

Submission
No 27

**INQUIRY INTO VETERINARY WORKFORCE SHORTAGE
IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 26 June 2023

Partially
Confidential

I've run a mixed animal Veterinary Clinic for 41 years in a small rural town of 700 people with a service radius of 100 km's.

I now employ a full time female Vet(3.5 years) & another female vet who has been with me for 6 years(who has had 2 children in that time & at present is working alternating 2 days one week & 3 days following week & does 1 week in 4 on call)

The things that concern me are

1) as it is , there are approximately 80% of females graduating in Veterinary Science and there is no doubt with my 2 vets they are very talented & professional. Maternity leave is an issue which has worked out pretty well for me but at times made it difficult to cater for that eventuality & also have 2 senior vet nurses/ administrators that have been with me for 36 & 23 years.

What concerns me in many surrounding vet practices is when young female vets get married & may have a family or not, often decide that they don't want to work at the old practice, they decide to start a part time vet business and choose to do the easy pickings from the back of the car in hours that suits them whether regularly or not. They don't provide a veterinary clinic to do intensive medicine or surgical services, don't have to have staff, equipment or regulated veterinary hospitals & none or very little after hours which appears to me to make it hard for principals of long term established practices. They get the best of both worlds with the easy pickings & every time a vet does this & taking the easy pickings, it would appear to me it makes it more difficult to get the easier low cost work to educate young vets & get their confidence up but also results in after hours often have to be provided to people who use these part time vets for the more mundane profitable easier jobs which would provide a lot of the simpler jobs for young vets, more money from young vets to run the clinics, develop young staff, provide after hours, employ more vets to provide rural Australia needs but appears not to being provided at present due to losing this easier work to out of the boot of the car vets when it suits them to provide services & don't provide after hours emergency or week end services.

There must be some way that these people must be more regulated & provide services like all our Vet Clinics are due to oversight by the hospital inspector from the Vet Surgeons Board.

2) The next thing is the more & more attempts of deregulation of S4 drugs where Agricultural Rural Merchandisers are continually advocating often with large rural lobby groups to change the the regulations so they become open sellers.(eg Meloxicam & trisolfen for pain relief for lamb marking & mulesing & ACP for ram sedation at shearing. These are things that provide a bit of extra profit to employ that extra vet, to get us onto properties & able to help farmers & provide services they may not have used & once they sit down & have a chat, they realise that we can provide them with valuable advice & services. All these things go to make up a practice that have enough resources to pay young vets a proper salary along with tuition & support.

3) After hours are a real issue & Joe Public can be quite unreasonable. Speaking from experience of 35 years as a single practitioner on call every hour of every day of that 35 years, that any calls that come after 10pm & before 6 am are usually in the main to people try to hold off going to the vet & then when it gets to midnight or 2 or 3 am panic or were too mean to ring earlier when it could have been done at a reasonable hour with a chance of a better result for there animal.

I believe that in rural practices we should turn the phone off from 10pm to 6 am & people will soon adjust to those hours. After hours on call Vet answering services have very little idea of your clinic demography & I believe complicate matters.

These are some of the things that eat away at the viability of Vet Practices in the bush.