



To the graduating veterinary class, across Australia and New Zealand

As we approach the end of this very different year and your final year as a veterinary student, it is important to reflect on all that you have achieved in spite of the many difficulties along the way. It is important that you know of the critical work that has happened 'behind the scenes' to ensure that you can enter the profession, as a graduate vet, with our full confidence.

Inevitably, ongoing restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic have affected the delivery of your final year program. You have been taught differently and you have learned differently but our veterinary schools are accomplished and innovative and have been well-placed to adapt as circumstances have required. As a graduating class, you too have shown considerable strength, agility and goodwill in progressing through your program and adapting to change. In fact, the pandemic has provided you with ample opportunity to demonstrate flexibility and resilience, both important attributes of a successful veterinarian.

We are particularly aware of your concern around the effect of COVID restrictions especially in respect to clinical placements. This aspect of your education is designed to provide authentic work-integrated-learning experiences during your training program so that you are work-ready on graduation. COVID-19 impacts for many schools have meant that student involvement in clinical placements has involved a combination of face-to-face, self-directed and online clinical experiential learning. However, *all* Schools have continued to deliver learning experiences that ensure students meet program and accreditation requirements and competencies at graduation.

The AVBC has reviewed your curriculum and continues to communicate regularly with VSANZ and with Schools on all matters related to the accreditation of your degrees. Throughout the year AVBC has been able to assure the veterinary boards of Australia and New Zealand that your degree continues to be accredited and you are on track to achieving all of the Day One Competences necessary to register and practise.

Employers are really looking forward to supporting your early career and providing further opportunity to develop your skills across all aspects of the profession. Take your time and seek out those employers where you will be mentored and encouraged through your transition to fully independent practice.

We are assured that you are well and truly ready for the next step in your veterinary career. We wish you every success.

Dr Mark Simpson
Chair AVBC

Dr Warwick Vale
President AVA

Prof Jon Huxley
Chair VSANZ

Additional resources

In addition to your future employer, all students have peer support available through their school alumnus networks, as well as support from the AVA. The AVA reaffirms their support by providing several resources, which include:

1. Free AVA Student Membership, including an extension of this membership for graduates of 2020 until June 30, 2021.
2. The Graduate Mentoring program, where graduates can be mentored by an industry professional in their early career. For more information, go to <https://www.ava.com.au/about-us/programs-awards/graduate-mentoring-program/>
3. The AVA's Return to Work program, which is accessible for free for students who have signed up to one of the AVA's special interest groups. For more information, log in and go [here](#)
4. The Veterinary Volunteer Initiative, where you can contact vets to discuss cases. For more information, log in and go to <https://www.ava.com.au/member-services/my-ava-groups/student/student-volunteer-initiative/>
5. AVA's Mental Health Phone Counselling service as well as HR Hotline, which includes a Free of Charge legal review of the Graduate's first professional veterinarian employment offer contract.

For more information, please do not hesitate to contact your respective veterinary school, or send inquiries to the AVA at <https://www.ava.com.au/contact-us/>

Registration

Registration to practice differs between states and you may wish to know further details. Links to all the veterinary registration boards can be found on the [AVBC website](#)