



November 2017

## Online APC renewal

From next year, you'll need to apply for your APC online. We won't be offering a paper application form any more.

Most veterinarians already choose to renew their APC online. For most of you, online renewal should be quicker and more convenient. It should also mean time and cost savings in the office, and bring us in line with other organisations where online processes are the norm.

We know some of you might have concerns about this change. If you do, please contact us early so we can talk about how to make this work for you.

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## Is your email address up to date?

If your email service provider was Vodafone, you'll need to update your email address. Don't forget to [update us](#) if your details change.

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## Releasing personal information to law enforcement agencies

The Privacy Commissioner has released [guidance on dealing with situations where you are asked by a law enforcement official to release personal information](#).

[Principle 11\(e\)\(i\) of the Privacy Act](#) allows you to release information about a client's animal to an Animal Welfare Act Inspector, an Animal Control officer or the police without the client's consent. We talked about this in our [August](#) and [May](#) updates.

The guidance includes a Quick Guide to help you with the process of releasing information.

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## The role of the lay person on the Notification Review Group



The Notification Review Group is the first to consider a notification that comes to the VCNZ about veterinarians and their professional practice. The Notification Review Group's job is to gather and look at the initial information, try and understand what has led to the notification, and make a decision about what the next steps should be in resolving issues.

As a lay person, I must be a member of the community who has no self-interest or commercial links with the profession. My principal role is to safeguard 'public interest'. In the VCNZ context this means contributing the perspective of the veterinary service user, and ensuring that decisions take into account that perspective.

In practice, in the Notification Review Group context, this means the following.

- I do not contribute to discussion of substantive clinical issues, apart from occasional clarifying questions.
- I contribute to discussion on determining questions of process, as it applies to the service-user, such as:
  - what policy, procedure and records are documented in the practice, and how sufficient and accessible are they for service users?
  - were such processes adhered to and full records kept?
  - is there a common understanding of the facts and timeline in the background to the notification?
- I'll be involved in helping identify and explore any ethical issues, such as:
  - was informed consent sought and documented where necessary?
  - were the full implications of procedures explained and discussed fully with the service user?

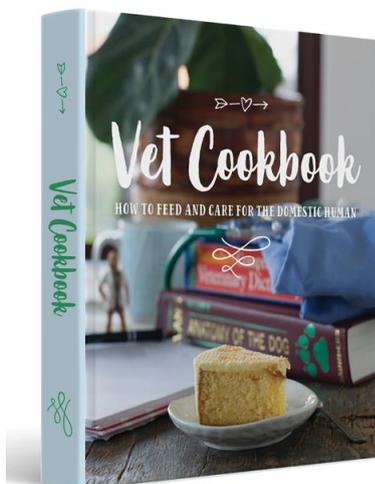
The key non-clinical issue in notifications is communication. Many issues that present as a clinical problem have, as their base, perceptions of poor communication. Clients who raise concerns with us frequently cite feeling discounted and disrespected, and not being given the information they need to understand processes and decisions. Again I see that my job is ensure that service user communication issues are identified by the committee and given due weighting in decisions and in feedback to the veterinarian.

Finally, as veterinarians know, their working environment can be stressful and unpredictable, and this may lead to reduced sensitivity to the individual needs of each service user. The notifications show that the impact of this is significant for service users who themselves are often already in a distressed, confused and emotional state. Mixed emotions may include deep grief at the pain or loss of a long-time companion animal, anger and guilt about some of their own decisions, or anxiety about finances for treatment. Having their feelings met with a professional response that respects and acknowledges them and their feelings is significant for service users, and an important aspect of the veterinarian's professional conduct.

In sum, much of what I do is to help shine a light on non-clinical issues as noted above, and ensure the

Notification Review Group gives appropriate weight to those issues in its decisions and feedback to veterinarians.

*Helen Ridley has been the non-veterinary member of the NRG since December 2016. Thanks to Helen for writing this article.*



## The vet cookbook

Here's a great initiative from our colleagues in Australia. It's not just a cook book – the aim is to support the mental health of the profession.

Among the recipes are stories and insights from colleagues who have overcome tough times.

All proceeds will be used to produce and deliver mental health resources for the profession.

Read more about this awesome project and order a copy [here](#).

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## Vetscript

In September, Wayne Ricketts wrote about [microchipping](#). His [October omnibus](#) looked at recent work from the VCNZ office. Vetscript is available to NZVA members, and we put Wayne's articles on our website.

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## Euthanasia guidelines for avians

In May, we talked about euthanasia guidelines for avians that NZVA was preparing. These have been signed off and are available to members on the NZVA website.

[The Code's](#) requirement is that euthanasia 'must be carried out humanely'. The Code links to the [AVMA guidelines](#).

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## Reminder about residues and withholding requirements

To meet the ACVM Act's requirements regarding residues, you must:

- provide the withholding period advice as clearly as possible
- include this advice in the authorisation.

Failure to do so could breach section 55(3):

*Every veterinarian commits an offence who knowingly fails to provide any client with information to prevent the occurrence, in any primary produce from any animal treated with an agricultural compound, of residues of that compound which contravene any requirements of the Dairy Industry Act 1952, the Meat Act 1981, the Animal Products Act 1999, or the Food Act 2014 or any regulations or notices in force under those Acts.*

See our earlier [advice on withholding periods and authorisations](#).

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