

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

Regulation & Professional Practice

- WA Veterinary Practice Regulations
 - Sustained advocacy with DPIRD, the WA Veterinary Practice Board and Ministers on amendments, highlighting risks to animal welfare, rural access, and professional accountability.
 - Delivered member Q&A sessions and implementation guidance for WA veterinarians.
- WA Firearms Act 2024. AVA submissions and parliamentary evidence secured explicit recognition of veterinarians' eligibility for a professional Business Licence, protecting access to firearms for humane euthanasia and emergency response.
- Microchip Registry (HomeSafeID collapse)
 - AVA alerted WA authorities to regulatory gaps and advised WA practitioners on interim risk-mitigation and record transfer.

Animal Welfare & Industry Reform

- Greyhound Racing Inquiry
 - Detailed AVA submission to the WA Parliamentary Inquiry with 20 evidence-based recommendations covering welfare, regulation, veterinary oversight and enforcement.
- Animal Welfare in Emergencies
 - Active participation in the WA Committee for Animal Welfare in Emergencies (CAWE) ensuring veterinary expertise informs preparedness and response planning.
- Live Sheep Export Transition
 - AVA involvement in WA stakeholder briefings and co-design processes to inform transition planning and ensure animal welfare and veterinary realities are considered.

WA Focus (cont)



Mental Health, Wellbeing & Workforce

- WA Suicide Prevention Framework 2026–2031
 - AVA submission to the WA Mental Health Commission calling for recognition of veterinarians as a high-risk profession, alignment with WorkSafe WA psychosocial hazard regulations, and support for AVA wellbeing programs.
- THRIVE Programs
 - Expansion of Cultivating Safe Teams (CST AWARE) (enabled by the Zoetis Foundation grant), strong WA participation in the Graduate Mentoring Program, and direct engagement with the WA Government on workforce wellbeing.
- WA Workforce Advocacy
 - Ongoing representation of WA workforce shortages in national workforce data and funding advocacy, with emphasis on rural and regional WA.

Government & Stakeholder Engagement

- Regular engagement with:
 - WA Ministers and Ministerial offices
 - WA Veterinary Practice Board
 - DPIRD
 - RSPCA
- WA-focused forums including FFTITC industry and workforce discussions, and emergency animal disease and biosecurity coordination.

WA Advocacy – Key Themes

- Protecting veterinarians' scope of practice**
- Fair, workable veterinary regulation**
- Stronger animal welfare outcomes**
- Workforce sustainability and mental health leadership**
- A strong, visible veterinary voice in decision-making**

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

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