

Submission
No 70

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

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 8 July 2023

Partially
Confidential

NSW Legislative Council's Portfolio Committee Number 4 – Regional NSW,
Chair
Mr. Mark Banasiak,

Dear Sir,

My Name is
I am a veterinarian.
In full time private clinical practice for 33 years.
Owner, Principal, Manager of a veterinary hospital .
Now Retired but still registered.
Mentor to first year post graduate veterinarians.

At the time I finished final year at Sydney University in **1968**, there were **three** veterinary schools in Australia, **Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and none in NZ.**
Students attending Sydney University Veterinary School were from NSW, WA, SA, NT, Tasmania and New Zealand.
Once the interstate students graduated they, in almost every case, returned from Sydney NSW to their home state or New Zealand.

In **1969** there were **three veterinary schools in Australia**
In **1969 one veterinary school in NSW**
January **1969** , **11 females and 61 males, total 72** graduated from Sydney University veterinary school, **that is 15% female**

In **2022** there are **seven veterinary schools in Australia**, Charles Sturt, James Cook, Murdoch, Adelaide, Melbourne, Queensland and Sydney plus **one in NZ Massey.**
In **2022** There are **two veterinary schools in NSW**
In **2022, 295 new veterinarians registered in NSW**
At graduation in **2022** almost **80% are female**
In **2022** we have **four more veterinary schools in Australia, than were in 1969** and **one in New Zealand.** The loss of Australian veterinary graduates from NSW back to other States, Territories and NZ should be negligible.

Part of the problem of the veterinary workforce shortage in NSW is:

1. The number of female graduates.

As a mentor of first year graduates I have had a number of females within the first year after graduation leave the profession as they are disillusioned as to what private clinical practice is all about.

Others in their first year have felt unsupported because they have been working in multi person practices with mostly part time female veterinarians who are unable to offer support as they are struggling themselves.

2. The number of part time veterinarians.

3. The number of fee paying International students who on graduation return to their country of origin.

4. The emphasis with many new veterinary graduates is about animal welfare whereas most other professions such as, law, engineering, architecture, banking, finance, accounting, pharmacy, building, computers and many more, **including human medicine have a strong link to business.**

The expectation of many of the general public is the veterinary profession is primarily about animal welfare and should not be interested in running a veterinary hospital as a business with the view to making a profit.

The other expectation of the general public related to human medicine is they get free public hospitals, medicare rebates, bulk billing, health fund rebates, pension free health, pension discounted pharmaceuticals etc . While the veterinary profession has none of this government assistance.

One of the consequences of all this are modest veterinary salaries compared to other professions.

Some solutions would be:

1. Before anybody starts the veterinary degree they should have to have 2 to 3 months full time experience working in a veterinary hospital to open their eyes as to what clinical practice is all about. Currently many start the veterinary degree with a warm fuzzy feeling about caring for animals and when they graduate reality hits home and they find out it is not all warm and fuzzy.

2. More full time veterinarians

3. Attract more males back into the profession.

4. Reduce the number of international students who on graduation return to their home country. The Universities get fees which is a short term gain, from international students. On graduation from NSW Universities , new international veterinarians are lost to the state of NSW as they return to their home country.

By reducing the number of International students you can increase the number of NSW students who will in most cases stay in the state or in Australia.