

**Submission  
No 53**

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

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I would like to thank you so much for giving me the chance to express my feelings regarding my career as a registered veterinarian in Australia.

I'm an overseas registered vet since 2001, arrived in Australia from New Zealand for better job opportunities. Back in 2001 the total number of job vacancies in my profession was not more than 10-20 a year, however, there were hundreds of vets available in the market.

In 2010 I started my own business as I was motivated by the number of vets available in the market, I still remember at first time I advertised for the vacancies, I got more than 30 vets queuing on the door for an interview.

This motivated me even more to build 2 more small animal clinics. Slowly since 2019 I started losing those vets one by one for the following reasons:

- Major clinics / Specialist centres started paying a huge amount of money that small clinics like me cannot offer it.
- Universities focusing on international students while offering DVM, rather than focusing on local students.
- International students go back to their own home countries after graduation.
- Long and painful process of overseas vets to pass Australian Veterinary Exams to be qualified as a vet in Australia, the process may take up to 4 years.
- Vet board offers only 1 exam a year, and if an overseas vet couldn't pass, he or she must wait for another year to sit for the exam. Kindly note that there are 2 exams in total and each one is offered once a year only.
- Stress of the job associated with lack of support and expertise to support a fresh graduated vet.
- Vets prefer to do locum shifts for higher pay.
- Some vets left the country to work in the USA or UK for a higher/better exchange rate of currency.

At my 3 clinics, I have more than 12,000 active clients, however I have only 2 vets to cover that much of the animals. There are many days when we have to decline seeing sick animals as we don't have enough vets to support our clients.

Myself couldn't take 1 day off since mid of 2020 including weekends, and if any of my vets called sick, or taking a day off, I had no choice other than closing the clinic for that day and sending nurses home without payment and cancel all surgeries and appointments. If you have a look on my Google review, you would notice many disappointed clients from mid of 2020 onward and a majority of them are related to lack of support due to a shortage of vets.

Due to all the reasons mentioned above, this increased the level of stress between Vets and Nurses, Vets and Vets, Vets and their employers, which reflected all on their own clients in the form of increasing medical expenses, taking shortcuts, and declining medical cases.

Below are some suggestions that might be helpful:

- Ease the AITAR or the prerequisite to enrol in vet schools for the next 5 years at least, which might improve the numbers of Australian students attending the DVM course.
- Local undergraduates' students can apply as international students by paying similar fees.
- Graduated international students are able to work in Australia after graduation for at least 2 years.
- Ease the process of overseas vets' certification, by either increasing the number of tests in one year or creating a quicker pathway for them.

- The vet board Council to consider accepting graduated vets from other international / overseas universities that they are not in commonwealth countries.