

Submission on the Veterinary Practice Amendment Regulation 2019

Submission to ACT Veterinary
Practitioners Board

Submission from the Australian Veterinary Association Ltd



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Date

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About us

The Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) is the national organisation representing veterinarians in Australia. Our 9500 members come from all fields within the veterinary profession. Clinical practitioners work with companion animals, horses, farm animals, such as cattle and sheep, and wildlife. Government veterinarians work with our animal health, public health and quarantine systems while other members work in industry for pharmaceutical and other commercial enterprises. We have members who work in research and teaching in a range of scientific disciplines. Veterinary students are also members of the Association.

Background

The AVA and ACT Division of the AVA believes that veterinary nurses play an important and positive role in the industry and we welcome the opportunity to provide feedback on the Veterinary Practice Amendment Regulation 2019.

The documents that were provided to the AVA have been reviewed with the following suggested response.

AVA Position

The AVA position is that castration of cats is an invasive surgical procedure and thus an act of veterinary science, which must only be performed by registered veterinary practitioners.

An 'act of veterinary science' means services which form part of the practice of veterinary surgery and medicine, and includes:

- the diagnostic confirmation of, treatment of, and provision of management advice for infectious disease, physiological dysfunction, psychological dysfunction and injury in animals;
- performing invasive or surgical procedures on animals;
- administering anaesthetics to animals;
- the exercise of prescribing rights for veterinary chemicals, medicines or poisons which may be restricted by scheduling or registered label; and
- the provision of veterinary certificates.

The AVA position is that a formal degree in veterinary science, registrable within Australia, is the minimum acceptable knowledge base and skill set necessary to perform acts of veterinary science competently. This minimum standard is in place to protect animals and the community, and is supported by the majority of Australian state and territory veterinary practitioner boards. The veterinarian is uniquely qualified to make evidence-based diagnoses, to manage patients before, during and after procedures, and to understand the systemic impacts of medical or surgical interventions on the individual patient. This level of knowledge and expertise is essential in order to minimize adverse welfare consequences and yield successful outcomes for the patient.

The AVA therefore opposes this Draft Amendment to allow for veterinary nurses employed by RSPCA ACT to be 'prescribed persons', under Section 10(3)(c) of the Act, and should not be able to perform cat castrations on cats that are owned by the RSPCA ACT. We also would like to point out that they are "in-house cats" is irrelevant. It is a matter of assurance to the cats and to the public that the operation and the anaesthetic regimen are performed by a registered veterinary surgeon.