



AVA National Election Platform

Introduction and Summary of Recommendations

Introduction

The Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) is the national professional association representing veterinarians in Australia, with 8500 members from all clinical and non-clinical fields across the veterinary profession. Veterinarians work as clinical practitioners with companion animals, horses, production animals (such as cattle and sheep), wildlife and laboratory animals. Non-clinical veterinarians work in a range of areas including government, public health, quarantine, private enterprise, and academic teaching and research. The Association also has strong membership amongst our future veterinarians who are currently training in Australia's seven veterinary schools.

It is well understood that animal and human health are interdependent. Standards of animal health and welfare affect human health and safety both positively and negatively. This is recognised through the One Health paradigm, which acknowledges the health threats shared by people, animals and the environment such as zoonotic infectious diseases (e.g. COVID 19), antimicrobial resistance, food safety and security. Further, with pets as family members in almost 70% of Australian homes, the positive impact on human health and wellbeing is a significant public health benefit for most Australians.

Similar to human health care, delivery of modern veterinary care is costly, however, is highly valued by the community, and significantly contributes to the social license of animal industries to operate. It is suffering from marked underinvestment, predominantly around labour investment. This is placing considerable pressure on the wellbeing of veterinarians and on the sustainability of veterinary service provision, which is now well evidenced . The AVA is highlighting this in its Election Platform and seeks commitments from the next Government in supporting:

1. Addressing the mental health crisis in the veterinary profession
2. Making veterinary services economically sustainable and accessible
3. Workforce sustainability of the veterinary profession
4. Regulatory reform
5. One health
6. Access to international markets
7. Climate action

The 2022 election will prove to be one like no other in recent memory. The disruption and economic cost induced by COVID 19 and climate change will weigh heavily on the election narrative. AVA are calling for all candidates, political parties and ultimately the new government to undertake a bold reform agenda to tackle long-term structural issues in the animal health sector that have been accelerated by external and internal market shocks.

Summary of Recommendations

- **Recommendation 1.1:** Australian Government support of \$3m over five years to implement programs to address key findings of the Superfriend report on a Veterinary Wellness Strategy.
- **Recommendation 1.2:** The Australian Government to implement an Assistant Minister for Wellness.
- **Recommendation 2.1:** Development of a mechanism to allow consistent secure payment for veterinary services delivered in natural disasters and to unowned animals, including wildlife.
- **Recommendation 2.2:** A mechanism to provide subsidisation of pet insurance.
- **Recommendation 3.1:** Creation of a HECS bonding scheme for regional and rural vets
- **Recommendation 3.2:** Funding for further analysis of education and training needs of the profession to address labour market shortages in rural and regional areas and to increase students' exposure to rural and regional Australia.
- **Recommendation 4.1:** Harmonisation of veterinary licensing across all jurisdictions in Australia via an inter-governmental committee comprising all Australian Governments, state or territory veterinary boards and the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council.
- **Recommendation 5.1:** The introduction of a national One Health framework for disease prevention and control in Australia.
- **Recommendation 6.1:** Benchmarking of Australian animal welfare practices against trading partners, protecting our competitive advantages while ensuring modern animal welfare is achieved.
- **Recommendation 7.1:** Sector-based emissions reduction transition strategies to be prepared and involvement of AVA in any working groups to progress the matter.

