Veterinary Nurses Case for Change

A. Administrative information

Name of IRC: Rural and Related Industry Reference Committee
Name of SSO: Skills Impact

This business case provides evidence of the need to review relevant Veterinary Nursing components of the *ACM10 Animal Care and Management Training Package* to ensure it reflects the current skill needs of industry. The Veterinary Nurses Council of Australia (VNCA), National Industry Advisory Group for Veterinary Nursing (NIAG) and the Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) want to make certain that they have access to best practice occupational skills standards that will assist in addressing issues related to large enrolment numbers that have impacted on the quality of skill levels that are exhibited in new applicants for positions.

The proposed components that require review to ensure the training package can be used to benchmark participant occupational performance comprise of the following; (See full list at Appendix A)
- 6 qualifications
- 52 units of competency
- 1 - 12 new units of competency.

Description of scope of work is at Part C below.

B. Why a case for change?

The Business Case will encapsulate clear articulation of the professional standards of performance required by industry. Having those standards reflected in the occupational skills standards contained within training packages is an important part of supporting the industry to demonstrate that participants are able to be assessed and where necessary trained to the standards set by the industry.

During 2015 the *ACM10 Animal Care and Management Training Package* was reviewed with the aim of it being able to meet the 2012 *Standards for Training Packages*. The ACM components of the Training Package were submitted to the department for endorsement by the Australian Industry Skills Committee but did not proceed due to the failure of the review work to meet the 2012 training package standards and Industry not supporting the endorsement of the training package in response to entry requirement issues in the Certificate IV in Veterinary Nursing not being addressed by the previous Industry Skills Council.

The need for Skills Impact to carry out work on the units to ensure they meet the 2012 Standards provides the opportunity to address a range of issues in response to industry feedback. To reduce the administrative burden to both the veterinary nursing and vocational education and training sectors, the VNCA, NIAG and AVA have requested that in addition to making the changes to the units of competency and qualifications to meet the 2012 Standards which has been commissioned by the department, a range of improvements should be made at the same time and be addressed in a single project. This request has been supported by the Rural and Related Industry Reference Committee and is the subject of this case for change.

Veterinary Nurses Case for Change

C. Outcome of the research and consultation carried out as part of this case for change

Table 1: The ACM10 training package has the following specific qualifications:

Name of qualification	No. of RTOs
ACM40412 Certificate IV in Veterinary Nursing	30
ACM20110 Certificate II in Animal Studies	47
ACM50312 Diploma of Veterinary Nursing (Dental)	0
ACM50412 Diploma of Veterinary Nursing (Emergency and Critical Care)	8
ACM50512 Diploma of Veterinary Nursing (General Practice)	14
ACM50212 Diploma of Veterinary Nursing (Surgical)	5

Table 2: Enrolment data[1]

Qualification Name:	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
ACM40412 Certificate IV IN Veterinary Nursing	2,648	2,770	3,082	6,593	8,416
ACM50312 Diploma of Veterinary Nursing (Dental)	0	20	21	0	0
ACM50412 Diploma of Veterinary Nursing (Emergency and Critical Care)	51	36	48	10	15
ACM50512 Diploma of Veterinary Nursing (General Practice)	0	0	12	33	28
ACM50212 Diploma of Veterinary Nursing (Surgical)	16	16	16	0	8

The increase in enrolments in Certificate IV in Veterinary Nursing over the past two years is a concern to VNCA and AVA, due to the fact that there are approximately 3,000 registered Veterinary Surgeries in Australia. A significant issue for the Associations is that there are not enough surgeries available for candidates to meet the requirements of work placement satisfactorily and gain the skills and knowledge required to facilitate valid vocational outcomes for graduates. These numbers also place additional burden on veterinary practices which have a core business of providing quality, professional animal care.

Meetings with VNCA, NIAG and AVA identified changes to Veterinary Nursing qualifications is required and should incorporate a functional analysis of the industry and possible structural changes to the qualifications as follows:

- identify areas in the assessment requirements that are vague and do not meet the specific needs identified by the VNCA, NIAG, AVA.
- ensure that educationally sound assessment requirements are put into place so as to identify evidence of required skills
- explore prerequisite requirements, such as Certificate II in Animal Studies or equivalent to become a prerequisite for Certificate IV in Veterinary Nursing
- review the duplication of units of competency in Certificate IV in Veterinary Nursing that are already in the Certificate II of Animal Studies
- develop new units that addresses animal anatomy and physiology that will be included as a core unit in the Certificate IV of Veterinary Nursing.

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[1] Data sourced from National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER)

Veterinary Nurses Case for Change

The AVA and NIAG have proposed that the Diploma qualifications need urgent change to keep up with new industry practices including advancing technology and changing societal expectations of very high level nursing care. Reviewing of these units is highly recommended to facilitate merging the four specialist Diploma of Veterinary Nursing qualifications and embedding specialty streams in to a single qualification. Industry would anticipate emerging specialties such as oncology, dermatology and specialised equine specialty units to be included in this.

- Diploma of Veterinary Nursing (Dental)
- Diploma of Veterinary Nursing (Emergency and Critical Care)
- Diploma of Veterinary Nursing (General Practice) Greyhound Primary Educator
- Diploma of Veterinary Nursing (Surgical)

All units of competency will be fully reviewed in this process ensuring a stronger emphasis on robust evidence collection and assessment requirements.

D. Estimated impacts of proposed change

In response to the feedback from VNCA, NIAG and AVA changes will facilitate better occupational outcomes and ensure that Veterinary Nurse graduates have the opportunity to apply skills in 'real-world' workplace environments and are work ready at the completion of the qualifications.

The Veterinary Nurses Council of Australia (VNCA), the Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) and the National Industry Advisory Group for Veterinary Nursing (NIAG) Australia have indicated a strong commitment to education and training with a focus on ensuring that national, standardised competency-based training and assessment is in place.

Minor interdependencies occur due to the close relationship between the veterinary and animal care industries and the agriculture Industries. There are some overlaps in the services and functions. A number of units from the *AHC Agricultural, Horticultural and Conservation and Land Management* are imported into the veterinary nurse's qualifications. It is not intended that these imported units will be reviewed as part of this project.

E. Outstanding issues

There are no outstanding issues

F. Proposed approach and estimated timeframes for undertaking development work

Training package development and review work will follow the standard stages of project scoping, technical development, validation, final draft, quality check, validation and endorsement.

The recommended time to complete work is 8 months to the time of submission for endorsement. If this Business Case is approved, the next phase will be to review and modify existing units to be consistent with industry feedback and requirements

The work will be informed by a Technical Advisory Committee consisting of:

- Veterinary Nurses Council of Australia (VNCA) representatives
- National Industry Advisory Group for Veterinary Nurses (NIAG) representatives
- Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) representatives
- Veterinarians in practice
- Veterinary Nurses in practice
- Animal welfare group (such as RSPCA NSW). representatives

This group will provide the subject matter expertise and appropriate coverage of how the Training Package can address the key issues.

G. Training product review status

See Appendix A.

H. IRC Signoff

This business case was agreed to by

REGINALD ALLAN KIDD

(Name of Chair)

Signature of Chair

APPENDIX A - Training Product Review Status					
Revised Training Package Code and Name	**Revised Qualification Code and name**	**Revised Unit of Competency Code and Name**	**Revised Skill Set Code and Name**	**Review Status**	**Change Required**
ACM10 Animal Care and Management	ACM40412 Certificate IV in Veterinary Nursing				3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMGAS202 Participate in workplace communications			3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMGAS204 Feed and water animals			3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMGAS205 Assist in health care of animals			3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMGAS208 Source information for animal care needs			3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMINF301 Comply with infection control policies and procedures in animal work			3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMMIC401 Implant microchip in cats and dogs			3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMSPE301 Provide basic care of amphibians			3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMSPE302 Provide basic care of birds			3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMSPE303 Provide basic care of native mammals			3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMSPE304 Provide basic care of dogs			3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMSPE305 Provide basic care of domestic cats			3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMSPE306 Provide basic care of marine fish			3.5

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ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMSPE307 Provide basic care of freshwater fish			3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMSPE308 Provide basic care of marine aquatic invertebrates			3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMSPE309 Provide basic care of terrestrial and freshwater invertebrates			3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMSPE310 Provide basic care of mammals			3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMSPE311 Provide basic care of non-venomous reptiles			3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMSPE312 Provide basic care of rodents and rabbits			3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMSUS301 Apply environmentally sustainable work practices			3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMVET201 Carry out veterinary nursing reception duties			3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMVET202 Carry out daily practice routines			3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMVET203 Assist with surgery preparation			3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMVET401 Coordinate patient admission and discharge			3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMVET402 Apply imaging routines			3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMVET403 Perform practice pathology procedures			3.5

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ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMVET404 Perform practice office procedures			3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMVET405 Carry out surgical nursing routines			3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMVET406 Nurse animals			3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMVET407 Carry out medical nursing routines			3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMVET408 Coordinate and perform theatre routines			3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMVET409 Provide specific animal care advice			3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMVET410 Carry out veterinary dental nursing procedures			3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMVET411 Prepare, deliver and review animal care education programs			3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMVET412 Coordinate practice promotional activities			3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMVET413 Develop and implement specific practice policies			3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMVET414 Nurse foals			3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMVET415 Provide intensive foal care and nursing			3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMWHS301 Contribute to work health and safety processes			3.5

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ACM10 Animal Care and Management	ACM20110 Certificate II in Animal Studies				3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management	ACM50312 Diploma of Veterinary Nursing (Dental)				3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management	ACM50412 Diploma of Veterinary Nursing (Emergency and Critical Care)				3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management	ACM50512 Diploma of Veterinary Nursing (General Practice)				3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management	ACM50212 Diploma of Veterinary Nursing (Surgical)				3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMVET501 Manage nursing requirements for specialised surgical procedures			3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Managements		ACMVET502 Carry out post-operative nursing routines			3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMVET503 Produce veterinary dental oral cavity radiographs			3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMVET504 Provide veterinary dental nursing support for advanced veterinary dental surgery			3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMVET505 Prepare for emergency response			3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMVET506 Perform emergency procedures to sustain life			3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMVET507 Provide nursing support for critical care surgery			3.5

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ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMVET508 Support veterinary practice communication and professional development			3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMVET509 Manage veterinary nursing procedures			3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMVET510 Apply veterinary nursing pathophysiology			3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMVET511 Apply principles of animal behaviour			3.5
ACM10 Animal Care and Management		ACMWHS501 Manage work health and safety processes			3.5