

**Submission  
No 48**

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

**Name:** Mrs Ellie Robertson

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Mrs Ellie Robertson ,

04 July 2023

## **Inquiry into the Veterinary Workforce Shortage in New South Wales.**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the following submission in response to the NSW Government's invitation for public feedback on the Inquiry into the Veterinary Workforce Shortage in New South Wales.

I will address some of the Terms of Reference and my concerns below.

### **(a) the shortage of veterinarians across the profession, including clinical (small and large animal practice), government, academia, research, industry and pathology**

The shortage of vets means there is not much competition and vets can charge whatever they like, making it very expensive for low income people like myself.

### **(b) the challenges in maintaining a sustainable veterinary workforce, including recruitment and retention rates**

This is very concerning to me because at the end of the line, consumers will face difficulties in accessing and engaging vets.

### **(c) the burn-out and mental health challenges facing the veterinary profession**

As a consumer, it is worrying to think that a vet I am using for treatment of my animals, may be experiencing burnout and mental health challenges. Also, I don't like the idea of constantly changing vets just as I'm getting used to them.

### **(f) the arrangements and impacts of providing after-hour veterinary services**

There are only 2 24-hour vets in Sydney that I know of. For this reason it has cost me literally all my savings so that I can get the critical care that my animals needed. Both of these 24-hour vets require at least half an hour drive from my house, which could mean life and death for my animals.

### **(i) the role played by veterinarians in providing care to lost, stray and homeless animals, injured wildlife and during emergency situations**

I would like to see vets more responsible in providing care to lost, stray and homeless animals, injured wildlife and during emergency situations. This will take the pressure and stress of people trying to help and save animals but having nowhere to go as shelters and pounds are overflowing.

Wildlife rescuers and carers face the unique challenge to find vets who are experienced and trained in providing care for native animals. I have personally taken native animals to the vet who were euthanised even though they could have been saved if vets had the proper training to care for these native animals and the time.

**(j) the impact of the current veterinary shortage on animal welfare, including the impact on the economy, members of the public seeking veterinary care for animals, pounds and shelters, the animal agribusiness industry, companion animal breeders and others.**

As I mentioned previously, having a limited number of vets available increases costs for members of the public and in turn, increases costs to pounds and shelters that will also flow onto consumers.

Small and large rescue groups struggle to access and pay for veterinary care, especially right now with the increasing number of homeless animals, especially cats, and kittens.

Council pounds have been particularly affected by the vet shortage, with many finding it difficult to secure veterinarians to care for sick and injured animals, as well as de-sex and microchip animals for rehoming.

**(k) current barriers to accessing veterinary care for members of the public, particularly those with lower incomes or who live in regional, rural and remote locations**

Barriers I have faced personally are the high costs, difficulty in access and turnover.

Regional NSW people can wait weeks or even months to see a vet.

**(l) strategies to support the current veterinary workforce, as well as ways to increase the number of practising veterinarians particularly in regional, rural and remote New South Wales**

Making it easier for veterinary nurses and assistants as far as education and training costs go, would ease the pressure of veterinarians. University fees for veterinarians should also reduce.

**(m) strategies to improve access to veterinary care**

Support students in choosing the veterinarian profession, supporting students with University fees, supporting graduates with costs of establishing clinics and bringing in trained vets from overseas

An increasing number of pet owners cannot afford to pay for veterinary care for their beloved companions, in this cost-of living-crisis. Putting caps on medical procedure fees, and most importantly – **implementing Veticare to make vet-care affordable and accessible for all.**