



VETERINARY PRACTITIONERS BOARD
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Ms Sandra Lambert AM
Chair, ACT Remuneration Tribunal
PO Box 964
CIVIC SQUARE ACT 2608

ACT Remuneration Tribunal 2025 Spring Sitting Review

Dear Ms Lambert

I refer to your correspondence of 31 May 2025 inviting submissions to the review of the remuneration of statutory office holders for the forthcoming financial year and provide the following submission on behalf of the ACT Veterinary Practitioners Board (the Board).

Executive Summary

Given the requirement for the majority of board members to be qualified veterinarians, this Board would stand as one of the most highly educated and professionally skilled in the ACT, reflecting a deep reservoir of expertise and leadership within the veterinary field. In the Board's opinion, the current remuneration status and quantum does not reflect the Board's responsibilities and workload in operating its functions. The nature, size and complexity of the Board's work has increased and changed significantly.

The Board suggest a remuneration in line with entities of a similar size and complexity is more appropriate and has proposed some benchmarks for the Tribunal's consideration.

The Board

The Board is a statutory authority established under section 90 of the *Veterinary Practice Act 2018*. The functions of the Board include:

- (a) registering veterinary practitioners and veterinary premises;
- (b) investigating complaints against veterinary practitioners;
- (c) conducting, on the board's own initiative, investigations of veterinary practitioners;
- (d) taking disciplinary action against veterinary practitioners;
- (e) enforcing this Act, including taking proceedings for offences against this Act;
- (f) developing codes of professional conduct for veterinary practitioners;

GPO Box 158, CANBERRA ACT 2601

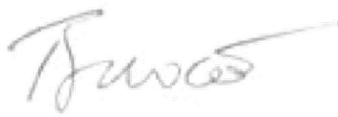
Tel: 02 6207 0012; Email: TCCS.vetboard@act.gov.au

- (g) setting standards for premises;
- (h) cooperating with other jurisdictions in Australia and New Zealand to further a common and harmonious approach to the administration of legislation relating to veterinary practitioners;
- (i) giving information to the veterinary profession relating to continuing education issues, developments in the field of veterinary science and disciplinary matters;
- (j) giving general advice to consumers of veterinary services in relation to the ethics and standards of professional competence generally expected of veterinary practitioners;
- (k) giving advice to the Minister in relation to any other matter related to the administration of this Act;
- (l) ensuring the professional development of veterinary practitioners, including by determining requirements for continuing professional development of veterinary practitioners;
- (m) approving educational and training courses related to professional qualifications for veterinary practitioners; and
- (n) liaising with, and if the board considers it appropriate, becoming a member of, professional organisations concerned with veterinary science.

This submission seeks to update the current remuneration framework to better reflect the work value and operational demands of the Board.

The proposed increase in remuneration will be covered as part of the Boards budget.

I look forward to the Tribunal's favourable decision on this matter and would be pleased to discuss it further.



Bruce Smith
President
ACT Veterinary Practitioners Board
11 July 2025

Attachment:

1. ACT Veterinary Practitioners Board Submission to the ACT Remuneration Tribunal 2025 Spring Sitting Review

Submission to the ACT Remuneration Tribunal 2025 Spring Sitting Review
Part-Time Public Office Holders
ACT Veterinary Practitioners Board

Executive Summary

The ACT Veterinary Practitioners Board (the Board) is a statutory authority established under the *Veterinary Practice Act 2018* (the Act). The Board is responsible for registering veterinary practitioners, regulating veterinary premises, and investigating professional conduct and competence. Given the requirement for the majority of board members to be qualified veterinarians, this Board would stand as one of the most highly educated and professionally skilled in the ACT, reflecting a deep reservoir of expertise and leadership within the veterinary field.

This submission seeks to update the current remuneration framework to better reflect the work value and operational demands of the Board. In the Board’s opinion, the current remuneration status and quantum does not reflect the Board’s responsibilities and workload in operating its functions. The nature, size and complexity of the Board’s work has increased and changed significantly.

The Board suggest a remuneration in line with entities of a similar size and complexity is more appropriate and has proposed some benchmarks for the Tribunal’s consideration.

Current Remuneration

Members of the Board are currently remunerated as Part-Time Holders of Public Office, where the Base remuneration (Per Diem) applies to Board meetings and additional work undertaken by the office holder in performing the duties of their office.

The Board’s current remuneration is referenced in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Determination 15 of 2024 Part-time Public Office Holders remuneration rates

Entity	Position	Determination 15 of 2024
ACT Veterinary Practitioners Board	President	\$635
	Member	\$545

Board Roles and Responsibilities

The Board is a statutory authority established under section 90 of the Act, and consists of seven members:

- the President;
- four members who are registered veterinary practitioners;

- one community representative, who is not a veterinary practitioner; and
- one member who is not a veterinary practitioner.

The functions of the Board include:

- (a) registering veterinary practitioners and veterinary premises;
- (b) investigating complaints against veterinary practitioners;
- (c) conducting, on the board's own initiative, investigations of veterinary practitioners;
- (d) taking disciplinary action against veterinary practitioners;
- (e) enforcing this Act, including taking proceedings for offences against this Act;
- (f) developing codes of professional conduct for veterinary practitioners;
- (g) setting standards for premises;
- (h) cooperating with other jurisdictions in Australia and New Zealand to further a common and harmonious approach to the administration of legislation relating to veterinary practitioners;
- (i) giving information to the veterinary profession relating to continuing education issues, developments in the field of veterinary science and disciplinary matters;
- (j) giving general advice to consumers of veterinary services in relation to the ethics and standards of professional competence generally expected of veterinary practitioners;
- (k) giving advice to the Minister in relation to any other matter related to the administration of this Act;
- (l) ensuring the professional development of veterinary practitioners, including by determining requirements for continuing professional development of veterinary practitioners;
- (m) approving educational and training courses related to professional qualifications for veterinary practitioners; and
- (n) liaising with, and if the board considers it appropriate, becoming a member of, professional organisations concerned with veterinary science.

In addition to its statutory responsibilities, the Board plays a broader role in protecting, promoting, and progressing the provision of veterinary services in the Territory. These non-regulatory functions, while not mandated by legislation, are critical to ensuring that the Board remains responsive, forward-looking, and engaged with the broader veterinary ecosystem. They reflect the Board's commitment to proactive leadership, national integration, and continuous improvement.

Some of these non-regulatory functions are outlined below.

Point of Contact and Integrative Function

The Board serves as a central liaison point for a diverse range of stakeholders, including members of the public, veterinary professionals, private sector entities, and inter-jurisdictional bodies. This integrative role enables the Board to facilitate dialogue, coordinate responses to cross-border issues, and ensure that local regulatory practices are informed by national and international developments. It also positions the Board as a trusted and accessible authority for addressing concerns and fostering collaboration across the sector.

Professional Educational and Cultural Development

The Board actively contributes to the professional growth and cultural wellbeing of the veterinary workforce. This includes involvement in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) initiatives, support for practitioner wellness programs, and engagement in workforce development strategies. These efforts are particularly important in addressing sector-wide challenges such as practitioner burnout, skills shortages, and the need for adaptive learning models. The Board's leadership in these areas helps to cultivate a resilient, competent, and future-ready veterinary profession.

Public and Professional Information Platform

Recognising the importance of transparency and informed decision-making, the Board manages a suite of digital communication channels to disseminate timely and relevant information. This includes through newsletters, via the Board website, and other time sensitive updates. By maintaining an accessible and authoritative information platform, the Board enhances public trust, supports practitioner compliance, and contributes to a more informed and engaged community.

Facilitation of System-wide Professional Cohesion

The Board plays a strategic role in fostering cohesion across the veterinary sector by engaging with educational institutions, national regulatory bodies, and government agencies. Through these partnerships, the Board contributes to the alignment of standards, the sharing of best practices, and the development of coordinated responses to emerging issues. This collaborative approach strengthens the overall regulatory framework and ensures that the ACT remains aligned with national and international expectations.

Innovation in Participatory and Preventive Regulation

The Board is committed to evolving its regulatory approach through the development of participatory and preventive models. This includes initiatives such as reflective regulation, incident reporting systems, and peer-led review mechanisms. These innovations aim to shift the regulatory focus from reactive enforcement to proactive risk management and continuous improvement. By embedding these principles into its operations, the Board

supports a culture of accountability, learning, and shared responsibility within the profession.

Change in Business Size and Nature

The role, size, scale, and complexity of the Board has increased and expanded significantly over the years, resulting in significant increases in the complexity of the Board's work and in the role and responsibilities of the Board.

Strategy Day

The Board recently held a dedicated strategy planning day to reflect on its current operations and set a clear direction for the future. This session provided an opportunity for the Board to identify key priorities and strategic goals aimed at strengthening regulatory effectiveness, enhancing stakeholder engagement, and supporting the evolving needs of the veterinary profession and the community. The outcomes of this planning day will guide the Board's initiatives over the coming years, ensuring a proactive and forward-thinking approach to its responsibilities.

Communication nights

The Board continues to provide free Communication Nights to the profession, fostering open dialogue and collaboration within the veterinary community. These events provide a valuable platform for practitioners to engage directly with the Board, share insights, raise concerns, and stay informed about regulatory updates and professional standards. The Board's involvement underscores its commitment to transparency, continuous improvement, and strengthening relationships across the sector to ensure the highest standards of veterinary care in the ACT.

Increase in complaints

The Board has experienced a notable increase in the number of complaints received, reflecting both heightened public awareness and evolving expectations of veterinary care. Each complaint requires careful consideration, thorough investigation, and adherence to procedural fairness, significantly increasing the time and resources needed to manage these matters. The Board remains committed to maintaining high standards of professional conduct and ensuring that all concerns are addressed diligently, despite the growing complexity and volume of cases.

Vet Nurse Regulation

The Board is actively progressing efforts to introduce legislation for the regulation of veterinary nurses, recognising their vital role in the delivery of high-quality animal care. This initiative represents a significant undertaking, requiring extensive consultation, policy development, and coordination with key stakeholders and government bodies. The Board acknowledges that this work will demand considerable time and resources, but remains committed to ensuring that veterinary nurses are appropriately recognised, supported, and

held to consistent professional standards that enhance the overall integrity of the veterinary profession.

President Specific Responsibilities

The work of the Board is complex and requires diligence and understanding to ensure decisions are carefully considered to effectively manage a large range of competing priorities. As a statutory authority, the President is required on an ongoing basis to:

- Provide ongoing leadership to the Board;
- Chair Board meetings and stakeholder meetings;
- Serve as the primary technical liaison for the Secretariat, providing initial guidance and support on all technical matters;
- Ensure all members are briefed on material matters arising at or between Board meetings;
- Ensure the Board comes to clear conclusions at Board meetings and that these decisions are properly recorded in the minutes;
- Conduct thorough reviews of all complaints to ensure appropriate handling and resolution;
- Meet with the Minister to discuss key strategic issues and emerging issues from a territory, national and international perspective;
- Maintain regular communication with the Secretariat to ensure effective implementation of the Board's decisions;
- Provide oversight and strategic guidance across all Board processes and operations;
- Promote an environment of trust, respect and openness to ensure consultative and constructive relationships between the Board and the Secretariat;
- Develop high level effective relationships with the Board's stakeholders, including national and state-based veterinary bodies, to ensure that the Territory's priorities are understood and
- Representing the Board as otherwise required from time to time.

Recommended Increase to Board Remuneration

The Board requests the Tribunal to consider an increase to the remuneration rate and mechanism for the Board, to more accurately reflect the current scope of duties being undertaken by the Board. This request acknowledges the substantial increase in the scale, scope, responsibilities, and complexity of the Board's role, as outlined above.

In our view, the workload of the President is continuous and we consider that their workload can be identified with some certainty over time. We believe that moving to an annual fee for the role of President will reduce the administrative workload for the entire Board and

Secretariat staff in keeping records of significant workload outside of scheduled meetings and be a fairer remuneration.

It is the Board’s view that daily fees continue to be most suitable for all other Board members as their workload is predictable but relatively confined to Board meetings (for which per diem payments are made). In the Board’s view, a higher remuneration will attract a greater pool of suitable candidates for all roles.

We are of the view that the ACT Remuneration Tribunal does not currently apply a directly comparable daily fee structure for Boards of this nature. Accordingly, we have proposed a suggested daily rate derived from our best efforts to benchmark against comparable annual remuneration figures, adjusted to reflect the anticipated frequency of Board meetings.

The Board has reviewed the nature and size of other regulatory boards and considers that the entities mentioned in Table 2 below are in line with the Board’s role and size.

Table 2: Comparable Entities Current Remuneration Ranges

Role	Base Remuneration (Per Diem)	Base Remuneration (Per Annum)
NSW Veterinary Practitioners Board		
Chair		\$29,660
Member		\$9,125
Western Australia Veterinary Practitioners Board		
Chair		\$18,303
Member		\$10,067
ACT Health System Council¹		
Chair	\$1,240	
Member	\$825	
Threatened Species Scientific Committee²		
Chair	\$1,322	
Member	\$883	

¹ https://www.remunerationtribunal.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/2566346/Determination-15-of-2024-Part-Time-Public-Office-Holders.pdf

² <https://www.remtribunal.gov.au/sites/default/files/2025-06/PTOH%20-%20RT%20Principal%20Determination%202025.pdf>

Australian Medical Research Advisory Board³		
Chair	N/A	
Member	\$1,209	
Repatriation Medical Authority⁴		
Chair	\$1,322	
Member	\$1,192	

Accordingly, the Board requests that the Tribunal consider a remuneration within the range of these entities as being appropriate. A proposed approach is suggested below in Table 3, noting any increase in remuneration will be accommodated within the Board’s budget.

Table 3: Proposed Remuneration

Entity	Position	Proposed Remuneration
ACT Veterinary Practitioners Board	President – amend the payment to an annual payment to reflect continuous workload	\$18,000 annual payment
	Member – retain a per diem but increase this to an amount reflective of the current responsibilities and qualifications of Board members	\$825 per diem

Summary

The Board’s proposal is modest, well-justified, and aligned with national practice. It supports operational efficiency, accountability, and equity, and ensures appropriate recognition of the work required to maintain effective regulation and engagement in a complex and evolving professional environment.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Remuneration Tribunal agree to the proposed increases to the President’s remuneration and the Board Member per diem rate, as outlined in Table 3 of this submission.

³ <https://www.remtribunal.gov.au/sites/default/files/2025-06/PTOH%20-%20RT%20Principal%20Determination%202025.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.remtribunal.gov.au/sites/default/files/2025-06/PTOH%20-%20RT%20Principal%20Determination%202025.pdf>