

**Submission  
No 60**

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

**Name:** Dr Mark Kallman

**Date Received:** 5 July 2023

---

Subject: Concerns regarding the Crisis in the NSW Veterinary Industry

To whom it may concern

I am writing to express my deep concerns regarding the current state of the veterinary industry in New South Wales (NSW) and the role played by the NSW Veterinary Board. As a concerned member of the community and someone with direct experience in the veterinary field, I believe it is essential to bring attention to the issues plaguing our profession.

The NSW Veterinary Board, which is responsible for overseeing the veterinary industry and ensuring the protection of both animals and professionals, appears to be contributing to the crisis rather than mitigating it. My observations and experiences have led me to the following conclusions:

1. **Lack of Protection:** The board's failure to adequately protect the industry and its professionals is a significant concern. Veterinarians are being prosecuted unjustly based on flimsy evidence, while the opinions and testimony of complainants are often given more validity than those of professional veterinarians. This undermines the trust and credibility of the veterinary profession as a whole. These actions affect veterinarians directly and indirectly over time.

2. **Limited Oversight:** The NSW Veterinary Board seems to operate with little oversight, which raises concerns about accountability and transparency. The lack of effective checks and balances has allowed for unfair decisions and actions that negatively impact the lives and careers of dedicated veterinarians.

3. **Legal Inequality:** The board's use of HWL Ebsworth Lawyers, who specialize in legal matters, creates an unequal playing field for veterinarians facing prosecution. It is disheartening to see professionals judged by legal specialists rather than their peers, as this compromises the fairness and impartiality of the proceedings.

4. **Disproportionate Standards:** The standard for veterinary care set by the board far exceeds that expected by contemporary medical or dental profession boards. While it is essential to maintain high standards, the disparity creates unnecessary pressure and burden on veterinarians, impeding their ability to provide optimal care to their patients.

5. **Bullying Tactics and Ambiguous Definitions:** The board's apparent support of bullying tactics and its failure to define unprofessional acts or behavior in clear terms are deeply troubling. This lack of clarity enables subjective interpretation, leading to unjust prosecutions and an environment of uncertainty for veterinary professionals.

6. **Impact on Well-being:** The board's actions, coupled with the immense stress and angst they create, directly and indirectly affect the mental health and well-being of veterinarians. The fear of unjust prosecution and the high stakes involved take a toll on professionals who are committed to providing compassionate care to animals.

In light of these concerns, I strongly urge the NSW Government to consider reevaluating the role and functioning of the NSW Veterinary Board. It is my firm belief that a board operating in the interest of the profession, rather than solely as a consumer protection instrument, would greatly improve the situation for veterinarians in NSW.

I propose that the government initiates a comprehensive review of the NSW Veterinary Board's policies, procedures, and decision-making processes. This review should aim to ensure fairness, transparency, and accountability while prioritizing the protection of both animals and professionals.

By addressing these concerns and making the necessary changes, we can restore trust and confidence in the veterinary profession, allowing veterinarians to fulfill their vital role in animal care without undue stress and fear of unjust prosecution.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I believe that by working together, we can pave the way for a stronger and more supportive veterinary industry in NSW.

Dr Mark Kallman

Blue & White Veterinary Clinics