Australasian Veterinary Boards Council

Governance Plan
2023 – 2027

AVBC

Contents

OUR MISSION

To promote the integrity and sustainability of the veterinary profession

Our Strategic Intent

In 2027, we would like knowledgeable stakeholders to see us as:

The **DRIVER** of quality in the veterinary profession.

Why are we here?

To promote the integrity and sustainability of the veterinary profession

Our values – the way we do things

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Collaboration	We are a community where skills are shared. We draw on expertise from within our community. We work together in the best interests of AVBC.
Communication	We communicate openly, honestly and transparently. We are clear about how and why we share information. We are proactive in our communications.
Integrity	We have robust processes. We act fearlessly. We do what we say we are going to do. We act fairly.
Leadership	We deliver value for our members and stakeholders. We make a meaningful contribution to society. We are a great organisation to work for and have an excellent culture. We put people at the centre of our work. We make decisions based on the best available information. We respond to risk, emerging evidence and trends, and the needs of society. We are forward thinking, energetic and effective.

Our stakeholders

We want to interact with our key stakeholders in the following ways.

STAKEHOLDER	OUR VALUE STATEMENT	CURRENT ASSESSMENT
State/Territory/New Zealand Boards	We will demonstrate that qualifications recognised by the boards for the purpose of registration have undergone rigorous accreditation and quality control, and that individuals assessed by AVBC for general and specialist registration meet clearly defined minimum standards. We will assist and inspire the boards to implement excellent practising standards and build sustainable practice.	Assessment: 93.5% How well placed: 81.3%
Veterinary education providers	We will demonstrate that qualifications recognised by the boards for the purpose of registration have undergone rigorous accreditation and quality control.	Assessment: 100.0% How well placed: 76.4%
AVA, NZVA, VNCA & International Organisations	We will demonstrate that Australian/New Zealand veterinarians and veterinary services meet international standards and that we are leaders in setting and harmonisation of standards.	Assessment: 80.4% How well placed: 60.9%
AVE Examiners, Staff, VSAAC, SPC and ACRVS	We will provide structure, support, development and succession planning to assist them in their function. We will give them strategic direction and leadership and ensure they can see how their work contributes to AVBC strategy.	Assessment: 90.9% How well placed: 59.6%
Veterinary professionals (veterinarians, veterinary nurses, veterinary technicians)	We will promote consistent internationally recognised standards that enable sustainable practice and ensure trust in veterinary professionals.	Assessment: 85.9% How well placed: 68.2%
Public (indirect stakeholders)	We will ensure that the public can trust that applicants/veterinarians have the capability to provide quality of care or service through appropriate qualifications and continuing professional development to make them eligible for general and/or specialist registration.	Assessment: 82.6% How well placed: 57.7%
Government (agriculture, education, health, small business)	We will engage with national and state/territory governments (particularly their Chief Veterinary Officers) to enable veterinary professionals to contribute to national priorities and enlist support in achieving our objectives.	new
Veterinary employers (corporates, govt, university etc.)	We will consult with veterinary employers to ensure the quality and sustainability of veterinary operations.	new

Our Governance and Reporting Framework

In delivering this strategic intent, AVBC will establish a governance and reporting framework to support the Board in its key governance obligations to oversee the:

- **Growth** in the organisation, through oversight of the implementation of the strategic pillars in this plan;

- governance of **Change;**

- management of Identified **Risks**.

FRAMEWORK

GROWTH   CHANGE   RISKS
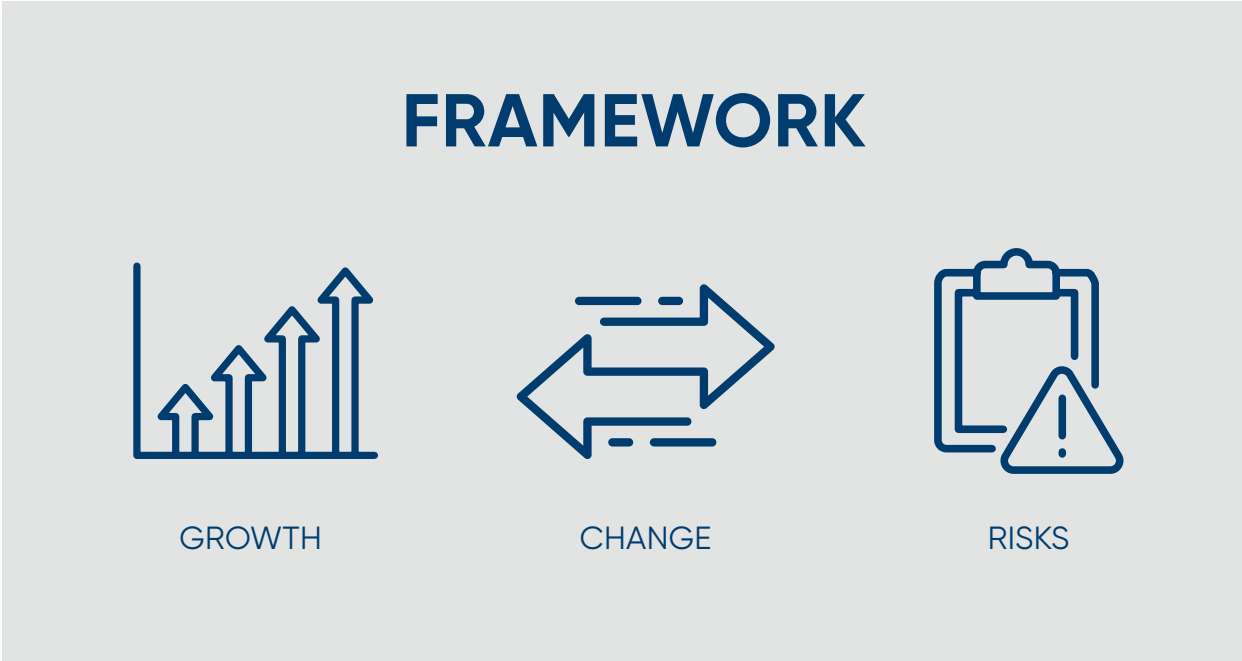
GROWTH – Our strategic pillars

Our strategic pillars outline the cornerstones to achieving the strategic intent. The 2023 Operations Plan will outline steps to achieving these strategic pillars in the next year.

1. Uniformity across member board/council legislation (to support Public Trust)

Goal: Consistency of legislation, guidelines, policies and processes across jurisdictions. We will ensure that the public can trust that applicants/veterinarians have the appropriate qualifications to make them eligible for general/specialist registration with the veterinary boards of Australia and New Zealand and that veterinarians practice to a consistent standard wherever they are in this region.

Consequence of non-achievement of Goal: Stagnation. Inability to progress. Ongoing legislative barriers. Inefficient use of resources. Impeded mobility.

Current practices: AVBC has the following existing practices to address the goal:

- Council meetings and information sharing between jurisdictions
- Committee work (e.g., approach to impaired veterinarians, Day One Competency Review).

New Initiatives: The following new initiatives are proposed in the 2027 Plan:

- Analyse legislation across all jurisdictions by Dec 2023.
- Draft a model Act by end 2024 and set up a process for regular review.
- Achieve COAG facilitation of model Act for State and Territory introduction by end 2026.
- Feasibility study on service sharing via AVBC by end 2024.

Performance Measures: This goal will be assessed against the following performance measures and targets:

- Leader(s) identified (March 2023), personnel allocated (March 2023), agreed project plan (May 2023)
- Analysis completed[1], process agreed (November 2023), Model Act completed and process for regular review initiated (November 2024)
- Plan/ statement of intent to state and federal ministers (May 2024), COAG agreement (end 2026)
- Identification of extension of services to be shared (beyond AVE, specialist assessment, skills assessment, and accreditation) commenced (November 2022) by September 2023.

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1 Accepted/agreed by Council = performance measure

2. International Respect/Footprint

Goal: There will be demand for AVBC accreditation from international veterinary schools. Australian and New Zealand qualifications will be recognised internationally (including at specialist level)

Consequence of non-achievement of Goal: Exacerbate workforce shortages, less desirable for international students to enrol in our degrees, which then has a financial impact on sustainability of veterinary programs

Current practices: AVBC has the following existing practices to address the goal:

- Renewal of MRAs

- Continued support and monitoring of ASEAN Veterinary Statutory Boards Network

- Participate and contribute to International Accreditors Working Group

- USDE re-accreditation

- Continued engagement with overseas stakeholders

- Participate in and contribute to International Veterinary Regulators Network

- Active Mind Matters International membership

New Initiatives: The following new initiatives are proposed in the 2027 Plan:

- Recognition of AVBC accreditation in North America by end 2025.

- Establishment of MRA with key European economies by end 2024.

- Gain ENQA (European QA) recognition by end 2027.

- VSAAC consideration of more accredited international degrees by end 2027.

- Establishment of a pathway for unrecognised degree holders to achieve specific skills registration by end 2024.

- Harmonisation of registration of specialists with unrecognised primary degrees by Dec 2023.

- Develop a plan to engage with overseas bodies on registration of veterinary nurses and technicians by end 2024.

Performance Measures: This goal will be assessed against the following performance measures and targets:

- Initial advances to relevant bodies including International Vet Reg Network by May 2023.

- Project plans by July 2023

- Roadmap to specialist registration harmonisation by May 2023

3. Sustainable Profession

Goal: The veterinary profession is sustainable and fit-for-purpose, in all elements of sustainability (Environmental, Social, Governance)

Consequence of non-achievement of Goal: Adverse animal welfare outcomes, food safety, biosecurity, environmental collapse, adverse consumer outcomes, loss of market access, loss of public trust, collapse of veterinary workforce

Current practices: AVBC has the following existing practices to address the goal:

- Specialist assessments
- SPC Committee operating within terms of reference and sub-committees
- Veterinary school accreditation
- AVE exam and skills assessment

New Initiatives: The following new initiatives are proposed in the 2027 Plan:

- National registration of veterinary nurses and technicians – by end 2024
- Mandatory registration of veterinary nurses and technicians by end 2027
- Framework for registration of other veterinary allied professionals by end 2027
- A national database of and for veterinary practitioners by end 2024
    - Resolve privacy limitations of collecting consolidated data (using registration cycles) – by Dec 2023
- A new CPD program for implementation across Boards – by Dec 2023
- Implement a consistent concerns/complaints process across all jurisdictions – by end 2025
- Review AVE process and purpose in line with AVBC's new Day One Competencies– by mid 2023
- Consider impact of changing technologies (e.g., telemedicine) and arrive at an AVBC policy by Dec 2023
- Consider impact of Climate change and arrive at an AVBC policy by Dec2023

Performance Measures: This goal will be assessed against the following performance measures and targets:

- Positive engagement with AVNA/VNCA by March 2023, project plan by May 2023
- Fund and appoint business analyst for national database by May 2023
- Initiate pilot CPD program by May 2023, draft complaints process by Nov 2023, D1C on March AVEC agenda, technologies agenda for 2023 AVBC workshop, establish AVBC "Green Team" by May 2023

4. Engaged Stakeholders

Goal: To deliver on our stakeholder values in support of the delivery of our strategic intent

Consequence of non-achievement of Goal: We fail to successfully engage with stakeholders impacting our ability to deliver on our goals

Current practices: AVBC has the following existing practices to address the goal:

- Design and implement repository for VSAAC accreditation
- Workshops to train accreditors on new VSAAC standards
- Complaints process review and harmonisation
- Regulation of veterinary allied professionals (i.e., registering veterinary nurses & technicians)
- Impaired veterinary practitioner policy

New Initiatives: The following new initiatives are proposed in the 2027 Plan:

- Stakeholder analysis by 30 June 2023 (do this prior to review of constitution)
- Review AVBC constitution re: objects and Council composition by Dec 2023
- Develop and implement stakeholder communications and engagement plan (with focus on relevance, value, vision) by Dec 2023
- Prepare a business case for consideration by AVBC on resourcing new projects (e.g. SPC) by Dec 2023

Performance Measures: This goal will be assessed against the following performance measures and targets:

- Launch repository for 2024 accreditation by October 2023
- Complete training of accreditors in new standards by November 2023
- Reviewed and implemented constitution and Council composition
- Appoint external communications consultant by October 2023
- Commence budget process for new projects August 2023
- "Deposits into relationship bank": external stakeholder meeting plan by May 2023

CHANGE - Our emerging risks

Listed below are the emerging items (risks and opportunities) which have a significant impact on the organisation but, at present, are either unknown or of rare occurrence:

(source: 14 November AICD EDU22)

Geo-political/ Climate

- ESG reports, targets, business case (budget) (forget net zero)

Technology/Cyber

1. What data do we hold?
2. Why do we hold it?
3. Is it encrypted?

Action:

- Clear roles and responsibilities
- Have cyber-strategy (APIs etc.)
- Have specific risk management register
- Create cyber- aware culture in AVBC
- Plan for an event e.g. simulation exercise

Regulatory/Governance

- "best interest" duty – short, middle and long term, ESG management, bullying (important to hear 'unvarnished' views of stakeholders and not just aggregated reports), OHS zero tolerance (sexual harassment, culture re-set) re director liability
- Resource: Respect at Work AICD tool
- NFP governance- financial, regulatory, stakeholder management
- Workforce- training and re-training

Mental Health and Diversity

- Culture- what value, how you express it, how management is supported Definition of diversity and inclusion means unique individuals can contribute according to their potential and achieve a sense of belonging.

RISK – Our identified risks

Listed below are the key identified risks to the delivery of our strategic intent:

Finance

- F1 – **Current Year Result**: Failure to deliver budget result at year end
- F2 – **Balance Sheet**: Failure to have a strong balance sheet

Human Resources

- HR1 – **Safe Workplace (WHS)**: Failure to have a safe environment leading to accidents, security incidents, and increased workers comp premiums
- HR2 – **Compliant with employment legislation, policies & procedures**: Organisation is compliant with employment legislation and its own policies and procedures, which reflect best practice
- HR3 – **Engaged staff**: Failure to have engaged staff resulting in high staff turnover, reputational damage, difficulty attracting staff or reduced productivity

Information, computers and technology

- ICT1 – **IT Systems Outage/Failure**: Significant outage or failure of IT systems leading to negative impact on service delivery
- ICT2 – **System and data protection**: Loss of business systems and/or personal/sensitive information through cyber or other attack leading to significant business disruption and/or breach of Privacy Act

Service Delivery

SD1. Veterinary School Accreditation (VSAAC)

Risk Description: Service Delivery

Risk Category: Poor quality graduates/poor standards. No value in accreditation and universities cease to participate. International reputation as an accrediting body.

Current practices: AVBC has the following existing practices to address the goal:

- Accreditation standards and processes
- Terms of reference for accreditation standards committee, by-laws, Day One Competencies, Qualifications generally recognised document

New Initiatives: The following new initiatives are proposed in the Plan:

- SE Asia schools review and evaluation and if relevant develop plan to gain more SE Asian school accreditation by end 2025

- EAEVE schools – analysis of most likely partners and develop proposal on facilitation of AVBC accreditation of schools without undertaking full independent AVBC visit by end 2024

- Develop MRA with EAEVE accredited schools with adequate outcomes assessment/QA, starting with top 5% of veterinary schools in Europe (e.g. Copenhagen, Ghent, Vienna, Zurich, Utrecht…)

- Investigate options for mandatory national survey of graduate outcome data via member Boards by Dec 2023

- Repository for schools to enter accreditation information by Dec 2023

- Increase pool of trained accreditors by Dec 2023

- Development of accreditation training material including online by Dec 2023

- Assisting schools with implementation of D1C (e.g., provide guides) by Dec 2023

- Review of standards (ongoing) and D1C by end 2025

Performance Measures: This goal will be assessed against the following performance measures and targets:

TBA

SD2. Assessment of Specialist qualifications (ACRVS)

Risk Description: Service Delivery

Risk Category: Poor quality specialist. Lack of ability to assess and have specialists registered by the board. Workforce implications – too many or too few specialists. Risk of inconsistent standards if ACRVS services are not utilised.

Current practices: AVBC has the following existing practices to address the goal:

- Assessment committee

- Minimum standards documents (MSD)

New Initiatives: The following new initiatives are proposed in the Plan:

- Review MSD for consistency with global standards. (This is in response to workforce shortages – may enable/allow for holistic assessment / level of discretion / greater flexibility in application of standards) – by Dec 2023

- Investigate Advanced Practitioner status – by end 2024

Performance Measures: This goal will be assessed against the following performance measures and targets:

TBA

SD3. Examinations (AVEC)

Risk Description: Service Delivery

Risk Category: Lack of pathway for overseas vets with unrecognised qualifications to register. Workforce implications. Risk of people in workforce who don't have appropriate skills. Risk of people who have appropriate skills not being able to participate in workforce.

Current practices: AVBC has the following existing practices to address the goal:

New Initiatives: The following new initiatives are proposed in the Plan:

- Independent review of AVE (delivery, assessment format, etc) to ensure best practice, establish/ maintain stakeholder trust and explore more resilient options (less dependent on 1 venue, open borders, etc)
- Investigate streamed (e.g., species specific) exam components to enable those with unrecognised qualifications to gain limited/specific registration in applicable jurisdictions.

Performance Measures: This goal will be assessed against the following performance measures and targets:

TBA

SD4. Skills Assessment for migration

Risk Description: Service Delivery

Risk Category: Risk of not meeting new government requirements for privacy and data security.

Current practices: AVBC has the following existing practices to address the goal:

New Initiatives: The following new initiatives are proposed in the Plan:

- Review of data and privacy standards (by mid 2023)
- Investigate transfer of veterinary nurse ANZSCO code from VETASSESS

Performance Measures: This goal will be assessed against the following performance measures and targets:

TBA

- AVBC is a member of the International Accreditors Working Group (IAWG). IAWG make veterinary accreditation and international degree mobility more efficient. It allows recognition in Australia of the Lyon (France) veterinary degree, for example. Universities prominent for some degrees may not have a recognised veterinary degree (eg Harvard University). Some less prominent universities have strong veterinary degrees (eg City University Hong Kong). Several universities with veterinary degrees not recognised in Australia because they do not meet minimum standards for all of their graduates have nevertheless graduated individuals able to develop competence equivalent to an Australian veterinary graduate. These veterinarians are offered a pathway for recognition in Australia via the AVE. As per its strategic plan, in 2024 AVBC is trialling new accreditation methodology for European veterinary degrees. All going well, graduates of these programs will be eligible for registration in NSW in 2024.

- A note on European veterinarians registered by RCVS (UK) under European labour mobility laws pre-Brexit. A temporary measure was applied post-Brexit to allow continued recognition of European degrees to prevent sudden labour shortages. Efforts to limit the time this measure is in place.

- The full cost table for the AVE can be found here:
  https://avbc.asn.au/for-veterinarians/australasian-veterinary-examination/