



## **Disease WatchDog Closure FAQ's**

### **What is Disease WatchDog?**

Disease WatchDog is Australia's national pet disease surveillance system.

Launched by Virbac Australia in 2010 and supported by the Australian Veterinarian Association, Disease WatchDog provided Australian veterinarians with an opportunity to capture, track and monitor disease outbreaks as a profession.

### **Who is Virbac Australia?**

Virbac (Australia) Pty Ltd is a specialist animal health company with its core business in sheep and cattle products, veterinary pharmaceuticals and vaccines, a wide range of pet care products for dogs and cats, plus a broad range of products for horses.

Virbac employs around 260 personnel and is passionate about animal health.

### **Why has Virbac Australia made the decision to close Disease Watchdog?**

1. Disease WatchDog has experienced lower rates of usage in the past year, with only 58 vets logging cases. This means that the number of cases logged have not been reflective of outbreak numbers being reported, which impacts the integrity and analysis of the data.
2. Disease WatchDog has been 'superseded' by a not-for-profit system called the Veterinary Companion Animal Surveillance System (VetCompass). Offering a similar database system to Disease WatchDog, VetCompass has the support of Australia's veterinary schools at Sydney, Adelaide, Melbourne, Queensland, Murdoch, Charles Sturt and James Cook Universities.

### **What is Virbac Australia going to replace Disease Watchdog with?**

Virbac Australia will not be replacing Disease WatchDog.

As part of the shut-down process of Disease WatchDog, Virbac Australia will be donating all de-identified data to VetCompass for future inclusion into university-based research, which will ultimately benefit the health and well-being of our companion animals.

### **What will happen to the data that has been collected on the site since 2010?**

As part of the shut-down process of Disease WatchDog, Virbac Australia will be donating all de-identified data to VetCompass (as above).

### **How will the privacy of existing data and registered users be protected?**

To protect the privacy of registered users all data will be de-identified prior to its donation to VetCompass meaning that all identifying information including names and addresses will be removed. No personal identifying information will be provided by Virbac to VetCompass.



## **When will the site closure happen?**

The 10<sup>th</sup> July 2017

## **What is the site closure process? What do I need to do?**

Registered users do not need to do anything the closure process and data transfer to VetCompass will occur in the backend of the website.

## **What is VetCompass?**

VetCompass is a project of the University of Sydney, University of Adelaide, University of Melbourne, University of Queensland, Murdoch University, Charles Sturt University and James Cook University, in collaboration with the Royal Veterinary College, London UK.

The idea behind this project is to build a database from information gathered during day-to-day veterinary consultations to increase the understanding of the frequency of and risk factors for disorders seen in Australian dogs and cats. Like Disease WatchDog, the program will provide a rich source of data for research into their health problems as encountered by veterinarians.

## **Where can I find out more information about VetCompass?**

Please refer to the VetCompass website – [www.vetcompass.com.au](http://www.vetcompass.com.au)

The Australian Veterinary Association also wrote a comprehensive article on VetCompass on their website – <http://www.ava.com.au/13625>

## **How do I register with VetCompass?**

Please contact the VetCompass Project Manager, Sophie Masters, at [vetcompass@sydney.edu.au](mailto:vetcompass@sydney.edu.au)

## **For more information contact:**

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