

Terms of reference – Advocacy Advisory Committee

Ratified August 2021 by AVA board

Preamble

A (National) Advocacy Advisory Committee – a skills-based committee of members and staff advising the Board on advocacy priorities and facilitating the implementation of the annual advocacy plan.

Functions

- Advises the Board on advocacy priorities and advises the Veterinary and Public Affairs team with the design of annual advocacy plan and provides advice around implementation.
- Assist the PVA Team with triaging reactive advocacy issues.

Scope

Consolidates the AVA Voice on advocacy issues that are important to members to assist the Board and PVA Team.

Membership

It is made up of 9 members selected by the Board and includes a balance of geographic and policy expertise. Amongst its membership, it ideally includes:

- Expertise in public relations & campaigning (staff)
- Expertise in legislative processes
- Expertise in regulation across the following areas:
 - veterinary profession
 - companion and recreational animal
 - production animal
 - animal welfare
- Demographic diversity (age, gender, career stage, employment status)
- Board representative (Chair)

Chairing

Board representative

Meetings

The AAC will meet on a bimonthly basis with additional meetings as needed.

The quorum for AAC meetings will be a simple majority of the Committee with the Chair exercising a deliberative vote.

Appointment process

An Expression of Interest process will be used and open to all AVA members to apply. The Committee membership shall be appointed by the Board with oversight by Noms and Rems Committee.

Term

Three years (with potential of reappointment for up to three consecutive terms).

Staff

National Manager, Advocacy & Campaigns

Approval Process

The AAC will operate on a consensus basis when possible. Where required, a majority vote will be used in determining recommendations for Board. The AAC is advisory in nature and the Board retains authority over annual advocacy plans.

Responsibility of Members

Members of the AAC are responsible to:

- Comply with the AVA Code conduct
- Attend and participate in meetings, being prepared for meetings.
- Be responsive to requests for feedback outside meeting times.
- Declare conflicts of interest
- Undertake decision making in the interest of the AVA and whole membership
- Ensuring that the AVA Advocacy activity meets the expectations of the membership.

Confidentiality

Meetings of the AAC are confidential and correspondence must not be distributed outside the Committee, to any third parties, unless authorised by the Chair.

In some cases, members may need to sign a Confidentiality Agreement, depending on the nature of the issue.

Managing Conflict of interest

Conflicts of interests could be described as facts that, when revealed later, could make a reasonable person feel misled or deceived. An important concept is that there does not have to be an actual conflict for a reasonable person to feel misled or deceived. A perception of a potential conflict can be sufficient to be a conflict of interest.

These interests may be personal, commercial, political, academic or financial, and may be “material” or “perceived”. In either event, members of the Committee must declare any interest before joining the group. Minor or perceived conflicts of interest may be managed by the relevant member withdrawing for decisions directly related to their conflict. More material conflicts of interest may mean that the proposed member cannot join, or must withdraw permanently from the Committee should such a conflict arise subsequently.

