

**SUBMISSION TO THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE,
FORESTRY AND FISHERIES re: The Veterinary and Para Veterinary
Professions Amendment Bill (B25-2012)**

(by T.M. Bengis on behalf of Outraged SA Citizens Against poaching
[OSCAP])

It is a sad fact that since 2008 South Africa has been faced with a terrible onslaught from various quarters on its Rhinoceros population. It is a fact that almost 90% of the worlds Rhino population resides within South Africa, this as a result of incredible foresight, knowledge and dedication by many South Africans since the population of these animals had dwindled dramatically in the late 1950's and early 60's. Dr Ian Player and a number of his colleagues devised methods where these animals could be captured sedated and translocated to different areas thus allowing the increase in range and subsequent increase in population.

This program has proven, over the years, to be a success story that has no peer in the annals of conservation practice and history. As the methods used improved so has the advancement of the drugs used which has played no small part in this success, however as the success brings many and great accolade to South Africa, a new scourge has also developed and that is greed and avarice.

Some Veterinarians, unfortunately, have succumbed to this and given the access granted them by their professions, to these drugs have found it easy to succumb to this temptation and have now found themselves on the wrong side of the Law and facing numerous charges that relate to the illegal exploitation of our National Rhino Herd.

There are a number of Court Cases ongoing in which members of what should be a noble profession are charged. In addition other courts are filled with cases where poachers and their accomplices are on trial for poaching possession and other related acts a number of which have involved Veterinarians. Prosecution teams are unable to have at their disposal punitive measures to assist in the prosecution of these cases. Heavy sentences for those involved in these crimes are as yet not on the statute books and therefore there is little deterrent, however should the possibility exist that a licensed Veterinarian have the very real possibility of having his/her licence revoked for life should they be found to have participated in or be guilty of any Rhino or poaching related crime this could serve as a solid deterrent and would make any potential perpetrator think again, it would give the prosecution teams yet another weapon in this fight.

My submission is therefore that should a Veterinarian be charged with any Rhino/poaching crime that his/her licence to practice be suspended immediately and that the Veterinary council be informed immediately, should the vet be found guilty that his/her licence be revoked permanently.

I thank you