

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

**Name:** Name suppressed

**Date Received:** 18 July 2023

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Partially  
Confidential

## Vet shortage crisis

Overview - the current challenges I have faced in this industry as a new graduate have been long working hours with the expectations of clients being exceptionally high and demanding 24 hour care, staff shortages which has meant we work more even when we are sick and without lunch breaks, being declined time off for well deserved holidays as the clinic claims to not be able to staff for time off, low wage (above award but with rising inflation this has meant needing to work more hours to afford basic necessities like groceries, electricity and rent), other professions are getting pay rises to counteract this but clients expect low cost high care, which means seeing more clients and animals to compensate for the lower cost and higher working stress to accommodate for more clientele.

Personal story - Keeping up with this has led to burnout in myself and I left this workplace. I now have chosen a part time position 3 days a week with no after-hours because of the increased demands and low remuneration I experienced at my previous job. The challenges outweigh the benefits especially due to the HECS debt I have which has had a rising interest rate. I've considered leaving the profession due to burnout and not being respected from clients due to increased costs of care, high expectations, needing to work through lunch breaks and always feeling stressed to keep up with the excess workload.

Impact on animal health and welfare - the quality of care I have given to animals has always been to give my best but this is not always possible when I have several hospital patients, emergency admits and after-hours calls for patients meaning I have less sleep and could miss diagnoses in the 15 minute consult window that I had to do workups in. I was always stressed at my previous job and my physical and mental health declined rapidly until I read the book "How great leaders prevent team burnout" This was truly insightful and helped me to realise what was happening and led to me leaving this job.

Suggestions for improvement - Helping us with our HECS debt would take a huge weight off our shoulders so that we can start to save towards a house/buy healthier food/afford holidays/afford our bills and not need to make so many extra repayments to keep the interest rate from growing on our HECS debt with our already low incomes, more funding/scholarships for utility bills or anything to be able to keep up with the financial burdens. Providing free courses on mental health and burnout especially for new graduates and uni students who are yet to graduate.

Consequences of the shortages are that a large animal/farm veterinarian isn't able to go out to sick animals or sudden death cases and we have an epidemic if the farmer isn't aware of zoonoses and handles the carcasses inappropriately. Small animal pets are left unseen and begin to suffer health consequences for treatable conditions. The cost is increasing for the clients which makes it less accessible for lower income households.