

**Submission
No 71**

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

Name: Ms Amy Johnson

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I am a NSW resident and have been my whole life. All of my experiences have been in an urban areas of NSW such as Newcastle, lake Macquarie, central coast and Sydney/western sydney areas.

I have struggled to pay vet costs for my pets, the after-hours vets charge 3 to 4 times the cost of a regular vet, most if not all regular vets do not open after hours, they are only 9 to 5 Monday to Friday. This means if your pet is sick you are forced to pay over 10 thousands to have them treated at an emergency vet, we have had to kill our pets with euthanasia because we can't afford the extremely expensive vet fees, if a regular vet was open they wouldn't have had to die.

I use to be a vet nurse and started studying veterinary medicine at Sydney but I had to leave the career as the level of stress you are put under in this career is extremely unmanageable. The biggest stress is having to kill patients because people can't pay for the vet costs and having pet owners be very angry and upset at you because they feel you are holding their pets life at ransom for thousands of dollar, most often reaching over 10 thousand plus for chronic conditions. With the impact of recent inflation on the cost of living, I suspect this would be even worse today.

I have been involved in rescue of animals being killed in local pounds, it has been very challenging to rescue and rehome these animals when the cost of vets is so high, it is imperative that rehomed animals are at a minimum desexed, microchipped and vaccinated. I have helped with rescuing animals in council housing thus very low socioeconomic areas. Nearly all of the animals there do not receive any vet care, especially desexing, vaccination and microchipping. This means deadly preventable disease run rife in these communities and out of control breeding of cats and dogs results in copious amounts of sick and dying animals everywhere. Many are subject to severe cruelty from humans who are frustrated at the mess and smell they make. The rspca have not been helpful in these situations, I have had to try and help the best I can. I have tried police with cruelty cases and they always palm me off to the rspca which then don't help. The whole situations feels completely hopeless, many residents have told me how depressed they are at seeing all of the suffering pets around them in these areas. Especially when they are being abused by humans and there is no one to call to help with the situation. Some of these areas are so bad the police have told me they don't like going there and they are very cautious about going there. Making the cruelty severe as there is no consequences. Many residents have complained to council housing about these problems but they are told they can't help as it's not their problem. I worry a lot about the impact this has on the kids living in these situations and the tolerance to animal cruelty and human abuse it is creating. Affordable pet care and helping people in these areas with the minimum amount of vet care required for all pets; desexing, microchipped and vaccination would solve the root cause of this problem.

I have a lot of experience and I am happy to provide further information on these experiences. Please also change the current situation of vet care in Australia to solve these problems.