

Submission
No 66

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

Despite love my team and caring for animals, I am considering a career change. I have been a veterinary nurse for almost ten years and have even won awards for my expertise in the profession.

The reason so many vet and nursing staff are leaving the industry comes down to 3 reasons.

1. The income in this day is not sustainable, after the costs I put in for the education then the cost I have to put towards mental health services to deal with the emotional taxing work I barely have enough to pay my mortgage, thank God I don't have children or I would of lost my house by now. My husband and I have to work weekends to make ends meet, and due to that we have lost all work life balance (we never get to spend time with each other) and the supervisors at a nearby cafe make more than I do (although I'm on an above award wage).

2. The emotional abuse. The daily verbal and, in some cases, physical abuse from people who can't afford pet care adds insult to injury and compounds the emotional toll of dealing with the life and death of creatures into whom you pour your heart and soul into. I've lost count of the number of times they've made me feel bad about myself and sent me home to cry.

3. No support. Every day you go to work, you put yourself in danger because there is little to no assistance, no perks for working in this "dangerous" industry, and aggressive animals still need care. Patients who have an innate response to resist you every step of the way require us to do everything that doctors and nurses do (and more). However, we are not offered any protections, such as free counselling or compensation for the risks of our work.

These three issues need to be addressed in order to alleviate the scarcity of veterinarians and veterinary nurses; Even, I and three of my coworkers will be leaving the profession by the end of the year because we cannot sustain the financial and emotional toll it has on us.