

Submission
No 113

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

Name: Miss Anna Rek

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The Hon. Mark Banasiak, MLC

Chair, Portfolio Committee No 4 Regional NSW

Parliament House

Macquarie Street

SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Mr Banasiak,

RE: Veterinary workforce shortage in New South Wales

I am not going to pretend that I am familiar with all the reasons why there is such a shortage of veterinarians in NSW, neither am I going to pretend to have all the answers to this issue. However, I would like to touch on two reasons which I believe would significantly reduce the difficulties in accessing vet care for animals who genuinely require it.

Diet of domesticated carnivores

No living creature on this planet has evolved to thrive on a diet of exclusively processed food. NOT A SINGLE HUMAN OR ANIMAL. While humans are being educated on the importance of eating a diet of fresh whole foods and are being told to avoid processed foods as much as possible, vets are continuously pushing a diet of exclusively processed foods on our pets and discouraging the feeding of raw meat and bones to domesticated carnivores. Why is that??? On what planet does this make sense?! It is about time that veterinarians started to take responsibility for the plague of disease they are continuously seeing in our domesticated carnivores! You cannot seriously feed your dogs or cats highly processed kibble for breakfast, lunch and dinner for years on end and expect them to be healthy! Veterinarians would not be seeing the majority of skin issues, teeth issues, internal organ failure and a number of other health conditions if our domesticated carnivores stopped eating a diet of Hills Science or Royal Canine and went back to a natural diet of raw meaty bones. They wouldn't be slammed with oral surgeries performing their multiple teeth cleaning a day or wasting their time seeing animals with constant skin issues caused by all the sugar they consume in their diet.

I am aware that some percentage of vets leave the profession due to abuse they experience from the pet owners. There is absolutely no excuse for such behaviour towards any veterinarian however it is hard not to see why pet owners get so frustrated with vets when they take their feeding advice believing that a trained professional knows best, just to end up with an animal who is constantly sick. It gets even more frustrating when, after spending thousands of dollars the vet still cannot find

the reason behind the animal's sickness just to eventually realise that all their health problems are gone once they have changed to a natural diet; the same diet which was discouraged by their vet!

Why are Australian vets so poorly educated about diet? It was so refreshing a couple of years ago when I had a chance to see a new vet who arrived in Australia from Italy, where she trained as a veterinarian. She couldn't believe that I was a 'raw feeder' and I couldn't believe that she wasn't trying to convince me to switch to kibble. She said kibble was nowhere near as pushed in Italy like it is in Australia because of all the health issues it causes in pets. I am not blaming the Australian vets for their lack of education here, I am blaming the corrupt, pet food industry sponsored Australian universities! Get pet food companies out of our universities and start teaching vets how to feed our animals without opening a packet of processed junk!

Surgical desexing of domestic animals

Why is it that this procedure is mostly avoided in Europe because the vets over there have noticed all the health issues it causes in animals yet it is pushed so heavily in Australia? Yet again, Australia is proving to the world that our education is still many years behind Europe. To make things worse, this procedure is performed on very young animals who have not yet achieved sexual maturity, only resulting in more damage to the animal's health. As pet owners, we trust the vets to give us the best advice just to find out a few years later that the vet was wrong and we are now left with a chronically sick animal suffering from heart disease or adrenal disease. And the cycle of the plague of disease continues, the vets are overworked, stressed out, the pet owners are angry that their vet's advice actually made their pet sick, they are left with enormous vet bills and more questions than answers. This hardly makes for a healthy working environment for the vets and they decide to leave the profession. While it is important to control unwanted pregnancy in our pets, this should never come at the cost of the animal's health and wellbeing.

It is clear that the root of this issue starts with Australian universities and the poor education they deliver to Australian veterinarians. It is certainly clear to those who treasure the lives of our pets, not just see the \$ sign when looking at animals. Get rid of pet food industry sponsorship deals from universities and you will address at least half of this problem.

Sincerely,

Anna Rek