

## Opening statement

My name is Georgia LADMORE, I am a veterinarian, and have been working in regional NSW since graduating.

To begin, I think this problem can be better defined as a problem retaining veterinarians. This is a social issue, with animal welfare, human health, and potential economic impacts for Australia. I think it is prudent to identify that these problems are not unique to NSW nor Australia, and veterinarians across the world face similar challenges.

Unrealistic and unsustainable work practices are common themes within the veterinary industry, and the ways in which employers respond to current problems directly impacts responses and reactions they get from employees and potential employees.

Financial incentives to service rural and regional areas deserve consideration as this is where the biggest impacts on the economy will be felt. Options to help incentivise veterinarians to re-engage with the workforce should be considered by way of HECS forgiveness, childcare places as well as tax incentives for businesses and individuals. Considering proposals of HECS forgiveness alone leads me to the realisation that once such incentive is finished, and the HECS debt is nulled, what motivation remains for experienced vets to stay in rural and regional practice? Especially on the large animal disease surveillance front, we need experienced vets in rural and regional practices more than ever. Similarly, there are many veterinarians taking on childcare responsibilities as the other person in the household has a higher paying job and childcare places are difficult to secure.

I hope that the outcomes of this inquiry can help to cement the foundations of the veterinary profession, and unite professionals to be metaphorically singing from the same song sheet. A change in culture where workplaces embrace the opportunities provided by part time employees would help to lighten the load across the profession. Similarly, I feel that the development of a limited register, especially for international vets, is a plausible way to empower skilled veterinarians that are already living and working in our rural communities. All efforts to solidify professional relationships, and enhance resilience within veterinarians and organisations are to be encouraged. Working as a veterinarian is a difficult undertaking, and building professional communities helps to foster resilience in individuals, and across the profession.

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