

The Registrar
Veterinary Board of Tasmania
PO Box 99
SANDY BAY TAS 7006

By email: vetboardtas@gmail.com

Dear Ms Jones

We note that the Board is undertaking a review of Tasmanian Veterinary Service Standards.

Much of the substance covered in the consultation survey is beyond our scope of expertise. However, we welcome this opportunity to provide comments for consideration in this Review with respect to shelter veterinary activities.

Over recent years, there have been many changes in community expectations with respect to the care of animals. This has had obvious impacts on the way in which animal welfare organisations (including the RSPCA), shelters, and sanctuaries deliver a range of services.

Of particular note in this context is the changing face of veterinary service provision in these organisations, most of which operate on a charitable and not-for-profit basis.

It is becoming increasingly common for animal welfare organisations and shelters to provide limited in-house veterinary services for animals in their care. These services are generally restricted to relatively straightforward procedures such as desexing, vaccinations, euthanasia, and health checks. More complicated matters are then referred to external veterinarians. In most cases, these services are provided free of charge, as part of the process of rehoming the animals involved.

The current standards do not make provision for this type of limited-service operation.

To recognise the unique circumstances, we believe that the Standards should include a separate category in that sets out requirements for this type of animal care practice.

It could be an additional category to supplement the current categories of mobile veterinary clinics and house call practices, but with less comprehensive requirements than for full service veterinary clinics and centres.

This would permit not-for-profit organisations to have accredited facilities where visiting vets can undertake basic activities for animals in their care without having to comply with the much more comprehensive requirements for a full-service practice caring for the animals owned by members of the public on a fee-paying basis. These services would be limited to desexing, euthanasia, vaccinations, and health checks.

This Review also provides an opportunity to address the confusion between these Standards and other legislation over microchipping procedures. These Standards indicate that microchipping can only be undertaken by a veterinary surgeon or a veterinary nurse. Yet the Cat Management Act 2009 makes provision for 'authorised persons' to undertake microchipping.

The Standards should be updated to recognise microchipping as a service that can be provided by appropriately qualified 'authorised persons' as defined in the Cat Management Act.

Some current record-keeping protocols are not practical for shelter environments. For example, we must formally record full ownership details for every animal in our care. As we are the 'owners' of these animals, the details are common in all cases. These are recorded in Sheltermate, our national electronic database. We would ask that this situation be appropriately recognised in this Review.

We would of course be pleased to provide any information required to further explore these proposed changes.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jan Davis', with a large loop at the start and a horizontal line extending to the right.

Jan Davis

CEO

17 October 2021