

# Your Advocacy at Work

## 2025 Retrospective

A snapshot of what **your collective voice** achieved in 2025

# Robust veterinary workforce

*Backing vets today — and securing the profession for tomorrow*

Momentum built towards a coordinated, nationally recognised approach to veterinary workforce planning.

What this delivered for members:

- Progress toward a national veterinary workforce strategy, with data-driven solutions now firmly underway
- Recognition of veterinarians as essential workers in regional workforce planning
- Direct advocacy to MPs in Canberra on workforce funding, rural incentives and mental health support
- \$400,000 Tasmanian Veterinarian Support Package over four years, improving access to childcare, supporting student placements and expanding safe-team initiatives

Key milestone:

- Release of *Destination Thriving: A Roadmap for the Australian Veterinary Workforce* — a landmark white paper that clearly defines the challenges you face and outlines practical reforms to address shortages

# Vets for Tomorrow

## *Reducing barriers for the next generation of vets*

You told us student debt, unpaid placements and access to rural experience are critical issues. Advocacy focused on turning that feedback into action.

What this delivered for students and practices:

- New placement subsidies for students undertaking rural and regional placements
  - \$1,500 travel support for final-year students in Tasmania
  - \$3,000 subsidies for placements across northern WA, NT and northern QLD
- 69 participants in the Graduate Mentoring Program - a record level of engagement - strengthening early-career support
- Continued pressure on the federal government to:
  - Include veterinary students in the Commonwealth Prac Payment Scheme
  - Increase funding for veterinary training to better reflect real-world costs

# Mental health for Vets

*Protecting the wellbeing of the people behind the profession*

Advocacy ensured veterinary mental health remained front-of-mind for policymakers.

What this delivered for members:

- Expansion of THRIVE and Cultivating Safe Teams (CST) initiatives
- A USD \$125,000 Zoetis Foundation grant to strengthen Cultivating Safe Teams AWARE psychological safety and resilience program
- Cultivating Safe Teams ACTION Program development underway, with pilots launching in early 2026
- Dedicated mental health policy submissions across WA, NSW, SA and nationally
- A second THRIVE Symposium at AVA Conference, creating space for honest, profession-wide conversations

# Sustainable disaster response and wildlife care

## *Recognising the unpaid, unseen work vets do for Australia*

Advocacy focused on making the case for fair recognition and support for the vital public good veterinarians provide.

What this delivered for members:

- Practical HPAI preparedness resources developed with government
- Strong national leadership during:
  - Hendra virus response
  - Flood and other disaster events
- Publication of the AVA Disaster Policy, Principles and Plan, strengthening coordinated disaster responses
- Expanded drought resources developed in consultation with Divisions and SIGs

# Protecting animal health and welfare

*Safeguarding standards that underpin trust, trade and food security*

Advocacy reinforced the essential role veterinarians play in protecting Australia's animal health, welfare and public safety.

What this delivered:

- Continued influence on the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy (AAWS) through national roundtables and sector-specific consultations
- Engagement on welfare standards implementation at state and territory level
- Strong advocacy for antimicrobial stewardship and surveillance, including new prescribing guidelines for horses

# Queensland Focus



## Legislative & Regulatory Reform

### Veterinary Surgeons Act 1936 – Review

- Active AVA advocacy for modernisation of almost 90-year-old legislation
- Formation of QLD VS Act Review Working Group
- Invited participation on DPI Stakeholder Reference Group

### Medicines & Poisons Reform

- Input into National medicines and poisons reform working group

### QLD Dog Management Laws

- Input into Draft Destruction Order Guidelines
- Input into Draft Roles & Responsibilities Guidelines

## Biosecurity & Emergency Animal Disease

### Priority EAD Sample Transport Subsidy

- Advocated for pilot funded by QLD DPI - fully subsidised laboratory testing for eligible EAD exclusion samples

### Emergency Preparedness

- Participation in QLD Emergency Animal Disease Preparedness Taskforce
- Engagement in QLD EAD Stakeholder Workshops

### Hendra Virus

- Rapid AVA/EVA response following confirmed QLD case
- Member alerts (email + SMS), clinical guidance, vaccination advocacy
- Strong QLD media engagement supporting vet safety and biosecurity

# Queensland Focus (cont)



## Submissions

### Racing Queensland – Veterinary Permit Proposal

- Key concerns:
  - Duplication of regulation
  - Increased admin burden and cost
  - Risk to veterinary workforce participation in racing
- Advocating for collaborative Code of Conduct instead

### QLD Biosecurity Prohibited & Restricted Matter Lists

- Submission addressing problematic definition of “cat”
- Advocacy to distinguish feral vs semi-owned/unowned cats
- Aim: reduce unintended impacts on veterinary care & rehoming

### QLD Poultry Welfare Standards

- Input into QLD implementation of national poultry welfare standards

## Workforce

### Veterinary Workforce Advocacy

Engagement with QLD Assistant Minister for Agriculture

Focus on:

- Workforce shortages (regional & rural)
- Student placements and retention
- Sustainable service delivery

### Business Red Tape

Engagement with QLD Small Business Commissioner

Advocacy on regulatory red tape impacting veterinary practices

Focus areas:

- Lost/stray animals and injured wildlife
- Compliance burden on small practices

# Queensland Focus (cont)



## Stakeholder Engagement

- Regular engagement with:
  - VSBQ / DPIQ / Biosecurity Queensland
  - QLD Chief Veterinary Officer
  - QLD Poultry Health Liaison Group
  - Animal Biosecurity Market Access Liaison Group (ABMALG)
- Participation in cross-government and industry biosecurity forums

## THRIVE & Wellbeing

- Cultivating Safe Teams (CST) – National rollout includes QLD practices
- Graduate Mentoring Program
  - Strong uptake by QLD members
- Critical Incident & Disaster Support
  - AVA resources promoted during QLD biosecurity and disaster events

## Queensland Advocacy – Key Themes

- Modernising outdated veterinary legislation
- Supporting veterinary workforce sustainability
- Strengthening biosecurity & EAD preparedness
- Reducing regulatory burden on QLD practices
- Ensuring practical, evidence-based animal welfare laws

# The National stats - 2025

- We finalised 8 new policies and updated 7 existing policies, which were all Board ratified, with a further 7 policies progressed to member comment
- We issued 27 media releases
- We attended more than 130 meetings with politicians and staffers, departments and stakeholders
- We lodged 40 submissions
- We undertook 36 advocacy projects
- We supported these National campaigns
  - Pets in Australia Report (Animal Medicines Australia)
  - Governance Institute's 2025 Ethics Index
  - Boehringer Ingelheim's 'Value Your Vet'



## What's next?

This progress is only possible because members like you share your experiences, respond to consultation and support the collective voice of the profession.

In 2026, advocacy will continue to focus on turning this momentum into long-term, nationwide change.



## *Have feedback or insights to share?*

Your experience strengthens our advocacy.

Email us anytime at [publicvetaffairs@ava.com.au](mailto:publicvetaffairs@ava.com.au)

Thank you for standing with your profession — and for making every one of these outcomes possible.