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Changes to Council

Council held its first face-to-face meeting of the year last week. At the meeting, Nick Twyford was re-elected as Chair for 2016. Lindsay Burton was elected Deputy Chair.

Tim Parkinson has recently resigned from Council. Tim has been a member of Council since 2011, and was the Deputy Chair in 2015. We wish Tim well and thank him for his huge contribution. His insight, creativity and quick wit are missed around the Council table.

Tim will be replaced on Council by the new Dean of the Massey University programme, when this appointment is made.

Have you renewed your APC?

Your 2015–16 APC expires on 31 March. Please apply for your 2016-17 APC immediately if you haven't already. It's illegal to practise without a current APC. Click [here](#) for more information.

Promoting and advertising services and products

Recently we have been asked for guidance on how vets promote their services. There are a number of 'go to' places for information:

- the [Professional Integrity](#) section of the Code of Professional Conduct – see paragraph 9
- the [Advertising Codes of Practice](#) provide information on advertising standards – these apply to anyone, not just veterinarians
- ACVM for information about [advertising RVMs](#)
- VCNZ's [Policy on the Use of Titles](#)

What do I need to know?

Our Code of Professional Conduct says that:

- *Veterinarians must act fairly representing their capability and competence accurately;*
- *Veterinarians must not exaggerate any claim or comparison of the service or product over another or overstate their skills and knowledge by using misleading descriptors.*

Here are some quick reminders:

- you can't claim or imply you are better than another colleague
- you can't slur or demean other veterinary services or products
- you can't say or do anything which brings the profession into disrepute

- you can't say or imply that you are a specialist if you aren't
- you can't use terms ending in 'ist' if they could convey the impression that you are a specialist. This is particularly so with titles that have medical specialist equivalents, eg veterinary cardiologist or veterinary pathologist.

These are some examples of what **you can't say**.

- I am the most experienced small animal veterinarian in Auckland.
- I am a cat specialist (if you are not recognised by VCNZ as a specialist) or a cat expert or a consultant in cat medicine – **but you can say** you are a cat veterinarian, or provide feline services or that you have a special interest, professional interest or a particular interest in cats.

Can I endorse or provide a testimonial for a product or service?

Yes you can. In addition to the above there are three main things to remember. You must:

- be a bona fide user of the product or service
- disclose any financial, business or other relationship you have with the seller/supplier
- be able to substantiate any claims you make in relation to the product or service.

If you are unsure please ask us.

What qualifications and post nominals am I allowed to use as a veterinarian?

This can be a bit confusing. Our policy is [on our website](#).

Again, the policy is based on ensuring that the public are not misled about a vet's skills.

The policy has two parts: what Council has approved to be recorded on the Register and what veterinarians might want to advertise about themselves.

The Register of Veterinarians

Qualifications will be approved for entry on the Register if:

- *they have relevance to veterinary practice; and*
- *they have been awarded following successful completion of a course of training or study by a body recognised by the Council.*

So membership of the Australian and New Zealand College of Veterinary Scientists (MANZCVS) would be approved but Membership of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (MRCVS) would not (unless gained by examination). A pass in a licensing/registration examination will only be only included on the Register if this was the basis for New Zealand registration e.g. BVSc Belgrade 1993, NZNVE 2005. Civilian, military decorations and Fellowships of the Royal Society of New Zealand are also approved for inclusion.

Public advertising

Vets can include information about memberships and affiliations that would not be approved for inclusion in the Register. The same principle applies: acronyms or descriptors must not create an inflated view of the vet.

If you wish to include your memberships and affiliations in your advertising, they need to be separated from other (approved) post nominal titles. For example, on your letterhead paper, you

can place your approved qualifications at the top of the page and memberships and affiliations at the bottom.

If you have any enquires about the use of post nominals or qualifications please contact us.

Therapeutic Products Bill and section 29 medicines

The Ministry of Health is working on a new Therapeutic Products Bill to replace the Medicines Act.

Nick Twyford (Chair) and Janet Eden (Registrar) recently met with Ministry staff to discuss difficulties caused by vets' lack of access to section 29 (non-consented) human medicines, and the animal welfare concerns that resulted from this.

Section 29 medicines include new medicines awaiting Medsafe consent, and superseded medicines where consent has lapsed.

At the moment, vets need to import s29 medicines as a veterinary medicine. This means getting approval from MPI (and MOH if it is a controlled drug).

Initially, drugs had to be for an identified patient and a specific time period. This led to serious repercussions for a number of vets (especially companion animal vets) and their clients, and animal welfare concerns. Council, NZVA and MPI worked together to address this. Vets can now import and hold certain s29 medicines in anticipation of use. However there are still delays and additional costs.

At the meeting, MOH officials were sympathetic to Council's concerns and are now considering ways to address the current problems in the new Act. Council and MOH representatives will be having ongoing discussions about this.

MOH is hoping to introduce the bill to the house by the end of the year, with a possible 2018 implementation date.

For further information visit [MOH](#) or [ACVM](#).

Supporting newly registered veterinarians

Council is looking at how it, and the profession, can better support newly registered veterinarians (mainly graduates in the first instance) make the transition from university or overseas.

A working party has been convened with representatives from Council, NZVA, MPI, Massey and employers. Tim Parkinson (convenor of the working party) says *'the first practice experience is critical; a make or break time for which assistance, encouragement and support is needed'*.

The working party has reviewed what other professions, agencies, jurisdictions and veterinary practices are doing; and is currently developing proposals for the future. We will seek your views on these.

Effective mentoring support is vital; so this new initiative links well with NZVA's review of its mentoring scheme and wellness initiatives.