



Australian Veterinary Association

Great Veterinary Workplaces

Guidelines

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Introduction

The AVA defines a Great Veterinary Workplace as one which seeks to develop, encourage, support, connect and motivate everyone within it. By providing an engaging and healthy work experience for individuals, great workplaces contribute to a thriving and sustainable veterinary profession essential for animal and public health.

These Great Veterinary Workplace Guidelines support the AVA's *Great Veterinary Workplace Policy*. The Policy acknowledges that skilled professions within a service industry require work environments that prioritise essential human resources across every role and career stage. The Policy's recommendations reflect that Great Veterinary Workplaces require a balance of organisational, individual and public actions, supported by advocacy and educational activities at industry level.

Scope of the Guidelines

These Guidelines include actions for both employers and employees, spanning all roles and types of veterinary work within the sector. Although around 80% of veterinarians work in clinical practice, in this document "practice" and "practise" refer to the application of veterinary knowledge and skills in all contexts, and "organisation" refers to the practice, business, department or institution where that occurs.

The following Guidelines recognise the complex interplay of the organisations', workers', patients' and clients' needs. Based on established theory, peer-reviewed evidence and veterinary sector data, the Guidelines comprise of ten Pillars which span effective leadership, HR and business management, professional standards and ethics. Together, they contribute to an engaged, healthy and high-performing veterinary workforce.

Use of these Guidelines

Focussing on the workplace to improve the everyday experience of those working and studying in the veterinary sector, these Guidelines aim to provide a central reference of helpful evidence-based goals, actions and behaviours. They can be used to guide internal organisational audits and improvements, focus workplace and sector education, and help prospective employees and shareholders determine whether a workplace might meet their needs.

Each Pillar includes a brief description relating to great veterinary workplaces. Beneath each Pillar sit key areas for consideration, underpinned by practical examples. Actions listed under one Pillar often also support other Pillars. Thus, the Guidelines should ultimately be considered in their entirety.

Examples are not exhaustive and will be reviewed regularly to reflect contemporary knowledge. Additional useful resources include WorkSafe, FairWork, Vet Board Guidelines, various employment and health legislation, and the many service providers offering tools, training and support relevant to these areas. Relevant AVA resources and programs are listed at the end of each Pillar.

Management practices rely on input and adoption by all workers, and today's leaders and leadership constructs will not be tomorrow's; therefore, these Guidelines are not always categorised into role-based responsibilities. Instead, they describe the attributes and actions of a Great Veterinary Workplace, allowing organisations and individuals the autonomy to implement these in ways which best suit their context.

Ultimately, these guidelines highlight that Great Veterinary Workplaces are intentional and multifactorial. By nature of the diversity of people who lead, work in and frequent them, they are also unique. Therefore, understanding oneself is also a key step in finding and creating a workplace that is a great fit for *you*.

The AVA Great Veterinary Workplaces Guidelines

Great veterinary workplaces recognise that every person working in the veterinary sector is unique and reasonably requires different things to thrive.

In navigating the following pillars, great workplaces use clear organisational vision, goals and values to guide their decisions. The needs of owners, shareholders, employees, clients, the veterinary professions, animals and the public should all be considered.

The AVA's ten pillars of Great Veterinary Workplaces are:

- 1. Meaning and value**
- 2. Health and wellbeing**
- 3. Equity, inclusion and diversity**
- 4. Job design and demands**
- 5. Growth and development**
- 6. Reward and recognition**
- 7. Proactive people processes**
- 8. Collegiality and connection**
- 9. Environmental and social responsibility**
- 10. Professional ethics and standards**

In combination, these Pillars aim to deliver sustainable productivity, career engagement, human and animal health and wellbeing, profit, and respect for the veterinary professions.

1. MEANING AND VALUE

Deliver veterinary care in ways that are valued by clients, animals, employers and team members.

Great workplaces help provide veterinary professionals with the opportunities, capabilities and motivation to deliver high standards of animal health care in ways that are valued by clients, patients, employers and the professionals themselves. While motivations vary between team members, everyone is united by a clear, specific and appealing “big picture” vision and goals and know how they fit within that. Defined organisational values guide a strong, intentional workplace culture where empowered autonomy can flourish.

Examples of how great workplaces achieve this include:

1.1. Organisational vision, mission and objectives

People know why they are there, and where the organisation is headed.

- a. Time and resources are committed to collaboratively developing a clear organisational vision, mission and strategic objectives that are well aligned with the contemporary and future needs of the public and animals, owners and shareholders, the veterinary labour market and the profession.
- b. The organisation’s “big picture” is regularly communicated with the entire team and public to focus effort, inspire initiative and innovation, and clarify the business’s value proposition.
- c. The business’s progress towards specific and valued objectives is regularly monitored and openly communicated to the whole team, for example using a “balanced scorecard”-type approach to identify and measure workplace benefits to
 - shareholder/owners/managers (e.g. meaningful vision and mission, return on investment, profit, risk management)
 - customers (e.g. service quality, value, cost, innovation, timeliness, communication, trust)
 - all team members (e.g. meaning, motivation, connection, performance, development, health, reward, balance)
 - process improvement (e.g. efficiency, cost, resource requirements, consistency, safety)
- d. The business model is appropriate to assist the team in sustainably achieving the workplace objectives and strategy. For example, there are appropriate service offerings, pricing and profit structures, remuneration models, organisational structure and succession activities.
- e. Employees consider how (and if) their personal purpose is consistent with the organisation’s objectives when choosing roles that will facilitate sustained engagement.
- f. All team members seek to understand their own, and others,’ work motivators.
- g. The organisation invests time and resources to periodically review its environment and business strengths, weakness, threats and opportunities and identify priority areas for strategy development and business evolution.
- h. Early communication occurs about any organisational changes and their reasons. Team member discussion and questions are encouraged. Any transitions, such as staff numbers, responsibilities or required skills and knowledge, are proactively supported and enacted in accordance with employment law.

1.2. Lived values

People feel confident to make decisions and behave in ways that support the team's culture.

- a. Time and resources are committed to collaborating with all team members to develop clear and meaningful organisational values.
- b. Values are not just “words on a wall” but are regularly considered and referenced personally, professionally and as an organisation to guide “how we do things round here”.
- c. Leaders and managers lead by example, demonstrating behaviours and management decisions that are consistent with the organisations’ values and which set the tone for workplace culture.
- d. Every team member recognises that their own behaviours and decisions contribute to an empowering and supportive work culture. Individuals hold themselves and others to account in acting in alignment with workplace values.
- e. Everyone is encouraged to identify and suggest improvements to any policies, processes and ways of working that are inconsistent with workplace values. Employers and managers regularly seek specific feedback about workplace culture from team members at all levels, and act on issues identified.

1.3 Understood costs and value

Everyone is supported to understand and confidently communicate their own, and their team's, professional value and costs.

- a. Training, communication resources and processes ensure that all team members understand, and can communicate to the public, the value of performing various work.
- b. The value of all team members’ and the veterinary professions’ work is clearly and regularly communicated to the public, for example through practice social media and newsletters and other marketing and communications strategies and resources.
- c. All team members are guided to understand the costs involved in the provision of their veterinary services, so that fees and prices are charged and communicated to the public with confidence. This includes an appreciation that staffing levels and pay are influenced by total business income.
- d. The organisation supports individuals’ discussions with clients by proactively communicating the business’s services, including after-hours options, and costs upon enquiry.
- e. Consistent billing is facilitated by clear and specific schedules of costs, including the use of bundled procedure pricing that can be refined for each patient.
- f. Service pricing sufficiently encompasses all aspects of associated costs, including non-billable work such as record keeping, some communications, management tasks including policy and protocol development, and teaching and learning. The high professional value of those work aspects is appropriately recognised within the profit structure.
- g. Team members can clearly see, through HR processes, feedback mechanisms and organisational data and reporting, how their efforts are contributing value to their organisation, customers and patients and broader community.

1.4 Workplace systems and processes

Effective technology use and continued process improvements reduce unnecessary or low-value work.

- a. Technologies and systems are effectively used to reduce low value, repetitive, unattractive work and to increase efficiency, accuracy and time spent on meaningful high intrinsic- or extrinsic-value work.
 - b. A culture of continuous workplace improvement is encouraged, where process improvements and technologies are explored and implemented to enhance team, client and/or animal experience including efficiency and productivity.
 - c. Appropriate quantitative and/or qualitative measurement and monitoring occurs to identify opportunities for process improvements, and the results of improvements.
 - d. Leaders are responsive to team members' suggestions and experiences, and are consultative, accessible and informative in effecting systems change.
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2. HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Enable and promote human health and wellbeing, and support people when they are stressed or unwell.

Great veterinary workplaces prioritise physical, mental and emotional health and safety through effective promotion, prevention, and protective response strategies. Great workplaces know that physical and mental health, wellbeing and resilience are multifactorial, dynamic and influenced by an individuals' environment. People with diverse health and wellbeing needs are well supported. Continuing education to understand and care for oneself and others is actively encouraged. Individuals are best placed to monitor their own health and wellbeing and take proactive steps to maintain or respond to it, however everyone supports each other in minimising physical and psychosocial harm and in the pursuit of good health.

**Pillar 2 outlines many key elements aligned to THRIVE's Prevent, Promote and Protect framework, however all 10 Pillars should be considered concurrently to comprehensively facilitate health and wellbeing.*

Examples of how great workplaces achieve this include:

2.1. Risk Management (PREVENT)

Everyone understands workplace physical and psychosocial hazards, and is well prepared, supported and conscientious in preventing harm.

- a. The workplace complies with, or exceeds, national, state and territory Workplace Health and Safety (WHS), human rights, veterinary regulation and human health regulations (Medicines, Poisons and Controlled Substances, Radiation etc) legal obligations, guidance and regulation, to provide a physically and psychosocially safe work environment.
- b. The workplace meets or exceeds Workplace Health and Safety and relevant employment award and legislation requirements for work-free time, such as regular mandated breaks, maximum work periods, and time away from work. *(see also Job Design and Demands)*
- c. The workplace provides facilities, equipment and personal protection that enable safe practice when used correctly and routinely.
- d. Relevant physical and psychosocial hazards are identified and their risk and minimisation strategies communicated to all team members during induction and as needed, and to the public as needed. Examples of physical hazards include working with radiation, cytotoxic drugs, chemicals, and dangerous and nervous animals as well as agreed approaches to managing fatigue, supporting pregnancy and enabling a diverse workforce. Psychosocial examples include, but are not limited to bullying, sexual harassment, gendered violence, aggression, poor change management, traumatic events and fatigue management. *(See also Pillar 3: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and Pillar 4: Job Design and Demands eg job demands, low job control, poor support).*
- e. Everyone is aware of their own role in managing these risks.
- f. Personal safety always takes precedence, including over various other professional responsibilities.
- g. Team members have regular opportunities to contribute to the development, communication, adoption and refinement of organisational systems, policies and processes that reduce and respond appropriately to physical and psychosocial hazards associated with veterinary work.
- h. Staff receive training at induction and as needed to support strong understanding and compliance with WHS requirements and workplace policies, systems and safe facilities and equipment use.

- i. Health and wellbeing incident and near-miss reporting, investigation and resolution processes, including for psychosocial hazards, are explained to all team members, and encouraged through practical ease and constructive response.
- j. Physical and psychosocial risks and hazards are routinely and effectively monitored, and policies and procedures regularly reviewed and refined or revised if needed through collaboration with staff.
- k. The workplace supports individual, organisational and profession-wide initiatives which seek to educate the public in key veterinary issues, for example:
 - the financial, practical and ethical responsibilities of animal ownership
 - reasonable expectations for treatment including costs, practical limitations and professional boundaries
 - the rewards, challenges and impacts of veterinary work to veterinary professionals and teams

2.2. Proactive Leadership (PROMOTE)

Leaders model healthy habits, empathy and responsiveness, championing a safe, proactive, and sustainable workplace.

- a. Leaders model actions and attitudes which prioritise health, by building an open and safe culture which celebrates and supports healthy work/rest-of-life integration.
- b. Gratitude and positivity are built into regular practises; for example by displaying client cards, puppy school photos, highlighting well-managed challenging cases during rounds, and celebrating outstanding effort, “wins” of any magnitude, and strong teamwork
- c. Leaders model and support a culture of psychosocial safety in which everyone feels comfortable expressing their perspective and demonstrating respect. This includes talking about mistakes and suboptimal decisions to learn from them.
- d. Leaders promote a culture of active engagement with health and safety matters, support good practise and challenge unsafe practises.
- e. Appealing spaces which facilitate both private reflection and team connection are accessible.
- f. Workplace, profession and community-based initiatives and discussions which build stronger understanding of safety, health and wellbeing are supported.
- g. Leaders encourage all team members to proactively build capabilities and habits which look after their own and others’ health and wellbeing. This includes:
 - *preventative and mitigative capabilities and activities*; for example: having difficult conversations, gratitude practice and mindfulness, self-awareness and social awareness, cultural humility, navigating ethically challenging situations, constructive leadership skills, reflection and active listening, and establishing personal boundaries, healthy eating, physical exercise, meditation, interaction with nature
 - *reactive tools* such as mental health first aid training and personal strategies to respond early to ill-health, preventing escalation to crisis
- h. Leaders facilitate opportunities to understand team members’ experiences and investigate their suggestions.

See also all other Pillars including 1 Meaning and Value; 3 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; 4 Job Design and Demands; 5 Growth and Development; 6 Reward and Recognition; 8 Collegiality and Connection; 10 Professional Standards and Ethics.

2.3. Personal support (PROTECT)

Everyone has appropriate awareness, information, and practical ways to seek and assist with health and wellbeing support. Everyone looks out for each other.

- a. Employers and employees acknowledge joint responsibility in actively caring for their own health and wellbeing and that of their colleagues. This includes proactively identifying and mitigating potential health risks and understanding impacts, including possible impairment of professional practice.
- b. All team members respect their own and others' health limitations and possible consequences of ignoring these. Rather than trying to "push through" or "tough it out", individuals are encouraged to exercise personal choice for appropriate sick or personal leave, seek health support, guidance, personal development and/or reasonable work adjustments when needed. These decisions are respected and implementation is supported by leaders and team members so that personal dignity and professional efficacy is maintained.
See also Pillars 3: Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, 4: Job Design & Demands, 5: Growth & Development
- c. A culture where all individuals, whether employee, employer or client, can raise their health or wellbeing concerns or challenges is promoted. All employees know that an issue raised with their manager will be taken seriously, confidentially, and with due consideration towards solutions and support.
- d. Structured, no-blame debriefings open to all team members routinely follow stressful workplace events (eg unexpected animal death, challenging client interaction, peer injury). Discussions seek to understand and acknowledge personal impacts, provide and suggest support, reflect on contributing factors, and identify changes to standard workplace approaches that could reduce future risks.
- e. Within the team there is awareness, knowledge and process to effectively respond to physical and mental health concerns, injury and disability at work, or affecting work, including through escalation, referral/s or external advice. Mental health first aid training is encouraged.
- f. Employers provide access to a suitable Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and provide clear information about this and other relevant helplines and support groups, so that everyone can readily access assistance when needed.
- g. To support the wellbeing of both staff and public, information about resources which support the emotional, physical and financial aspects of animal ownership is provided to all team members and clients. For example, the organisation and public-facing team members can provide information about public health risks, pet insurance, third party payment options, any subsidised vet care options, ambulatory animal health services, telehealth, veterinary social work options, and pet loss grief counselling.

3. DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Create an environment where everyone can feel safe, welcome and valued.

Great veterinary workplaces are highly inclusive and recognise the many benefits of diversity within their community. All personnel within the workplace are treated fairly and equitably, with zero tolerance of prejudice, discrimination, aggression, bullying or other inappropriate behaviours. Management practices and individual behaviours seek to create an environment where people feel safe, connected, respected, valued, and able to express themselves.

Examples of how great veterinary workplaces achieve this include :

3.1. Behaviour and communication

Everyone can feel safe, respected and included, and is empowered to take action if that is breached.

- a. Workplace values and a code of acceptable conduct is communicated to everyone and applies to everyone within the workplace, including external service providers and members of the public.
- b. Written, verbal and non-verbal language is free from microaggressions, and is inclusive and respectful to all people in the workplace and community.
- c. Sensitive discussion seeking to understand other's emotional, physical and mental needs and belief systems is encouraged and modelled across the whole team, to build a well-informed and considerate workplace culture.
- d. Communication with owners is clear, comprehensive and free of medical jargon so that they are able to make well informed decisions. Options for optimal animal health management are presented to owners without prejudice or assumption. Owners' identified constraints are respected, with a focus on practical solutions. Team members are responsive to questions which improve owners' understanding and participation in patient care.
- e. Resources which support good communication are accessible to team members and clients, for example written information, an interpreter service, audiovisual material (YouTube etc) or necessary technology.
- f. A zero-tolerance policy exists for discriminatory, abusive or inappropriate behaviours by employers, employees and the public. This is clearly communicated and enacted; everyone is empowered to call out inappropriate behaviours.
- g. If discrimination or bullying may have occurred, a timely reporting and investigation process is followed, with the assistance of appropriate resources and support
- h. There is a consistent and enforceable approach to inappropriate patterns of behaviour which may require involvement or support from other agencies such as Fairwork, WorkSafe, AVA HR support, and state regulators. Workplaces can refuse to work with repeatedly or wilfully discriminatory, abusive or inappropriate people.

3.2. Human resource management practices

Employment processes, practises and conditions are transparent, fair and provide equal opportunity.

- a. Processes and decisions about employment, advancement, responsibility and reward are fair, transparent and equitable in accordance with Australian employment and anti-discrimination laws.
- b. Employment and advancement processes consider and mitigate systemic and unconscious biases through promotion of opportunities for individuals from minority communities.
- c. Employment decisions are made or informed, wherever possible, by more than one person. Diversity of decision-making perspective, for example across gender, sexuality, age, experience, qualification and role, physical ability and ethnicity mitigates the risk of discriminatory implicit bias.
- d. Information about workplace opportunities for development, advancement or reward are provided to all employees. There is transparency about when, why and how opportunities may be open to staff, what pay range is applicable, and the basis on which decisions are made.
- e. Employers and employees understand their responsibilities under laws and regulations.
- f. Personal leave respectfully accommodates the broad range of reasons it may be required.
- g. Parental leave applies to all genders and recognises all stages and forms of parenting, including miscarriage, stillbirth and adoption.
- h. Caregiving in all its forms is recognised as important, and variable in the challenges it may pose to team members. Employers are open to flexible working arrangements and leave allowances that support caregivers to contribute and progress meaningfully.
- i. Diversity of disclosed protected attributes within the team and in leadership roles is measured and monitored to understand the effect of workplace strategies, decisions and behaviours.
- j. Strategies, policies and actions related to equity, diversity and inclusion are regularly reviewed by the whole team or representatives spanning all segments of it.

3.3. Psychological environment

Everyone is encouraged to be themselves and be open-minded and curious in understanding others.

- a. Diversity within the workplace and the profession is championed by leaders.
- b. Diverse perspectives are sought in making workplace decisions and in reviewing policies and procedures, including a meaningful diversity strategy.
- c. Autonomous self-expression through cultural and religious practices and personal appearance is facilitated in accordance with WHS requirements.

- d. Leaders establish ways to regularly check in with all employees. They practice an open-door policy, inviting discussion about concerns, challenges and suggestions without prejudice or reprisal.
- e. Visible and practical support is given to initiatives that champion and improve equity, diversity and inclusion in the workplace.
- f. There is visibility for all staff and clients about how to access support, resources and connection if it is needed (e.g. industry groups and relevant government and non-government and not for profit organisations, EAPs etc)

3.4. Physical environment

All team members and animal owners are well supported to physically participate in the workplace.

- a. Facilities and equipment support the participation of people of all physical abilities. Management is open to modification suggestions which support accessible work activities.
- b. Breastfeeding, pumping and baby change areas, accessible bathroom facilities and spaces suitable for prayer or quiet reflection are available and appropriate for these purposes.
- c. Work and profession-based activities and venues are planned to span the physical and psychological needs of all team members.

3.5. Informed, inclusive teamwork

A well-informed and inclusive community is fostered through management practices, and formal and informal education.

- a. Diversity of personal values, beliefs, knowledge and capabilities is respected, fostered and harnessed through management and clinical practices which encourage sharing of perspectives. Collaborative and/or consultative leadership and decision making occurs through workplace meetings, feedback processes, clinical rounds, mentoring and coaching, and communication with clients.
- b. Animal owners and all staff are considered important members of an animals' health care team. Differences in the understanding, beliefs and priorities of individuals are explored with curiosity, open-mindedness and cultural humility, with the aim of identifying shared goals, reducing knowledge gaps, and defining acceptable outcomes.
- c. Activities, discussions, events, continuing education, physical spaces and facilities, and cultural elements (such as name badges, uniforms, titles and privileges) are inclusive and co-designed, fostering a sense of community within the workplace, local area and the veterinary professions.
- d. A structured and comprehensive diversity and inclusion education program is a part of standard workplace training. This includes training about neurodiversity, physical ability, LGBTQI+ diversity, linguistic, religious, cultural and racial diversity, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island community considerations.
- e. Individuals and/or managers provide explanation as to why a behaviour or communication is unacceptable, to strengthen workplace understanding and help prevent recurrence
- f. Information about barriers to equality and diversity and the consequences of discrimination is sought and communicated to the whole team so it may inform workplace actions and decisions. Sources include, but are not limited to, published research and reports, government and workplace resources, lived experience, and continuing education opportunities.

4. JOB DESIGN AND DEMANDS

Engage your team through defined, well-suited, productive and sustainable roles.

To meet the varied demands of veterinary work, great workplaces encourage open dialogue between employers and employees to understand individuals' scope to contribute according to their various evolving skills, constraints, needs, motivators and goals. Work roles are consciously refined to facilitate individual engagement, achievement and sustainability. Individuals' technical and non-technical capabilities are valued and nurtured through thoughtful job design. Everyone feels able to openly identify when work demands exceed capacity, and also steps in to share the load when they're able.

Examples of how great veterinary workplaces achieve this include:

4.1. Job content

People do work that is interesting, meaningful and well-suited to their knowledge, skills and capabilities.

- a. All employees have clear role descriptions including areas of responsibility and accountability, which are updated regularly to include any aspects of the role which have changed or developed.
- b. Everyone understands how various tasks contribute to the "big picture".
- c. There is variety of work within each role.
- d. All team members are guided to consider and communicate their capabilities, interests, work needs and constraints to their manager and employer.
- e. Appropriate work within a role is assigned to that employee based on their skills, knowledge and experience. All team members can communicate what they are legally allowed to do and their level of competency so that work can be delegated appropriately.
- f. There is agreement between employee and employer about the scope of expected work, including any changes in scope.
- g. Veterinarians or veterinary nurses and technicians' job content may recognise valuable non-technical skills and knowledge which add to the non-clinical aspects of the business.
- h. Managers welcome employee-led discussions where an employee believes a role could be developed to make better use of their skills or interests, or if they have concerns regarding tasks being assigned inappropriately.
- i. Managers monitor job design, aiming to regularly use team members' strengths and include tasks that energise them.

4.2. Workload

People have an appropriate and sustainable workload and help each other when exceptional circumstances arise.

- a. Flexible teams coordinate the provision of services to clients and maintain oversight of animal health and welfare, and public health. Delegation and collaboration enables achievable and fulfilling workloads for all team members and builds varied knowledge across differing roles.

- b. All team members are provided with the training and support to appropriately prioritise and allocate time for work, including non-client-facing aspects, to prevent chronic overbooking. Contingencies for emergencies are built into scheduling.
- c. The organisation's capacity to accept work is understood and appropriately acted upon by all team members
- d. Stories about chronically long work hours, poorly supported work or extreme altruism are not glorified. The workplace culture celebrates conscientiousness accompanied by self-awareness of personal needs and limits, and the ability to discuss these constructively to find win/win solutions.
- e. All public-facing team members receive training and support to communicate to the public the business's approach to accepting work, expectations of clients (for example around cancellation, payment, client behaviour and patient preparation) and work capacity or capability limitations.

4.3. Support

Everyone is provided with the support they need to do their work well.

- a. Practical supervision, assistance and support for work is provided and based on identified need, irrespective of career stage. Continued learning is supported throughout all team members' careers.
- b. At employment, and within regular performance review and development planning, employers and employees work together to identify any need for support and to agree on its form and extent.
- c. Recent graduates and trainee nurses are expected to require significant direct supervision and mentorship from suitably experienced and capable professionals of good standing. Regular and frequent check-ins within the first 3-12+ months of employment occur until capabilities are demonstrated and confidence is strengthened.
- d. Direct supervision by suitably qualified staff occurs if/where unqualified team members perform roles that require technical (including medical) knowledge.
- e. Afterhours work is appropriately supported by trained nursing and/or veterinarian peers, based on personal and job need as agreed between the employer and employee. This can include support for both technical and non-technical reasons, such as safety and efficiency.
- f. The options for referral, inter-practice collaboration and/or specialist opinion or assistance are made clear to all veterinarians, and these collaborative professional relationships are maintained.

4.4. Hours and scheduling

Employers and employees agree on realistic, anticipated and sustainable work hours and schedules which support a healthy work /rest-of-life balance.


- a. Work schedules are set in consultation with staff, to maintain and monitor workloads which are fair, anticipated, and which provide adequate time for all aspects of the job (such as client communications, record keeping, diagnostic interpretation, teaching and learning, management tasks and meetings).

- b. Alongside practical needs (eg work demand, financial) and physical hazards, employers and employees consider the inherent psychosocial hazards in veterinary practice, such as emotional labour, when determining sustainable hours and schedule.
- c. Any unforeseen work hours are infrequent, genuinely unanticipated and rewarded and/or recognised appropriately.
- d. There is a transparent and practical system in place to record and monitor hours worked, including any overtime and/or afterhours jobs, to ensure correct remuneration and identify patterns that may require workload adjustment. If “reasonable overtime” occurs, this is clearly defined and agreed upon.
- e. Workplace culture supports boundaries between work and non-work time. Reasonable breaks are consistently scheduled and protected for physical and mental health. Managers or employers ensure that breaks and leave are taken as rostered, and all team members are effectively quarantined from work when they are on breaks or rostered off. If working during breaks, days off and/or leave is occurring, managers seek to understand the reasons and resolve them so chronic overworking does not occur. Individuals take responsibility for monitoring their own wellbeing, and make considered, proactive decisions about managing breaks and leave.
- f. Employers and managers work with employees to develop business systems, models and staffing arrangements that enable leave and break entitlements to be met without putting extra pressure on other team members.
- g. There are effective systems, and time within scheduled hours, to facilitate good communication and smooth transition of patient and client care between team members. All team members use these consistently to protect their own, and others,’ time off alongside animal health.
- h. Afterhours requirements are clearly communicated and agreed to. Maximum hours of continuous work, including fielding public enquiries, are recognised according to occupational health and safety legislation and employment laws.
- i. There is a clear policy about provision of veterinary services outside regular work hours, which aligns with the relevant state vet regulatory guidance. This is developed and reviewed in consultation with veterinarians within, and where necessary, beyond the business so that all team members understand their rights, responsibilities and available resources in providing afterhours care.
- j. The business and all team members proactively communicate to the public the afterhours service options offered. Any limitations in the level of supervision or hours of emergency service or hospitalisation provision, and any reasonably anticipated risks, are clearly communicated to assist the animal-owning public in their responsibility to understand and make provisions for accessing afterhours care.

4.5. Autonomy and flexibility

Team members are empowered to make decisions and provide suggestions about how they do their work.

- a. Expected work and/or outcomes are clear and documented. Along with an understanding of organisational goals and values, the teamwork required and any relevant constraints, this gives employees autonomy in deciding how they and their team will successfully meet these goals.

- b. Initiative and flexibility is encouraged for a resilient workplace.
 - c. When flexible working conditions or a change in employment hours, duties or scheduling is requested by any team member, employers, managers and employees work together open-mindedly to craft solutions and accommodate these requests wherever possible. Great workplaces recognise, respect and do not judge the many reasons – often personal – that flexibility or a different work-life balance is required.
 - d. All team members recognise the possible impacts on the rest of the team of flexible or part time work, breaks and leave periods, and work to support each other in their need for flexibility.
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5. GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Encourage and enable lifelong learning and career development for everyone.

Great workplaces encourage continued learning and career progression for all team members, for example through coaching and mentoring opportunities, structured and balanced appraisals, clear guidance and appropriate support, and valued education, development and advancement opportunities. There is genuine care for personal growth as a foundation for pride, motivation, and performance. The workplaces' systems and culture facilitate reflective learning from mistakes.

Examples of how great veterinary workplaces achieve this include:

5.1 Quality Feedback

Everyone can understand the results of their efforts.

- a. Appropriate processes, tools and culture and skills exist for everyone, including employers and employees, to respectfully deliver and receive regular balanced and constructive feedback with emotional intelligence. This includes informal and formal opportunities, 360 degree (internal) and external (client) feedback mechanisms, and the consistent use of 2-way performance appraisals and staff exit interviews to identify strengths and areas for development. Due consideration is always given to the aim (positive reinforcement or constructive?), context and style of feedback.

5.2 Professional and personal development

Everyone is supported to learn and grow in personally motivating ways.

- a. Professional *and* personal development is supported, recognised and rewarded as important for thriving, motivated, highly capable personnel and the delivery of professional services.
- b. Continuing professional and personal development (CPD) is facilitated by the provision of continuing education allowance and leave and time within workhours to undertake teaching and learning. There is time, encouragement and opportunity to implement new knowledge and skills and share information with team members.
- c. There are regular opportunities for *proactive* professional discussion and peer coaching, such as clinical rounds, mentoring and journal club/CPD sharing, and *reactive* constructive sessions such as reflective case studies (e.g. "Morbidity and Mortality") and adverse event discussion, and learning from complaints.
- d. Both clinical/technical and non-clinical/non-technical education is valued and supported.
- e. Everyone is empowered to guide their own professional and personal development that supports, in direct or indirect ways, the organisation's various needs and goals. Regular structured employment reviews, informal feedback, reflective practice, peer coaching and/or mentoring provides additional insights.
- f. A range of types of CPD and development opportunities are considered and facilitated; for example, information and education hub subscriptions, in person and online events, courses and forums, in-house resources, one-on-one coaching and training and sabbaticals, secondments and exchanges between workplaces.

- g. On-the-job skill and knowledge development, including through internship or residency, is supported by sustainable scheduling and is remunerated appropriately for the role's competency and knowledge requirements, level of supervision, accountability and performance.
- h. A growth mindset culture is modelled and encouraged, where everyone is open to trying new things and learning within the workplace, including through debriefing of mistakes or suboptimal outcomes.

5.3 Career development and progression

Everyone can access ideas and opportunities for desired progression.

- a. Diverse role models are visible within the workplace and broader veterinary professions.
- b. A variety of career progression opportunities are visible, accessible and attainable, without prejudice regarding financial, care-giving, geographical or other constraints.
- c. There are fair, clear and transparent structures, criteria and rewards (including remuneration) for progression within the organisation.
- d. Application and selection processes are fair, understood and truly open to all.
- e. Employers and managers are receptive to innovation and suggestions for new or alternative career development and progression which aligns to the business vision and objectives.
- f. People can be seen and respected as leaders irrespective of job title and are supported to develop their leadership skills and responsibilities.
- g. Opportunities for "shadowing", mentoring and/or on-the-job training for various roles, including ownership or senior management responsibilities, are provided to support smooth succession and shared confidence.

6. REWARD AND RECOGNITION

Encourage effort, achievement and pride through fair, transparent and valued reward systems.

Reward (including wages) and recognition systems are fair, equitable and transparent, and serve to positively reinforce valued effort, growth and achievement. Great workplaces also know that equity is not the same as equality and despite its immediate efficiencies, "one size" does not necessarily fit all. Recognising that every person uniquely assigns value to various intrinsic (internal, intangible) and extrinsic (external, tangible) rewards and brings different strengths to the team, employers regularly work together with each employee to agree on appropriate employment conditions which align with the organisation's needs and values. Great workplaces establish systems to regularly seek, record and act on positive feedback from customers, patients and team members.

Examples of how great veterinary workplaces achieve this include:

6.1 Pay

Pay is fair and equivalent and reflects valued team and individual work.

- a. Pay is fair and equitable for all team members, relevant to their respective responsibilities and capabilities. Pay is regularly reviewed by management for equality and fairness, and in the context of the broader labour market. As one example, there is no gender pay gap across equivalent roles.

- b. Pay is transparent, with indication of pay provided for all advertised roles. Sharing details of employment conditions, including remuneration, is not restricted by the employer.
- c. Any relationship between pay/rewards and work/outcomes is documented and clear to everyone. Remuneration for various afterhours work, overtime, meeting performance targets, work in a specific location, or in return for an increase in responsibility or capability (via qualification and/or experience) is transparent, agreed and documented. Employers provide clear and consistent information to each team member about objective criteria for pay increases.
- d. Incentivised pay structures consider the regular role of teamwork in providing great veterinary services and remunerate people in a way that recognises and strengthens that. For example, where performance targets rely on the teams' combined skills, knowledge and efficiency, all involved individuals are rewarded for the teams' achievement. This may be through profit sharing, team bonuses or other reward mechanisms.
- e. Pay complies with all relevant employment law, and all parties know where to seek information and support if necessary (for example, Fairwork, Chambers of Commerce, and AVA HR Advice service). The relevant veterinary Awards are considered as a minimum limit and are considered alongside other information.
- f. All team members ensure their work hours and other relevant details (including afterhours procedures, travel, medical record keeping, client communications and other expenses) are documented for accuracy and future reference.

6.2 Other benefits

People are rewarded for valued contributions in meaningful ways.

- a. The reasons for further reward are transparent, understood, fair, equal and effectively aligned with the organisation's mission and goals.
- b. Beyond their pay, individuals' valued skills, knowledge, capabilities and work are rewarded in ways that hold meaning and value for that person, in alignment with the role and organisation. This may involve both tangible benefits (money, business equity, facilities, equipment, uniform, team, food and drinks, or development opportunities) and/or intangible benefits (change in title, team dynamic, privileges, respect of others, flexibility/autonomy, greater alignment of job meaning with personal purpose etc).

6.3 Recognition

The right people are recognised for the right things in the right ways.

- a. Reasons for special recognition are made clear to the recipient/s and broader team, and support the organisation's mission, goals and strategy.
- b. Recognition of effort and achievements are specific and tailored to their context. Individual outcomes are appropriately attributed to the person responsible; team outcomes see the whole team recognised for their efforts.
- c. Visible recognition and celebration of effort occurs within both the team and broader organisation and community
- d. Employees and employers think creatively about benefits and recognition, focusing on those which best help to create a positive work culture for their team and which are valued by the employee.

7. PROACTIVE PEOPLE PROCESSES

Enable people to succeed through clear, consistent, compliant and considered human resource management, and constructive leadership.

Great veterinary workplaces build employer and employee understanding and confidence through consistent, considered human resource management processes. They understand that as a service business, their success relies heavily on well-aligned, highly capable and motivated people. These businesses focus on attracting and selecting the right people for the right jobs, helping them to understand and sustainably thrive in their role, and ensuring their eventual exit from the business is constructive and not disruptive. Great workplaces invest in developing processes that support their significant investment in people.

Examples of how great veterinary workplaces can achieve this include:

7.1. Recruitment, Selection and Onboarding

People are sought, selected and supported to succeed in the workplace.

- a. Recruitment is intentional and thoughtful – Position Descriptions are routinely developed and provided, outlining key knowledge, capabilities, behaviours, responsibilities and deliverables. Definite requirements and negotiable elements are well-considered. These serve as helpful references in selecting the most appropriate recruitment channels (eg via universities, non-vet forums and veterinary sector recruitment agencies and advertisers), differentiating and personalising roles, and during onboarding, performance review and development planning.
- b. To ensure expectations match reality, employers are transparent and honest about the organisation and the role when hiring new team members, including any potentially difficult aspects. Candidates are equally honest in identifying any concerns, challenges or needs for support.
- c. Employers engage in open and honest discussion with all team members about finding, selecting and supporting the right people in the right ways to succeed.
- d. Selection processes are fair and afford equal opportunities to shortlisted candidates. For example, the time, questions and opportunities offered to applicants during their selection process are equitable, and equal diversity of perspective is sought regarding each person.
- e. Employers provide written contracts to all employees to ensure everyone is aware of agreed expectations, pay and other benefits, entitlements, responsibilities and obligations.
- f. A structured and comprehensive onboarding process occurs for every new team member, including volunteers, to enable consistent, confident and compliant team behaviours. This includes introduction to the physical environment, team members, organisational structure and areas of accountability, all relevant workplace policies and processes, IT systems (e.g. Practice Management Software, HR systems), and organisational vision, purpose, values and current focus/objective.
- g. Anyone new to the organisation receives appropriate support to carry out their role and are actively engaged in regular two-way feedback opportunities in the first few months of employment.

7.2. Performance review, career and succession planning

Everyone knows how they're doing at their work, and what they need and want to do next. Employers and employees are prepared for team member change.

- a. Referring to their position description, everyone understands what they are responsible and accountable for within their role and has agreed with their manager how performance in those areas will be measured.
- b. Performance measurements are specific, relevant, and balanced across all areas of capability required for the job including technical skills and knowledge (such as surgical, medical, financial, IT etc) and non-technical capabilities (such as communication, teamwork, peer coaching/mentoring, leadership).
- c. Measurements reflect where performance is valuable to achieving organisational goals over short, medium *and* long terms. Quality, quantity and consistency of work are considered through quantitative and qualitative measurement.
- d. Performance review and planning gives due consideration to the capability, motivation and opportunities given to each team member. For example, performance measures and goals must align with sufficient opportunities to develop and perform, and with the available resources including time, people, equipment, information and training. If stronger performance is desired, leaders seek to understand what, if any, additional resources may be required.
- e. All team members are guided to consider and communicate their capabilities, interests, work needs and constraints to their manager and employer at least annually as part of their performance review and planning.
- f. Role description and performance indicators are regularly reviewed; for example, upon a new person assuming the role; as part of performance appraisals; at the request of either employer or employee; and in response to an exit interview.
- g. Proactive consideration, consultation, communication, training and mentoring, job design and documentation occurs to prepare for team member changes, absences or other contingencies, for confident and competent succession and continuity of workplace knowledge.

7.3. Performance management

People are supported in their motivation, capability and opportunity to deliver on work expectations, but continued underperformance is not accommodated.

- a. Managers are pro-active in managing poor behaviour or underperformance of team members, initially through specifically identifying it and seeking to understand the reasons for it.
- b. Managers and employers then work together with the employee to support motivation, capability and opportunities for improvement; for example through clear instruction, goals, support and/or training but if needed, team members are removed, or reassigned to roles which better fit the person.
- c. Employees are encouraged to use their regular review meetings to raise any concerns and request support.

7.4. Exit processes

When people leave, leaders and managers learn more about the workplace while minimising disruption to it.

- a. Employers have, or seek advice to develop, a good understanding of legal requirements and processes for ending employment in a range of circumstances so that this is managed legally, ethically and fairly.
- b. Managers review potential gaps in managing workloads and specific tasks, and seek to minimise disruption through succession planning. For example this may require early recruitment and onboarding, internal promotion, education and training, process or service changes, and customer and team communications.
- c. Exit interviews routinely occur when a team member leaves. This may be facilitated by a human resources person external to the team to encourage honest and complete feedback and suggestions. Constructive feedback is passed onto relevant leaders and managers and improvements considered and/or actioned.

7.5. Concern and conflict resolution

Everyone understands how to respectfully raise and constructively respond to concerns and conflicts.

- a. There are clear and transparent complaints policies and processes, including when and to whom escalation is expected, for dealing with client complaints and for internal team concerns, and all team members are supported to understand these.
- b. Conflict resolution processes are supportive, accessible, fair and constructive, well documented for all involved, and are regularly reviewed in consultation with all team members.
- c. Leaders and all team members seek first to fully understand a situation where conflict or concern exists. They listen actively to others, acknowledge feelings and impacts, identify key issues and objectives, explain their own perspective clearly and respectfully, and focus on solutions and follow-up actions.
- d. Mental health support for team members, including through Board complaint processes, is facilitated where appropriate. Clients may also be directed to relevant support resources.
- e. Employees highlight any concerns with HR processes to their managers, discuss suggestions for solutions and seek advice from the AVA HR Advisory service, FairWork and/or their relevant state and federal small business support resources if needed.
- f. All team members are enabled, through complaint review processes and constructive leadership, to approach complaints, concerns and adverse events as an opportunity for reflection and where necessary, systems improvement, team learning and personal growth.

7.6 Human Resource Management education and support

Leaders and managers are encouraged to develop skills in designing and managing engaging, fulfilling and sustainable jobs.

- a. Leaders and managers undertake continuing education or access expert advice and resources in integrated Human Resource management
- b. Time and money are invested in improving and reviewing human resource management processes, including seeking advice from subject matter experts such as HR professionals and/or organisational psychologists to improve recruitment, management, and exit processes where necessary

8. COLLEGIALITY AND CONNECTION

Help people to feel part of their communities.

Great veterinary workplaces encourage and facilitate connection: between team members, between the organisation and its customers, between veterinary businesses, with veterinary and other health care professions and amongst the broader public community. They are mindful that personal non-work-related relationships are also an important part of a balanced, sustainable and fulfilling life for everyone and take conscious steps to support those. Great workplaces help their team members to feel supported and valued for their contribution within a range of communities.

8.1. Workplace connection

Opportunities exist for everyone to develop personal connections at work. The workplace community is celebrated and strengthened by formal and informal symbols, stories, rituals, events and ways of working.

- a. Workplace induction and review processes facilitate development of supportive networks, for example for the purpose of mentoring, peer coaching and social connection.
- b. Work tasks and breaks are scheduled and equipped to facilitate interaction between team members.
- c. Symbols, facilities and equipment that signify a professional or workplace community are used in ways that are meaningful and appreciated by team members. For example, name badges, uniforms and scrubs, employee carparking, staff noticeboards, coffee mugs, coffee machine, water bottles, lunchrooms and other non-public areas.
- d. Regular meetings that include everyone, and others which include functional or crossfunctional teams, are scheduled and protected, for example practice meetings, clinical rounds and working groups (focussed on specific workplace projects or goals (such as Diversity and Inclusion, Environmental Sustainability, Team Wellbeing, Client Communications etc).
- e. Meeting times and places (eg online/in-person/hybrid) are varied to facilitate attendance and avoid repeatedly disadvantaging some team members.
- f. The format of meetings consistently encourages contribution from everyone present, bringing diversity of perspective to shared celebration, goals, challenges and solutions.
- g. Workplace social and educational events are encouraged and held regularly. There is balance between in- and out-of-hours events, recognising that mental and physical time away from work is also important. Partners and family members are invited to participate in some workplace social events, to enhance opportunities for connection and inclusion.
- h. Birthdays, employment milestones and other occasions and achievements are celebrated by the whole team.
- i. Workplace events, education, celebrations and other connection opportunities are inclusive and equitable - for example, consideration is given to physical accessibility, varied religion and belief systems, timing, location, food and beverage options and norms, and dress code.

8.2. Professional community


Everyone is encouraged to connect with others associated with the veterinary sector. Professional collegiality is fostered irrespective of commercial competition.

- a. Collegiality and connection is modelled and facilitated between professional peers and businesses, for example through encouraging local social and professional events, special interest educational opportunities, sharing resources (products, people or equipment), or co-servicing clients with diverse needs.
- b. Mentoring and peer coaching relationships beyond the workplace are practically encouraged. For example, recent graduates are encouraged to participate in the AVA Graduate Mentor program and time is planned to build these relationships. Career development planning considers the option to seek mentor/s for general or specific development purposes.
- c. Where there is need to meet non-veterinary workload, relationships are established with suitable paraprofessionals whose work complements the veterinary teams'.
- d. All team members are helped to understand the role and intended value of professional bodies such as the AVA and VNCA, regulators (state Boards, AVBC) and unions (Professional Scientists of Australia). These organisations are recognised as integral parts of the veterinary profession which employ and represent the perspectives of member veterinarians, nurses and others to advance the professions.
- e. Team members are encouraged and enabled to strengthen their professional bodies through contribution of individuals' perspective and skills, for example through volunteer involvement, membership or employment.
- f. Team members have the opportunity and encouragement to share and discuss current issues, learning and initiatives within, and emerging from, veterinary sector groups and resources such as VIN, AVA and SIGs, VNCA, VetEd, SVC, AVN (according to any confidentiality rules), and other forums.
- g. The workplace encourages and builds teams that span various work areas, qualifications, experience levels and organisations, to enhance innovation, strengthen mutual understanding and develop complementary skills and knowledge. For example, relationships with local human health support services and professionals are fostered, in recognition of the interplay between human and animal health and wellbeing.
- h. The workplace facilitates practical learning opportunities, such as "exchange" visits between practices or work sabbaticals.

8.3. Broader community

Team members can feel a sense of value, connection and belonging within their communities.

- a. Animal owners are viewed as part of the organisation's community – an "us and them" attitude is discouraged and respectful teamwork facilitated. For example, trusting and appreciative relationships between clients and team members are celebrated; negative client interactions are discussed constructively to build understanding and relevant skills.

- b. Notwithstanding this, personal boundaries around professional communications and work with clients are respected and supported.
 - c. There is visibility of the workplace in the local community, for example through event sponsorship, social media, signage, and involvement in community initiatives (see also Social Responsibility)
 - d. Rostering, including reasonable and mutually agreed afterhours requirements, allows team members regular and sufficient time away from work and associated responsibilities to nurture non-veterinary connections.
 - e. Team members are encouraged to engage in social events and activities outside of work, with or without their work colleagues. Practical support is offered to connect new team members with the broader community.
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9. SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Contribute positively to OneHealth objectives and minimise harm to our world.

Great veterinary workplaces seek to make a positive difference in their local and global communities. They take their essential role in OneHealth objectives seriously, support community initiatives and champion environmental sustainability. Daily practices help everyone to feel proud, aligned and empowered by the way they work within and for their communities.

Examples of how great workplaces achieve this include:

9.1 Workplace practices

Everyone can work in socially and environmentally conscious ways.

- a. Team members conscientiously engage with One Health agendas and develop appropriate policies, protocols and knowledge through training. For example, an antimicrobial prescribing protocol is used, disease surveillance and reporting is well understood and facilitated, and the human-animal bond is regularly considered.
- b. Everyone is empowered to understand the risks and impacts of climate change and other relevant environmental challenges such as water pollution and soil degradation on animals and OneHealth
- c. A meaningful and regularly reviewed environmental sustainability policy exists, and appointed sustainability champions develop and report on initiatives and progress.
- d. Actions which support environmental sustainability and reduce carbon footprint are embedded within daily work; for example recycling and appropriate reuse, low-paper practices, power saving initiatives (including insulation), green energy sources, water saving initiatives, and environmentally and socially conscious choices of clinical management, products, packaging and suppliers.

9.2 Engagement with the community

Everyone is empowered to be considerate and helpful to the world around them.

- a. The organisation supports team members' choice to undertake and/or report on pro-bono or charity-funded veterinary work. For example, this may be through agreed time-in-lieu, establishment of a workplace "benevolent fund", care for wildlife, or through donation of sustainable consumables or equipment use.
- b. Everyone is supported in their efforts to make a positive contribution to the wider community within and beyond work contexts. For example, time is allowed within work to speak to local school children, a service club, livestock producers group or other animal club, and work experience students are well-supported through consistent induction and monitoring processes. The workplace may offer some annual community service leave for employees to contribute to the community in any way they value.
- c. Contribution to the veterinary community's issues and initiatives are practically supported, for example through sharing related media content, attending events, participating in research, or making financial, in-kind or work contributions
- d. Everyone can raise public awareness of the impacts of climate change on animals. For example, through hand-outs in Puppy Packs, posters in the waiting room, or discussing the impacts of issues such as heat stress on domestic pets or livestock.

10. PROFESSIONAL ETHICS AND STANDARDS

Facilitate public trust and professional pride in veterinary service and teamwork.

Professional standards require more than appropriate facilities and technical knowledge and skills.

Veterinary professionals also earn their respected reputation through accountability, continued learning, ethical behaviours and principled leadership within their veterinary work and in the community. Great workplaces model these things, empowering their people to develop and demonstrate sound professional judgement and competencies as expected by their veterinary peers and the public. Consistent, considered and ethical behaviour from all team members within the workplace, whether members of the veterinary profession or not, supports public trust, peer respect and strong regulatory compliance.

Examples of how great workplaces achieve this include:

10.1. Personal behaviour, including professional ethics

Everyone behaves in ways which strengthen the veterinary professions' good standing.

- a. Everyone's behaviour towards other team members, animals, professionals outside the organisation and the public is guided by the professional principles of:
 - i. *Honesty and integrity.* For example, everyone is honest in their professional and commercial dealings. They consider alternative approaches suitable to specific situations and communicate those without prejudice. They base their decisions and actions on the best data available and communicate any limitations of this. They respect the confidentiality and privacy of their interactions with owners and each other.
 - ii. *Self-management and Accountability.* For example, everyone is mindful of their own health and wellbeing and takes steps to modify their practice if their performance and judgement may be impaired. They recognise the limits of their knowledge and experience and seek appropriate advice and support when needed, while remaining accountable for their decision making and actions. In making ethical decisions, they consider if, when, why, and how their own interests should be constrained.
 - iii. *Respect.* For example, everyone demonstrates due regard for the welfare, beliefs, customs, perceptions, and cultural heritage of animal owners, team members and professional peers. They listen actively to owners and provide sufficient, clear and accurate information to enable informed consent for veterinary care. They make decisions that are in the interests of the individual animal and which also demonstrate due concern for individual and collective animal health and wellbeing, human health and wellbeing, the community and the environment.
- b. All registered veterinary professionals are aware of, and comply with, their professional responsibilities, privileges and obligations under the relevant Acts.
- c. All team members are proactive and supported to identify and navigate ethically challenging situations, for example through peer discussion and continuing education.
- d. Everyone recognises the importance of genuine and productive veterinary-owner-animal (VOA)/ Vet-Client-Patient (VCP) relationships to optimise animal health and welfare outcomes. Everyone complies with regulatory VOA/VCP requirements and works to foster shared understanding, effective collaboration and trust. Where this is not possible, refusal or termination of the VOA/VCP relationship demonstrates professional standards of behaviour.

10.2. Professional judgement and competence

Veterinary professionals are empowered to make well-justified decisions and take actions that meet their peers' and public expectations appropriate to the context. Complaints or adverse outcomes are seen as an opportunity for reflection and where necessary, growth.

- a. All registered veterinary professionals are familiar with the guidance provided by their relevant veterinary regulator/s about professional standards of veterinary practice.
- b. Everyone in the team respects diversity in veterinary professionals' approach to their work. Everyone understands that there is more than one effective way to do many things.
- c. Everyone respects that professional judgement includes navigation of various owner, patient and environmental constraints and considerations, including:
 - animal health and wellbeing
 - public health and safety
 - environmental impact
 - currency of knowledge and practice
 - legal and regulatory compliance
 - healthy, supportive and collegiate work environment
- d. Registered professionals are empowered to make decisions and act in a manner that reflects their own professional judgement
- e. Everyone understands that upholding regulated professional standards refers to good practice which "meets peer and public expectations" across a spectrum of care, and not "gold" standard care in every case. Workplace peers are available to provide perspectives on what might be considered reasonable by professional peers, and all veterinarians learn from others' work.
- f. Everyone is empowered to ask questions to understand why patient health decisions have been made, and to contribute other ideas and suggestions.
- g. Everyone is encouraged and supported to identify and acknowledge the limits of their own expertise and capacity, and ask for others' assistance and perspectives.
- h. Professional decisions are made based on contemporary knowledge and evidence, to the extent that that exists. Innovation based on sound related evidence is acknowledged as necessary for both knowledge expansion and to suit very varied veterinary work contexts.
- i. Any complaint about professional standards to regulators (Vet Board etc) is viewed constructively as an opportunity for independent objective feedback to validate or strengthen practise.

10.3. Leadership, management and clinical governance systems

Leadership, management and workplace systems support everyone to meet their professional responsibilities including effective teamwork with animal owners and peers, and continued learning and development.

- a. Policies, systems, processes, decisions and procedures appropriately consider and prioritise
 - animal health and wellbeing
 - public health and safety
 - environmental impact
 - currency of knowledge and practice
 - legal and regulatory compliance
 - safe, healthy, supportive and collegiate teamwork
- b. Effective clinical governance systems, including appropriate technology use, support professional standards of care in accordance with regulatory guidance, including through clear accountability, good record keeping, and peer and client communications.
- c. Managers and registered veterinarians assist everyone to develop a good understanding of the regulatory expectations of veterinary work, including the veterinarian's obligations and accountability, the public's responsibilities, and the importance of effective clinical governance to enable these. Resources such as fact sheets and checklists that help educate team members and the public about these responsibilities are utilised.
- d. Development and regular review of systems and policies that support professional standards occurs in consultation with all regulated professionals and other relevant team members to ensure they are practical, clear, compliant, comprehensive and efficient in supporting professional practice.
- e. The workplace's consistent and fair conflict resolution process enables peer or client concerns about professional standards to be heard attentively, and opportunity is always provided for veterinarians and others involved to explain their decisions and actions.

10.4 Facilities, equipment and assistance

Workplace facilities, equipment and personnel, including in ambulatory contexts, enable delivery of professional standards of service.

- a. Facilities and equipment are selected, designed, installed, used, maintained and replaced with appropriate consideration and prioritisation of
 - animal health and wellbeing
 - public health and safety
 - environmental impact
 - currency of knowledge and practice
 - legal and regulatory compliance, including medication storage/access
 - safe, healthy, supportive and collegiate teamwork
- b. Everyone contributes to ensuring that the workplace environment and equipment are appropriate for the veterinary services delivered there. This includes owners and managers' role in the purchase and maintenance of facilities and equipment, and all team members' role in their use, cleaning, maintenance and identification of necessary items or facilities for professional standards of care.

- c. Registered veterinary professionals are enabled to exercise their professional judgement when recommending, undertaking, referring or refusing veterinary services based on the appropriateness of facilities, equipment, assistance and other physical aspects of a work environment.
- d. Everyone takes reasonable measures to ensure that anyone assisting to provide veterinary services has the knowledge, skills and capacity to perform the task.
- e. According to their role, everyone works to ensure workplace facilities and equipment minimise health and welfare risks to and from animals, including through attention to animal physical, emotional and mental needs, principles of biosecurity, and to preventing introduction of infection or parasites.
- f. Together, everyone works to deliver facilities and equipment that encourage development of respectful, trusting and productive veterinary-owner-animal relationships.