**VETERINARY PRACTICE (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL 2013**

**Legislative Council, 26 September 2013, pages 5091-2**

Second reading

**The Hon. G.E. GAGO (Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, Minister for Forests, Minister for Regional Development, Minister for the Status of Women, Minister for State/Local Government Relations):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This amendment bill is about improving the current operation of the Veterinary Practice Act 2003 and principally to introduce national recognition of veterinary registration.

The proposed amendments to introduce the veterinary registration (NRVR) will complement similar amendments already made or in the process of being made in all other jurisdictions, following endorsement of NRVR by the Primary Industries Ministerial Council in 2008. This will allow veterinarians, both general and specialist, who are resident in other jurisdictions and who are registered to practice there, to also practice in South Australia. Until now, a veterinarian wishing to practice in more than one jurisdiction has to register and pay fees annually in each jurisdiction in which they desire to work.

The mechanism for achieving NRVR is deemed registration, where general and specialist veterinary registrants are deemed to be registered in all jurisdictions when registered in any one state or territory. This must be the state or territory where the veterinarian resides.

NRVR is strongly supported by the veterinary profession nationally and by the Veterinary Surgeons Board of South Australia and the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council. NRVR is also supported by consumers of veterinary services, including the livestock industries.

Most of the changes to the act are to implement NRVR in administrative areas, which are the responsibility of the board and the registrar, including the veterinary registers, applications for registration and removal from and reinstatement to the register. The amendments also make it clear that the board may only suspend a person pending the outcome of disciplinary proceedings if there is a serious risk to the health and safety of the public or the health and welfare of animals.

Some more modest changes not directly related to NRVR have been included in the amendment bill. The principal change is to allow the Veterinary Surgeons Board of South Australia to recognise courses or veterinary education on the recommendation of the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council Incorporated (AVBC). The previous act required the board to independently approve such courses of education, which is an unnecessary burden given that a principal function of the AVBC is to approve courses in education in veterinary science in Australia and New Zealand on behalf of all relevant veterinary boards.

It will be the responsibility of the Veterinary Surgeons Board of South Australia, as well as the corresponding boards in all other Australian jurisdictions, to assist veterinarians and their clients to become aware of the new arrangements of national recognition of veterinary registration. The veterinary boards will be required to ensure that any restrictions, variations or limitations that they may individually apply to the registration of veterinarians are communicated to all other veterinary boards so that users of the veterinary services can be assured that veterinarians they use are appropriately controlled.

The bill will significantly reduce the regulatory burden on veterinary surgeons who work in multiple Australian jurisdictions. This will also improve client access to veterinary services across Australia, especially in regional areas. I expect that all members will favourably consider supporting these amendments.

Finally, the bill provides for an additional member of the Veterinary Surgeons Board of South Australia to be nominated by the council of the University of Adelaide to be a veterinary surgeon engaged in teaching veterinary science. This reflects the importance of the university's new School of Animal and Veterinary Sciences to train new veterinarians to the highest level of professionalism.

The South Australian government contributed $5 million to assist with the establishment of the veterinarian school at the University of Adelaide, increasing its potential value to the state. The university commits a substantial part of its curriculum to developing in veterinary students the attributes which are of critical relevance to the responsibilities of the Veterinary Surgeons Board. This additional board position should therefore enhance its effectiveness and operations.

I commend this bill to you and I seek leave to have the explanation of clauses inserted into Hansard without my reading them.

Leave granted.