

From: Melanie Latter

Sent: Thursday, 12 October 2017 6:07 AM

To: Readford, Phoebe <Phoebe.Readford@agriculture.gov.au>; Julie Strous <ed@avbc.asn.au>

Cc: Melanie Latter <melanie.latter@ava.com.au>

Subject: RE: Australia-Hong Kong FTA - Veterinary Services [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Dear Phoebe

After discussion with the AVA Policy Manager, Dr Debbie Neutze, and AVA President, Dr Paula Parker, I can inform you that the AVA would not support inclusion of the suggested paragraphs in the A-HKFTA.

We offer the following reasons:

1. Australian graduates can already register as a veterinary surgeon in Hong Kong (through recognition by the U.K).
2. The City University of Hong Kong has been established in collaboration with Cornell University. If they gain AVMA accreditation, Australia will presumably recognise their graduates. This would seem to be an appropriate pathway for graduates from that university to apply to work here.
3. We would not be comfortable with the risks around a blanket MRA with Hong Kong, such as the one we now have with New Zealand. The Hong Kong Vet Practitioner Board (VPB) presently registers graduates from the National Taiwan University. Other vet schools of lower standards than ours could set up in Hong Kong in the future, and the HK VPB Board may decide to register their graduates. We do not want to be in a position where there could be any risk that those graduates, through an MRA, would have an automatic ability to register in Australia, if they do not meet our standards.
4. We understand that typically, even with an MRA in place, Australia would still require that people seeking registration are graduates of a veterinary school accredited by AVBC or an AVBC-recognised accreditation body (AVMA, RVC) – ie the “standards approach”. In that case we feel that this negates the purpose of an MRA somewhat. Our concerns remain that a blanket MRA with HK may leave the way open in the future for alternate means of entry if there were to be any dilution of the standards approach. Any potential decrease in the current standards of Australia’s registered veterinarians would put Australia’s biosecurity, trade access and animal welfare at too high a risk and as such we cannot support any proposal to enter into mutual recognition arrangements with Hong Kong at this stage.

Kind regards,
Melanie



Dr Melanie Latter | Head of Policy and Advocacy

Australian Veterinary Association

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From: Readford, Phoebe [<mailto:Phoebe.Readford@agriculture.gov.au>]

Sent: Thursday, 5 October 2017 7:01 PM

To: Julie Strous <ed@avbc.asn.au>; Melanie Latter <melanie.latter@ava.com.au>

Subject: Re: Australia-Hong Kong FTA - Veterinary Services [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi Mark, Julie and Melanie,

Next week the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) will participate in the 3rd round of negotiations of the Australia-Hong Kong Free Trade Agreement (A-HKFTA) and would like to include text regarding the potential for mutual recognition arrangement (MRA) between the veterinary services of Australia and Hong Kong. I would appreciate AVBC and the AVA's views on whether this is worthwhile for Australian veterinarians and, if so, your comments on the draft text.

The OCVO can see some benefits for Australian vets; Considering the number of Australian veterinarians who currently work in Hong Kong, an MRA will streamline registration for these vets. Also the first intake of veterinary students started in Hong Kong this year and this will lead to more Hong-Kong-trained veterinarians in the future. An MRA will keep a 'foot in the door' for Australian veterinarians wanting to work in Hong Kong. However the work of negotiating and developing an MRA will fall to AVBC and there is a risk that Hong Kong graduates will not meet Australia's standards for veterinary registration. There are also a number of other FTAs in earlier stages of development so, the question is, whether this will open the 'flood gates'. I have altered the wording in the draft text in an attempt to alleviate these concerns but would appreciate your opinion. The alternative option is to remove this text from the FTA altogether.

The draft text from DFAT is below and the changes I've made are in blue font. DFAT have asked us to provide comments and views by COB Friday 13 October at the latest as the negotiations run from Tuesday 10 to Saturday 14 October. Therefore, are you able to provide your comments to me by COB Thursday 12 October? My apologies for the short notice.

X. The Parties recognise the existing collaborative institutional and people-to-people links between the two economies on veterinary services. The Parties shall promote the mutual recognition of professional competence in veterinary ~~services~~ registration to facilitate the mobility of veterinarians between their Areas.

Y. Each Party shall encourage its relevant bodies to ~~expeditiously~~ consider entering into mutual recognition arrangements with the relevant bodies of the other Party to formalise and streamline existing recognition requirements for veterinary ~~services~~ registration, with a view to facilitating and expanding trade between the Parties in veterinary services.

Some explanation:

- Parties are the governments of Hong Kong and Australia. This means that, if this text makes it into the final FTA it is the Australian Government who will be compelled to encourage the relevant bodies (AVBC in this case) to consider a MRA with Hong-Kong. And AVBC are not compelled to enter into an arrangement should mutual recognition not be possible.
- I have changed 'veterinary services' to 'veterinary registration' as recognising veterinary services, as per the OIE definition, has potential wider implications on trade. Julie, do you believe veterinary registration is the correct term to use?

Thanks Melanie, Julie and Mark. Please feel free to contact me if you'd like to discuss this further.

Cheers.
Phoebe

Dr Phoebe Readford

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From: Julie Strous [<mailto:ed@avbc.asn.au>]
Sent: Wednesday, 4 October 2017 11:28 AM
To: Schipp, Mark <Mark.Schipp@agriculture.gov.au>
Subject: FW: Australia-Hong Kong FTA - Veterinary Services

Hi Mark,

I've had the following email from Andrew Jacenko this morning as a follow up to a phone call and email in early September.

After some initial discussions, it seems that AVBC is not going to be able to formally respond to Andrew Jacenko before its November 30 meeting and I was wondering if you would be interested in following up with him, perhaps with the AVA about

- including Veterinary Services in the A-HKFTA and also
- about the wording of paragraphs X and Y.

If so, I will refer him to you.

If not, I'll ask him to hold off including veterinary services in the Professional Services Annex.

Thanks and best regards,

Julie



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Dear Julie,

I hope you are well.

I am following up to see how your AVBC Council meeting went on 28 September and whether you had a chance to discuss our proposed approach and language for the Australia-Hong Kong FTA.

The 3rd round of negotiations are being held in Melbourne next week at which time we can raise our proposal with Hong Kong if we are in a position to do so.

Grateful if you could let me know how your internal considerations have progress.

Kind Regards,

Andrew

Andrew Jacenko
Assistant Director
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Services Trade & Negotiations Section
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From: Jacenko, Andrew [<mailto:Andrew.Jacenko@dfat.gov.au>]
Sent: Monday, 4 September 2017 12:46 PM
To: Stefan Tulloch <education@avbc.asn.au>; Julie Strous <ed@avbc.asn.au>
Cc: Webb, Nathaniel <Nathaniel.Webb2@dfat.gov.au>; Abbott, Louise <Louise.Abbott@dfat.gov.au>; Nam, Juliana <Juliana.Nam@dfat.gov.au>; Fisher, Suz <Suzanna.Fisher@dfat.gov.au>; Mulas, Caroline <Caroline.Mulas@dfat.gov.au>
Subject: Australia-Hong Kong FTA - Veterinary Services

Dear Julie and Stefan,

My name is Andrew Jacenko and I am involved in the Australia-Hong Kong Free Trade Agreement (A-HKFTA) negotiations.

I understand that you have had some preliminary discussions with Nathaniel Webb regarding existing arrangements with Hong Kong in relation to recognition of veterinary degrees.

I am interested in arranging a call with you to discuss the possibility of advancing a formal Mutual Recognition Arrangement between the AVBC and the Veterinary Surgeons Board (VSB) of Hong Kong as part of the FTA negotiations. Based on the information you have provided to Nathaniel and information we have received from our consulate in Hong Kong, we feel veterinary services is an area ripe for an outcome as part of the FTA.

We have prepared some drafted text (see below) to include in the Professional Services Annex of the Cross-Border Trade in Services (CBTS) Chapter of the FTA to provide a hook for an MRA, which we are interested in sending to Hong Kong by 15 September.

Veterinary Services

X. The Parties recognise the existing collaborative institutional and people-to-people links between the two economies on veterinary services. The Parties shall promote the mutual recognition of professional competence in veterinary services to facilitate the mobility of veterinarians between their Areas.

Y. Each Party shall encourage its relevant bodies to expeditiously enter into mutual recognition arrangements with the relevant bodies of the other Party to formalise and streamline existing recognition requirements for veterinary services, with a view to facilitating and expanding trade between the Parties in veterinary services.

I would be grateful if you could let me know when you may be free over the next week to have a discussion on our proposed approach.

Kind Regards,

Andrew

Andrew Jacenko
Assistant Director
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

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