

**Submission  
No 17**

## **COMPANION ANIMAL BREEDING PRACTICES IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

**Organisation:** Veterinary Practitioners Board of NSW  
**Name:** Mr John Baguley  
**Position:** Registrar  
**Date Received:** 2/06/2015

Dear Mr Marshall MP

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The Board discussed scenarios where veterinarians may develop concerns regarding the welfare of animals in relation to this issue . Firstly, a veterinarian may attend an animal breeding establishment in which case the veterinarian's priority for animal welfare would most likely be achieved through engagement with and education of the persons responsible for the care of animals. If the veterinarian was unable to progress these concerns the veterinarian should seek legal advice prior to reporting these concerns to the RSPCA or other appropriate authority given the veterinarian's potentially conflicting obligations in relation to animal welfare and the requirement to maintain client confidentiality ([Veterinary Practitioners Code of Professional Conduct cl 1, 2 and 12](#)).

Secondly, a veterinarian taking over the treatment of animals at an animal breeding establishment may develop concerns regarding previous veterinary treatment. Again, the most likely method for progressing these concerns would be to contact the previous treating veterinarian to discuss these concerns and if a satisfactory explanation or outcome could not be achieved the veterinarian could make a complaint to the Board. It would be helpful for any subsequent investigation if this second treating veterinarian was able to obtain consent from the persons responsible for the care of these animals prior to lodging this complaint.

The object of the *Veterinary Practice Act 2003* is to regulate the provision of veterinary services in NSW and the Board's functions include the investigation of complaints against veterinarians and taking disciplinary action against veterinarians. The first basic principle of the Veterinary Practitioners Code of Professional Conduct (Code) is a primary concern for the welfare of animals and veterinarians are required to consider the welfare of animals at all times when practising veterinary science. Evidence to the contrary would be considered by the Board to be a breach of the Code however, as above there is also an obligation to maintain confidentiality of information obtained in the course of a veterinarian's professional practice. The Board noted that mandatory reporting is not currently legislated and was of the opinion that mandatory reporting is problematic.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you believe the Board can be of any further assistance to this inquiry.

Kind regards

*John Baguley*  
*Registrar*

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