



VCNZ e-Update – 22 December 2015

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1. Our People – Sue Ineson Lay (non-veterinary) member of VCNZ



I have been working as a consultant, primarily in the health sector, for the last 10 years both in New Zealand and overseas. Previously I was the CEO of the Medical Council of New Zealand and I am very aware of the importance of professional regulation. I currently serve on another health regulatory board – the Osteopathic Council of New Zealand; provide executive support to the Council of Medical Colleges; and as a lay member I assist several other boards with complaints investigations and competence reviews of their professionals.

I live in Te Horo on a ten acre block with my husband, dog and too many rabbits! I have two adult children and one granddaughter.

I first became involved with the Veterinary Council of New Zealand in 2007 as a consultant when I assisted the Council with strategic and business planning, risk assessment and governance issues.

In 2012 I was appointed to VCNZ by the Minister as a lay (non-professional) member. At the time I was also serving on other regulatory Boards and saw this role as complementing that work. Recently I have been appointed by the Minister to serve another three years on the Veterinary Council.

As well as my work as a Council member I chair the Finance and Risk Committee and sit on the Judicial Committee as a lay member.

A lay person is defined as someone who is without professional or specialised knowledge in a particular subject. On the Veterinary Council of New Zealand this means that I am one of the two non-veterinary members.

As a layperson I see my role as having a particular focus on looking after the “public interest” and ensuring that the principle purpose of the Act is never forgotten when we debate professional and regulatory matters. By this I mean, ensuring the focus of Council’s discussions and decisions is on protecting the public interest by ensuring that veterinarians



are fit and competent to practise. The role is also to ensure the Council is aware of how a “non-vet” may think, what they may understand or not understand and what their expectations are of the Council.

Sometimes these roles are called community or public representatives but, like the other members of Council, I’m not there to represent the views of any particular group. That said prior to my role in the Medical Council, I primarily worked for not for profit groups in the health, education and social sectors and since that time have had several voluntary roles in the community.

I have been interested in professional regulation for over 15 years and being on the Veterinary Council gave me another opportunity to learn about and contribute to the work of another regulated profession. I have first-hand experience in governance and management and felt I could contribute on this level too.

I have always found work with the professions challenging and interesting. Despite the bad publicity that may come when professionals, just like other people, make mistakes or get sick, my experience is that very few set out to do a bad job or cause harm and most professionals want to do the very best they possibly can for their clients.

2. Fees payable to VCNZ in 2016

In October we consulted on the proposed fees for 2016. The consultation document set out:

- the Veterinarians Act requirement to “seek to eliminate any cross subsidisation between fee payers”
- the methodology used to ensure that registration application and other fees reflect the total costs of providing these activities
- the resulting proposed changes to registration application; non-practising and letters of good standing/certificate fees
- the proposed 4.3% increase in practising certificate fees

At its meeting on 26 November 2015 the Council spent time reviewing and discussing the four submissions received. While appreciating the comments made, including the impact of the downturn in the dairy sector, the Council decided to proceed with the increased fees for the following reasons:

- to ensure sufficient funding to meet conservatively estimated operational costs in 2016/17
- to maintain adequate reserve levels to cover any unexpected increases in complaints, disciplinary and court case costs
- to continue to meet its statutory responsibilities and, amongst other things, deliver on its undertakings to progress improvements to the current Veterinarians Act (including paraprofessional registration); and review the current CPD framework and the needs of new registrants.



We have consistently signalled over the last 4 years that VCNZ revenue is not sufficient to fund its operations, particularly in the face of significant complaints and disciplinary costs. Our position has been that small incremental increases to the APC fee are preferable to major hikes.

We are however continuing to investigate ways to improve our operational efficiency and will also be looking at the possibility of extending “user pays” to other areas of our work.

The 2016 practising certificate fee will therefore be \$532, discounted to \$507, for early payment by 29 February 2016.

Click [here](#) for the consultation document, which includes detail on the revised registration application and other fees.

3. Online Annual Practising Certificate (APC) Renewal

The online option for renewing your practising status will be available again for the 2016/17 APC renewal round.

We'll email you in early February with advice on how to access the online system.

Please make sure we have your current email address, preferably not a shared one. Contact vet@vetcouncil.org.nz to change this.

Online renewal will be available during the ‘bulk’ APC renewal process from early February to 31 March 2016.

The early payment fee of \$507 applies to applications and payments received before close of business on 29 February. After that the fee is \$532.

Online APC applications can only be paid via direct debit or credit card. If you wish to pay by cheque or can't use the online system, you can download the application form [here](#) from 23 December.

Please make it a priority to apply for your APC before your current one expires on 31 March 2016.

By renewing your practising certificate the Council is providing an assurance to the public that you are competent and fit to practise. It is illegal to practise as a veterinarian without holding a practising certificate. Those who do risk prosecution, a fine of up to \$10,000 and lack of indemnity cover.

It is your professional responsibility, not your employer's, to renew your APC. However some large employers require their employees to complete a hard copy application to be collated centrally and forwarded to VCNZ with a bulk payment. Please make sure you are aware of your employer's requirements.



4. Requirements for employers bulk paying the APC fees of their employees

If your practice has previously bulk paid the APC renewal fees of your veterinarian employees you can continue to do so.

We have emailed the contact person we have recorded for your practice/organisation with advice on what to do. Please let us know if you haven't received this by ringing us on 04 473 9600 or emailing vet@vetcouncil.org.nz

As occurred this year, you will need to make payment to the Council's bank account by 28 January 2016 and provide a spreadsheet with the names, registration numbers and amounts paid for each veterinarian, on the same day as the bulk payment is made (or cheque provided).

If you are not able to meet the bulk payment deadline of 28 January please call Margriet Philipsen on 04 473 9600 to discuss your options.

5. Seasons Greetings



The Council and its staff extend their best wishes for a safe and enjoyable holiday season.

Thanks to all those who have assisted our work during the year.

Our office will be closed from midday Thursday 24 December and will re-open Tuesday 5 January.