
From: Georgia Ladmore
Sent: Tuesday, 19 September 2023 8:05 AM
To: Portfolio Committee 4
Cc: Portfolio Committee 4
Subject: Re: Inquiry into the veterinary workforce shortage in New South Wales - Post hearing responses
- Tuesday 29 August

Hi Sarah,

Please find my response to the question on notice;

Recommendations from the AVA

- **Recommendation 1:** The NSW Government commit to ongoing recognition and support of veterinarians to continue to build and maintain capacity for Emergency Animal Disease surveillance and response activities. **STRONGLY AGREE-** consider tax incentives for businesses and individuals that contribute to the surveillance for EADs, eg vets in mixed animal practice. Incentive could be related to full time equivalent work done.
- **Recommendation 2:** The NSW Government consider the pressing concerns experienced by government veterinarians and conduct a comprehensive review and develop a proactive strategy to support the critical work of our government veterinarians, ensure the health of our livestock, and maintain our ability to respond effectively to biosecurity threats and animal welfare issues. **AGREE-** however, I feel the government vets as they stand have some of the best workplace conditions, making the shift from private practice to government work appealing.
- **Recommendation 3:** The NSW Government commit funding to AVA's wellness initiative, THRIVE to support veterinarians and veterinary staff to lead satisfying, prosperous and healthy careers. **AGREE-** however, I feel that more needs to be done to enhance workplace culture from the viewpoint of employers. Employees are limited in the control they have over workplace conditions. Have you tried telling someone with a broken leg to do a webinar and try not to have a broken leg?
- **Recommendation 4:** The NSW Government consider funding a public awareness campaign to address the rising rates of verbal and physical assault of veterinary teams and to educate the community on the impact of their actions. For example, similar to the NSW Ambulance 'It's Never Okay' campaign. **AGREE-** Sophie's Legacy has already made monumental progress on this matter.
- **Recommendation 5:** The NSW Government consider funding for the profession to provide work integrated learning (WIL) opportunities for overseas veterinarians wishing to work in NSW as well as funding to assist international NSW applicants undertake the Australian veterinary examination process without financial hardship. **STRONGLY AGREE-** consider imposing timeframes that the candidate must work in Australia after completion of the exam process, and or regions to work in, to ensure long term sustainability.
- **Recommendation 6:** The NSW Government support changes to visa provisions including lifting of the age cap for permanent residency to be in line with the human medical field. **STRONGLY AGREE**
- **Recommendation 7:** The NSW Government provide resources to fund a think tank to develop an afterhours model that is sustainable for the profession and allows veterinary services to be delivered to the NSW community in both urban and rural areas 24/7. **STRONGLY AGREE-** I feel this is more useful and timely than the THRIVE program, and the real 'cost' of vets performing after hours is that they are much more likely to leave the profession afterwards. The NSW Veterinary Practitioners Board must be engaged with this process.

- **Recommendation 8:** The NSW Government Veterinary professionals are extended the same opportunities as other professions that are being encouraged to move to regional, rural and remote areas. STRONGLY AGREE- I feel this is useful and timely, but the metaphorical bucket needs to be plugged before we just add more vets- see recommendation 7.
- **Recommendation 9:** The AVA calls upon the NSW Government to explore solutions that support the veterinary sector in its role with stray animals, addressing the key issues outlined and promoting overall animal health, welfare, and public health. DISAGREE that this is a major factor influencing the workforce, though heartily agree that the difference in these matters is vastly different in different council areas.
- **Recommendation 10:** The NSW Government commits funding to develop and implement a framework that provides regulatory and appropriate financial support to the provision of veterinary services for lost, stray and homeless animals, injured wildlife and during emergency situations provided by all sectors of the profession (charities and the private veterinary sector). STRONGLY AGREE- consider contracting practitioners with appropriate skills and experience for natural disasters so that vets are remunerated appropriately and so that the animals have appropriate welfare outcomes. Vets Beyond Borders may be able to assist with this.
- **Recommendation 11:** The NSW Government through funding encourages industry and the veterinary profession to collaborate and develop a framework or solution that will improve integration of veterinary services into animal production systems that is workable for all parties. DISAGREE that this is a major factor influencing the workforce, though agree that this is important for animal welfare within production systems.
- **Recommendation 12:** The NSW Government support extending access to the national Translating and Interpreting Service for veterinarians. DISAGREE that this is a major factor influencing the workforce, though agree that this is important for people (clients) with non English speaking backgrounds.
- **Recommendation 13:** The NSW Government provide funding to resource the development of prioritisation and planning of the longer-term strategies that will have the most effective workforce outcomes for all stakeholders the veterinary profession serves and the profession itself. AGREE
- **Recommendation 14:** The NSW Government commit to legislative and regulatory reform to safeguard the role of the veterinary profession in the delivery of animal health and welfare, whilst making it adaptable to a constantly changing environment. This could be achieved by a review of the veterinary practice act and consider the interactions with other legislation including the prevention of cruelty to animals act. STRONGLY AGREE- The NSW Veterinary Practitioners Board must be engaged with this process.
- **Recommendation 15:** The NSW Government considers funding around educational fee relief to encourage early career veterinarians to work in rural NSW. STRONGLY AGREE- consider tax or HECS forgiveness incentives for individuals rural and regional practice. Incentive could be related to full time equivalent work done. Remember that HECS incentives alone don't leave much incentive for experienced veterinarians to continue sharing their accumulated wisdom once HECS fees are paid off.
- **Recommendation 16:** The NSW Government includes veterinarians in existing mechanisms to sustain medical and paramedical workers in rural areas of NSW. STRONGLY AGREE

Georgia LADMORE

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