

History of the Australian College of Veterinary Scientists

Initial steps towards the formation of a College of Veterinary Scientists were taken in the 1950s by Dr A Sinclair and others through the Australian Veterinary Association. A resolution at the annual general meeting of the AVA held in Melbourne in May 1967 supported and approved in principle the formation of a College. At the annual general meeting of the New Zealand Veterinary Association in 1969, resolutions supported the participation and formation of the proposed college.

The primary objectives were:

- To provide professional qualifications to veterinarians with superior competence.
- Apart from Foundation Membership, entry to the College to be by examination.
- Membership of the College open to veterinarians in Australia and New Zealand.

An interim Council drafted a memorandum and articles of association. The College was registered under the Companies Act, NSW. Of the 505 who accepted membership, 130 were practitioners.

Inauguration of the College occurred in Canberra on the 18 May 1971 when Dr DF Stewart was elected the first president. At the annual general meeting of the College one year after the inauguration, Dr Stewart said, "The establishment of the College provides the opportunity for recognition of advanced professional skills for members of the profession not in a position to acquire higher academic qualifications or to those who aspire to a higher standard of proficiency in their chosen field".

There have been many achievements since the College was first established. Post-graduate training and education have been instituted by a number of special interest groups formed by the various disciplines (chapters), furthering the maintenance of standards required for memberships and fellowships. Examinations are held annually, with written papers held at many centres throughout Australia and New Zealand, with oral/practical examinations held during the College Science week at the same times as scientific meetings, the annual general meeting and the Awards Dinner. In 2001-2 the College had 1463 members of whom 147 were Fellows. Regular newsletters are circulated.

The College prize was established in 1975 and is awarded to a veterinarian making the outstanding contribution to veterinary science. The Ian Clunies Ross award was established in 1979 and gives special emphasis to members who have excelled in the research and academic sectors of the profession.

In its short history the College has filled an important role in the veterinary profession both in Australian and New Zealand. The present size of the College and its continuing development shows it has undoubtedly fulfilled the hopes, confidence and aspirations of the founders.

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