practising Fees

The Annual Practising Fee is charged for the period from 1 April to 31 March.

Annual Practising Fee income is recognised on an accrual basis.

The \$1170808 shown on page 5 represents fee income in advance that will be recognised in the months April 2015 to March 2016.

(2013 \$275842 recognised in the months January 2014 to March 2014).

#### Goods and Services Tax

The financial statements have been prepared on a GST exclusive basis, except for accounts receivable and accounts payable.

#### Valuation of Property, Plant & Equipment

Property, Plant & Equipment have been valued at cost less accumulated depreciation to date.

#### Depreciation

Rates of depreciation applied to the property, plant & equipment in the financial statements are:

Office Equipment 9.0 - 80.4% DV

Office Furniture & Fittings 7 - 39.6% DV

Reference Library 26% DV

#### Accounts Receivable

Accounts Receivable are stated at net realisable value after due allowance for uncollectable debts and includes recovery of cost relating to Judicial Committee decisions.

#### Taxation

The Council is exempt from paying income tax under sCW 50(2) of the Income Tax Act, 2007.

#### Changes in Accounting Policy

There have been no changes in accounting policies. All policies have been applied on a basis consistent with those used in previous years.



# The Veterinary Council of New Zealand

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE 15 MONTHS ENDED 31 MARCH 2015

### 2. DEPOSITS - ON CALL AND TERM

	2015	12 MONTHS 2013
	\$	\$
<b>Current portion</b>		
ASB Term Deposits (Fixed Term)	232,102	216,888
BNZ Term Deposits (Fixed Term and On Call)	662,946	330,465
ANZ Term Deposits (Fixed Term)	430,817	219,766
<b>Total Deposits</b>	<b><u>1,325,865</u></b>	<b><u>767,119</u></b>

The Veterinary Council has a credit card facility with the Bank of New Zealand. The credit card limit is \$12,000

### 3. PROPERTY, PLANT & EQUIPMENT & DEPRECIATION SCHEDULE

2015 (15 Mths)	Original Cost	Deprn	Accum Deprn	Book Value
Office Equipment	70,430	7,527	54,068	16,362
Furniture & Fittings	166,962	10,373	94,842	72,120
Reference Library	673	-	671	2
Software Development	44,076	18,856	18,857	25,219
	<b><u>282,141</u></b>	<b><u>36,756</u></b>	<b><u>168,438</u></b>	<b><u>113,703</u></b>

2013 (12 Mths)	Original Cost	Deprn	Accum Deprn	Book Value
Office Equipment	56,420	6,640	46,540	9,880
Furniture & Fittings	160,660	9,465	84,472	76,188
Reference Library	673	1	669	4
Software Development	29,768	-	-	29,768
	<b><u>247,521</u></b>	<b><u>16,106</u></b>	<b><u>131,681</u></b>	<b><u>115,840</u></b>

### 4. CAPITAL COMMITMENTS AND CONTINGENT LIABILITIES

	2015	2013
Capital expenditure commitments contracted for at balance date are:	<u>Nil</u>	<u>Nil</u>

### 5. RELATED PARTIES

Members of Council who are registered Veterinarians deal with the Council as part of their ordinary course of business as veterinarians.



# The Veterinary Council of New Zealand

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE 15 MONTHS ENDED 31 MARCH 2015

### 6. OPERATING LEASE COMMITMENTS

Non-cancellable operating lease rentals (inclusive of GST) are payable as follows:

	2015	2013
Current	89,343	89,343
Non-current	<u>162,740</u>	<u>268,030</u>
	<u><b>252,083</b></u>	<u><b>357,373</b></u>

The Council entered into a lease for new premises in December 2008. The term of this lease is nine years from the commencement date of 22 December 2008.

The Council entered into a lease on a new photocopier in December 2012. The term of the lease is five years from the commencement date of 23 January 2013.



## **VCNZ contact information**

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