

Veterinary Board of the Northern Territory

(GPO Box 3000, DARWIN, NT 0801)

REGISTRATION UNDER THE *MUTUAL RECOGNITION ACT* – ADVISORY NOTE

OVERVIEW

The registration of veterinarians in Australia is a State/Territory responsibility and is regulated by separate legislation in each jurisdiction. The Veterinary Boards are the designated legal authorities under the relevant legislation to administer registration.

In the Northern Territory, applicants for registration must comply with the requirements of the *Veterinarians Act*. However, **an additional and alternative pathway to obtaining registration is provided** under Australian Commonwealth and complementary State and Territory laws **through a process of reciprocal recognition of registration of the qualifications** of a practitioner who is registered in another jurisdiction. **This is known as mutual recognition.**

PRINCIPLE

Under the provisions of the *Mutual Recognition Act 1992* a **person who has a current authority to practise in one State/Territory** in an occupation recognised as equivalent to an occupation in another State/Territory, **is eligible to be registered** and to carry on that equivalent occupation **in the second State or Territory. This right may be exercised through lodgement of a written notice, verified by statutory declaration. The written notice (application form) must cover the matters listed at section 19(2) of the *Mutual Recognition Act 1992*.** The same mutual recognition arrangements apply to New Zealand under section 18(2) of the *Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Act 1997*.

JURISDICTION

The *Mutual Recognition Act* and the *Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Act* **cover all occupations for which some form of legislation-based registration, certification, licensing, approval, admission or other form of authorisation is required** by individuals in order **to practise legally** the occupation. **No occupations are exempt from the *Mutual Recognition Act*. Both Acts are in force in all jurisdictions, by virtue of enabling State/Territory legislation** (that commenced in most jurisdictions in 1993 and 1998, with the exception of WA, which commenced its *Mutual Recognition Act* in 1995 and *Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Act* in December 2007).

BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES

The responsibilities and duties of registering authorities prescribed in section 39 of the *Mutual Recognition Act* require Boards to facilitate (and publish guidelines on) **the operation of relevant sections of the Act. A copy of sections of the *Mutual Recognition Act* relating to occupations (ie sections 19 to 42) is attached.**

ACCESS - LINKS TO GUIDES AND COPIES OF RELEVANT LEGISLATION

A “Users’ Guide” to the legislation produced by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in 2006, to assist registered occupations and administrators of the scheme(s) can be viewed at

http://www.innovation.gov.au/Industry/TradePolicies/MRA/Documents/TT_MRA_UsersGuide.pdf

Copies of the Australian MR and TTMR Acts are available at www.comlaw.gov.au

A copy of the New Zealand TTMR Act is available at www.brookersonline.co.nz

Copies of the State and Territory MR and TTMR Acts are available at:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• www.legislation.nsw.gov.au (New South Wales)• www.dms.dpc.vic.gov.au (Victoria)• www.legislation.qld.gov.au/OQPChome.htm (Queensland)• www.slp.wa.gov.au/statutes/swans.nsf (Western Australia) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• www.parliament.sa.gov.au/dbsearch/legsearch.htm (South Australia)• www.thelaw.tas.gov.au/index.w3p (Tasmania)• www.nt.gov.au/dcm/legislation/current.shtml (Northern Territory)• www.legislation.act.gov.au (Australian Capital Territory) |
|---|--|

NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA

MUTUAL RECOGNITION (NORTHERN TERRITORY) ACT

An Act relating to the recognition of regulatory standards adopted in Australia
regarding goods and occupations

4. Interpretation

(1) In this Act, unless the contrary intention appears:

"conditions", when used in relation to occupations, means conditions, limitations or restrictions;

"deemed registration" means deemed registration as defined in section 25;

"equivalent", when used in relation to occupations, has a meaning affected by Division 4 of Part 3;

"goods" means goods of any kind, and includes:

- (a) animals; or
- (b) a package containing goods; or
- (c) a label attached to goods;

"grant", when used in relation to registration, means grant, issue or otherwise confer registration;

"import" means import from outside Australia;

"labelling" of goods includes any means by which, at the point of sale, information is attached to goods or is displayed in relation to goods without being attached to them;

"local registration authority" of a State for an occupation means the person or authority in the State having the function conferred by legislation of registering persons in connection with their carrying on of that occupation in the State;

"occupation" means an occupation, trade, profession or calling of any kind that may be carried on only by registered persons, where registration is wholly or partly dependent on the attainment or possession of some qualification (for example, training, education, examination, experience, character or being fit or proper), and includes a specialisation in any of the above in which registration may be granted;

"participating jurisdiction" has the meaning given by section 43;

Mutual Recognition (Northern Territory) Act

"produce" includes to manufacture, and also includes to harvest or otherwise produce in the course of any form of primary production;

"registration" includes the licensing, approval, admission, certification (including by way of practising certificates), or any other form of authorisation, of a person required by or under legislation for the carrying on of an occupation;

"requirements", when used in relation to goods, means requirements, prohibitions, restrictions or conditions;

"sell" includes sell by wholesale or retail, and includes distribute for sale, expose or offer for sale or have in possession for sale or agree to sell, and includes barter, and includes supply by way of exchange, lease, hire or hire-purchase;

"State" includes the Australian Capital Territory or the Northern Territory;

"substantive registration" means registration under a law of a State, but does not include deemed registration;

"Tribunal" means the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

PART 3 – OCCUPATIONS

Division 1 – Preliminary

16. Mutual recognition

(1) The mutual recognition principle as applying to occupations is as set out in this Part.

(2) This Part deals with the ability of a person who is registered in connection with an occupation in a State to carry on an equivalent occupation in another State.

(3) In this Part, the first-mentioned State is called "the first State", and the other State is called "the second State".

17. Entitlement to carry on occupation

(1) The mutual recognition principle is that, subject to this Part, a person who is registered in the first State for an occupation is, by this Act, entitled after notifying the local registration authority of the second State for the equivalent occupation:

(a) to be registered in the second State for the equivalent occupation; and

Mutual Recognition (Northern Territory) Act

- (b) pending such registration, to carry on the equivalent occupation in the second State.

(2) However, the mutual recognition principle is subject to the exception that it does not affect the operation of laws that regulate the manner of carrying on an occupation in the second State, so long as those laws:

- (a) apply equally to all persons carrying on or seeking to carry on the occupation under the law of the second State; and
- (b) are not based on the attainment or possession of some qualification or experience relating to fitness to carry on the occupation.

18. Application of this Part

- (1) This Part applies to individuals and occupations carried on by them.

(2) This Part extends to an occupation carried on by an individual, where the individual is subject to more than one system of registration or more than one local registration authority in a State, and accordingly this Part applies in relation to each such system of registration and each such authority.

(3) Without limiting subsection (2), an example of such an occupation is that of a legal practitioner, which involves both the admission as a legal practitioner by a court and the issue of a practising certificate by another body.

Division 2 – Entitlement to Registration

19. Notification to local registration authority

(1) A person who is registered in the first State for an occupation may lodge a written notice with the local registration authority of the second State for the equivalent occupation, seeking registration for the equivalent occupation in accordance with the mutual recognition principle.

- (2) The notice must:
 - (a) state that the person is registered for the occupation in the first State and specify that State; and
 - (b) state the occupation for which registration is sought and that it is being sought in accordance with the mutual recognition principle; and
 - (c) specify all the States in which the person has substantive registration for equivalent occupations; and
 - (d) state that the person is not the subject of disciplinary proceedings in any State (including any preliminary investigations or action that might lead to disciplinary proceedings) in relation to those occupations; and

Mutual Recognition (Northern Territory) Act

- (e) state that the person's registration in any State is not cancelled or currently suspended as a result of disciplinary action; and
- (f) state that the person is not otherwise personally prohibited from carrying on any such occupation in any State, and is not subject to any special conditions in carrying on that occupation, as a result of criminal, civil or disciplinary proceedings in any State; and
- (g) specify any special conditions to which the person is subject in carrying on any such occupation in any State; and
- (h) give consent to the making of inquiries of, and the exchange of information with, the authorities of any State regarding the person's activities in the relevant occupation or occupations or otherwise regarding matters relevant to the notice.

(3) The notice must be accompanied by a document that is either the original or a copy of the instrument evidencing the person's existing registration (or, if there is no such instrument, by sufficient information to identify the person and the person's registration).

(4) As regards the instrument evidencing the person's existing registration, the person must certify in the notice that the accompanying document is the original or a complete and accurate copy of the original.

(5) The statements and other information in the notice must be verified by statutory declaration.

(6) The local registration authority may permit the notice to be amended after it is lodged.

20. Entitlement to registration and continued registration

(1) A person who lodges a notice under section 19 with a local registration authority of the second State is entitled to be registered in the equivalent occupation, as if the law of the second State that deals with registration expressly provided that registration in the first State is a sufficient ground of entitlement to registration.

(2) The local registration authority may grant registration on that ground and may grant renewals of such registration.

(3) Once a person is registered on that ground, the entitlement to registration continues, whether or not registration (including any renewal of registration) ceases in the first State.

(4) Continuance of registration is otherwise subject to the laws of the second State, to the extent to which those laws –

Mutual Recognition (Northern Territory) Act

- (a) apply equally to all persons carrying on or seeking to carry on the occupation under the law of the second State; and
- (b) are not based on the attainment or possession of some qualification or experience relating to fitness to carry on the occupation.

(5) The local registration authority may impose conditions on registration, but may not impose conditions that are more onerous than would be imposed in similar circumstances (having regard to relevant qualifications and experience) if it were registration effected apart from this Part, unless they are conditions that apply to the person's registration in the first State or that are necessary to achieve equivalence of occupations.

- (6) This section has effect subject to this Part.

21. Action following notice

(1) Registration must be granted within one month after the notice is lodged with the local registration authority under section 19.

(2) When granted, registration takes effect as from the date the notice was lodged.

(3) However, the local registration authority may, subject to this Part and within one month after the notice was lodged, postpone or refuse the grant of registration.

(4) If the local registration authority neither grants the registration nor takes action under subsection (3) within the period of one month after the notice is lodged, the person is entitled to registration immediately at the end of that period and no objection may be taken to the notice on any of the grounds on which refusal or postponement may be effected, except where fraud is involved.

22. Postponement of registration

- (1) A local registration authority may postpone the grant of registration, if:
 - (a) any of the statements or information in the notice as required by section 19 are materially false or misleading; or
 - (b) any document or information as required by section 19(3) has not been provided or is materially false or misleading; or
 - (c) the circumstances of the person lodging the notice have materially changed since the date of the notice or the date it was lodged; or
 - (d) the authority decides that the occupation in which registration is sought is not an equivalent occupation.

Mutual Recognition (Northern Territory) Act

(2) If the grant of registration has been postponed, the local registration authority may in due course grant or refuse the registration.

(3) The local registration authority may not postpone the grant of registration for longer than a period of 6 months, and the person is entitled to registration immediately, at the end of that period, unless registration was refused at or before the end of that period.

(4) Nothing in subsection (3) prevents earlier registration from being granted or a review by the Tribunal.

23. Refusal of registration

(1) A local registration authority may refuse the grant of registration, if:

- (a) any of the statements or information in the notice as required by section 19 are materially false or misleading; or
- (b) any document or information as required by section 19 (3) has not been provided or is materially false or misleading; or
- (c) the authority decides that the occupation in which registration is sought is not an equivalent occupation and equivalence cannot be achieved by the imposition of conditions.

(2) A decision to refuse to grant registration on the ground that the occupation in which registration is sought is not an equivalent occupation takes effect at the end of a specified period (not less than 2 weeks) after the person is notified of the decision, unless it has been previously revoked or there is an application for review to the Tribunal, in which case the Tribunal may make whatever orders it considers appropriate.

24. Notification of decision

A local registration authority must give the person who lodges a notice in accordance with section 19 a notice in writing of its decision to grant registration, or to postpone or refuse the grant of registration, or to impose conditions on registration.

Division 3 – Interim Arrangements

25. Deemed registration

(1) A person who lodges a notice under section 19 with a local registration authority of a State is, pending the grant or refusal of registration, taken to be registered as provided in section 20.

(2) Such registration is called "deemed registration" in this Act.

(3) Deemed registration in one State does not of itself provide a basis for registration in another State.

26. Duration of deemed registration

(1) A person's deemed registration in the second State continues until it is cancelled or suspended or otherwise ceases in accordance with this Part.

(2) A person's deemed registration in the second State ceases if the person becomes substantively registered in the State in connection with the occupation concerned.

(3) A person's deemed registration in the second State ceases if the local registration authority of the State refuses to grant registration, subject to any determination of the Tribunal.

(4) A person's deemed registration in the second State ceases if the person ceases to be substantively registered in every other State mentioned in the notice as required by section 19(2)(c).

(5) A local registration authority of the second State may cancel a person's deemed registration in the second State if the person requests cancellation.

(6) Deemed registration is not affected by postponement of the grant of substantive registration.

27. Activities under deemed registration

(1) A person who has deemed registration in the second State may carry on the occupation in the second State as if the deemed registration were substantive registration in the second State.

(2) However, the person may do so only:

(a) within the limits conferred by the person's substantive registration in the first State; and

(b) within the limits conferred by the person's deemed registration in the second State; and

(c) subject to any conditions or undertakings applying to the person's registration in the first State, unless waived by the local registration authority of the second State under this section; and

(d) subject to any conditions applying to the person's deemed registration.

(3) Without limiting anything in this Division:

(a) the person may not carry on the occupation in the second State without complying with any requirements regarding insurance, fidelity funds, trust accounts and the like that are designed to protect the public, clients, customers or others; and

Mutual Recognition (Northern Territory) Act

- (b) a person who has deemed registration in an occupation in the second State is subject to any disciplinary provisions and arrangements that are applicable to persons who are substantively registered in that State; and
- (c) references in the law of the second State to persons registered in an occupation under the law of that State (however expressed) extend to persons who have deemed registration for the occupation under this Act.

(4) However, the local registration authority of the second State may waive any condition imposed under the law of the first State, or any undertaking given to the local registration authority of the first State, if it thinks it appropriate in the circumstances.

(5) The local registration authority of the second State may impose conditions as if deemed registration were substantive registration, but it must not impose conditions that are more onerous than would be imposed in similar circumstances (having regard to relevant qualifications and experience) if it were registration effected apart from this Part, unless they correspond to conditions or undertakings that apply to the person's registration in the first State or that are necessary to achieve equivalence of occupations.

Division 4 – Equivalent Occupations

28. Equivalent occupations

The equivalence of occupations carried on in different States is to be determined in accordance with this Part.

29. General principle

(1) An occupation for which persons may be registered in the first State is taken to be equivalent to an occupation for which persons may be registered in the second State if the activities authorised to be carried out under each registration are substantially the same (whether or not this result is achieved by means of the imposition of conditions).

(2) Conditions may be imposed on registration under this Part so as to achieve equivalence between occupations in different States.

(3) This section has effect subject to any relevant declarations in force under this Division.

30. Declarations as to equivalent occupations

(1) This Part is to be given effect in accordance with relevant declarations (if any) made under this Division regarding equivalent occupations.

(2) If a declaration made by the Tribunal and a declaration made by Ministers are inconsistent, the ministerial declaration prevails.

(3) A declaration under this Part does not affect the registration of any person already registered (except in the case of a declaration made by the Tribunal in relation to that person specifically).

31. Declarations by tribunal

(1) On a review, the Tribunal may make an order that a person who is registered in a particular occupation in a particular State is or is not entitled to registration in another State in a particular occupation, and may specify or describe conditions that will achieve equivalence.

(2) On such a review, the Tribunal may make a declaration that occupations carried on in two States are not equivalent, but only if the Tribunal is satisfied that:

- (a) the activities involved in the occupations are not substantially the same (even with the imposition of conditions); or
- (b) registration in one State should not entitle registered persons to carry on a particular activity or class of activity in the other State, where:
 - (i) the activity or class of activity is a material part of the practice of a person registered in the first State for the occupation; and
 - (ii) the activity or class of activity, if carried out by a person not conforming to the appropriate standards, could reasonably be expected to expose persons in the other State to a real threat to their health or safety or could reasonably be expected to cause significant environmental pollution (including air, water, noise or soil pollution); and
 - (iii) it is not practicable to protect the health or safety of such persons from that threat or the environment from such pollution by regulating the manner in which services in the occupation are provided.

(3) The Registrar or other proper officer of the Tribunal must cause a notice setting out the terms of a declaration under this section to be promptly published in the *Gazette*.

(4) A declaration made on the basis of paragraph (2)(b) has effect for no longer than 12 months, and the local registration authority must promptly notify appropriate authorities in each other State and the Commonwealth of the declaration.

(5) The local registration authority is to give effect to the decision on the review, and must thereafter act in conformity with the decision in relation to other persons seeking registration.

32. Declarations by Ministers

(1) A Minister from each of two or more States may jointly declare, by notice in the *Gazette*, that specified occupations are equivalent, and may specify or describe conditions that will achieve equivalence.

(2) The declaration may be amended or rescinded in the same way.

(3) The declaration has effect only in relation to the States concerned.

(4) The appropriate local registration authority is to give effect to the declaration.

Division 5 – General Provisions

33. Disciplinary action

(1) If a person's registration in an occupation in a State:

(a) is cancelled or suspended; or

(b) is subject to a condition,

on disciplinary grounds, or as a result of or in anticipation of criminal, civil or disciplinary proceedings; the person's registration in the equivalent occupation in another State is affected in the same way.

(2) However, the local registration authority of the other State may reinstate any cancelled or suspended registration or waive any such condition if it thinks it appropriate in the circumstances.

(3) This section extends to registration effected apart from this Act.

(4) This section has effect despite any other provisions of this Part.

34. Review of decisions

(1) Subject to the *Administrative Appeals Tribunal Act 1975*, application may be made to the Tribunal for review of a decision of a local registration authority in relation to its functions under this Act.

(2) In subsection (1):

"decision" has the same meaning as in the *Administrative Appeals Tribunal Act 1975*.

(3) If a local registration authority gives a person written notice of the making of a decision referred to in subsection (1), the notice must include a statement to the effect that:

Mutual Recognition (Northern Territory) Act

- (a) subject to the *Administrative Appeals Tribunal Act 1975*, application for review of the decision may be made to the Tribunal by a person whose interests are affected by the decision; and
- (b) except where subsection 28(4) of that Act applies, application may be made in accordance with section 28 of that Act by or on behalf of that person for a statement in writing setting out the findings on material questions of fact, referring to the evidence or other material on which those findings were based, and giving the reasons for the decision.

(4) Any failure to comply with a requirement of subsection (3) does not affect the validity of the decision.

35. Costs

The Tribunal may order a party in proceedings before it to pay costs if the party has acted unreasonably.

36. Residence or domicile

Residence or domicile in a particular State is not to be a prerequisite for or a factor in entitlement to the grant, renewal or continuation of registration arising under this Part.

37. Furnishing information

(1) A local registration authority of a State must furnish without delay any information reasonably required by a local registration authority of another State about a person substantively registered under a law of the first-mentioned State.

(2) The obligation imposed under this section does not apply unless the authority of the other State notifies the authority of the first-mentioned State that the information is required in connection with:

- (a) a notice lodged by a person seeking registration; or
- (b) a person's deemed registration; or
- (c) actual or possible disciplinary action against the person.

(3) The authority of the first-mentioned State is empowered to provide the information, despite any law relating to secrecy or confidentiality.

(4) Nothing in this section affects any obligation or power to provide information apart from this section.

38. Receiving information

If a local registration authority receives information under section 37, the information is subject to any law relating to secrecy or confidentiality that would apply if the information were provided under the law of the State under which the authority is constituted or exercises its functions.

39. General responsibilities of local registration authorities

(1) It is the duty of each local registration authority to facilitate the operation of this Part in relation to the occupations for which the authority is responsible, and in particular to make use of the power to impose conditions in such a way as to promote the mutual recognition principle.

(2) It is the duty of each local registration authority to prepare and make available guidelines and information regarding the operation of this Part in relation to the occupations for which the authority is responsible.

(3) The first such guidelines and information are to be available within 6 months after the commencement of this section.

40. Fees

(1) A local registration authority has power to impose fees in relation to substantive or deemed registration or the continuance of registration arising under this Part, but any such fees may not be greater than are applicable for registration apart from this Part.

(2) Nothing in this section prevents the fixing or prescribing of fees referred to in this section under any other law of a State, but the fees may not be greater than can be imposed under this section.

(3) The local registration authority may impose a condition on substantive or deemed registration arising under this Part to the effect that a person may not carry out activities under registration unless a fee or other payment has been paid, but such a condition may not be imposed unless it corresponds to a requirement attaching to registration apart from this Part.

(4) This section does not authorise the imposition of a tax.

41. Formalities requiring personal attendance

(1) Neither substantive or deemed registration, nor entitlement to registration, under this Part requires compliance with any statutory or other formalities requiring personal attendance in the second State.

(2) This section applies to formalities that would otherwise have to be complied with before, at or after registration.

42. Saving

Nothing in this Part prevents a person from seeking registration or being registered for an occupation under a law apart from this Part.

PART 4 – GENERAL

43. References to participating jurisdictions

For the purposes of this Act, a participating jurisdiction is:

- (a) a State (other than a Territory) for which there is in force an Act of its Parliament that refers to the Parliament of the Commonwealth the power to enact this Act, or that adopts this Act, under paragraph (xxxvii) of section 51 of the Commonwealth Constitution; or
- (b) a Territory (being the Australian Capital Territory or the Northern Territory) for which there is in force an Act of its legislature that requests the Parliament of the Commonwealth to enact this Act or that enables this Act to apply in relation to it.

44. Application of mutual recognition principle

(1) The mutual recognition principle and the provisions of this Act may be taken into consideration in proceedings of any kind and for any purpose.

(2) Nothing in this Act prevents a person from relying on the mutual recognition principle in relation to more than two States.

45. Machinery provisions regarding limitations &c.

In cases where Part 3 provides that conditions or undertakings that apply or are relevant to registration in the first State also apply or are relevant to registration in the second State, they are to be construed with any necessary adaptations, including the following (where appropriate and so far as practicable):

- (a) references to the first State are to be read as references to the second State;
- (b) references to officers or authorities of the first State are to be read as references to the corresponding officers or authorities of the second State.

46. Determining place of production

(1) For the purpose of determining where goods are produced for the purposes of this Act, goods are taken to be produced in the State where the most recent step has occurred in the process of producing the goods (including for example processing, harvesting or packaging the goods).

- (2) Subsection (1) applies even though:
 - (a) the process of production may be incomplete; or
 - (b) some steps in the process have not yet been carried out; or

Mutual Recognition (Northern Territory) Act

- (c) some steps in the process were carried out elsewhere, whether in another State or outside Australia; or
- (d) the goods or a component of the goods were imported.

47. Amendment of schedules

(1) The Governor-General may make regulations amending the Schedules.

(2) No such regulation may be made unless the designated person for each of the then participating jurisdictions has published a notice in the official gazette of the jurisdiction setting out the terms of the proposed regulation and requesting that it be made.

(3) For the purposes of this section, the designated person for a State is the Governor, for the Australian Capital Territory is the Chief Minister and for the Northern Territory is the Administrator.

SCHEDULE 1

PERMANENT EXEMPTIONS: GOODS

(Secs. 14, 47)

1. Firearms and other prohibited or offensive weapons.
2. Fireworks.
3. Gaming machines.
4. Pornographic material.