

Submission  
No 141

## INQUIRY INTO VETERINARY WORKFORCE SHORTAGE IN NEW SOUTH WALES

**Organisation:** NSW Dairy Action Plan Implementation Panel  
**Date Received:** 21 July 2023

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[Inquiry into the Veterinary workforce shortage in New South Wales](#)

REPORT TO PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 4 – REGIONAL NSW

DATED 21/7/2023

FROM THE NSW DAIRY ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION PANEL,

Please use the following link to access the webpage - [NSW Dairy Industry Action Plan](#)

We would appreciate the opportunity to make a presentation in person to the members of the inquiry at the hearing time to follow up the points made in this report and discuss solution options.

Contact;

Rob Cooper,

Chair, NSW Dairy Action Plan Implementation Panel

## PREAMBLE

This report contains two parts;

1. A copy of our report on The Crisis in Supply of Veterinary and aligned skills to the NSW Dairy Industry. Pages 3 to 11
2. A copy of our evaluation of Review of Veterinary Education – Veterinary Schools of Australia and New Zealand ([vsanz.org](http://vsanz.org)). Pages 12 to 16

Regarding the terms of reference for the Portfolio Committee NO 4 we have only sought to address those matters relevant to this advisory panel, specifically matters 1a, 1b, 1c, 1g, 1j, 1l and related matters as they pertain to our original report and to the Review of Veterinary Education – Veterinary Schools of Australia and New Zealand ([vsanz.org](http://vsanz.org)).

The Crisis in Supply of Veterinary and aligned skills to the NSW Dairy Industry & Addendum following the release of the Review of Veterinary Education – Veterinary Schools of Australia and New Zealand (vsanz.org)

Report to Minister from the NSW Agriculture Ministers Advisory Panel

Report from Committee Members: Rob Cooper, Tim Bale, Ian Lean

Ex Officio:

Other Panel Members:

Mr Ken Garner

Mr Phil Ryan

Mr Brad Granzin

Mr Greg Duncan

Professor Sergio Garcia

Mr Michael Jeffrey

Mrs Ruth Kidd

Mr Alex Russell

Mr Paul van Wel

Mr Ash Cooper

Mr Scott Barnett

Ms Jenny Wilson

## Executive Summary

### Situation appraisal

- There is an unprecedented shortage of skilled veterinary graduates to the rural areas including for dairy farm needs
- There are also skills shortages for aligned industries including specialists in nutrition, agronomy, milk plant and farm management.
- There are serious concerns about technical education resources in NSW, training for these and for secondary school agriculture teachers.
- Changes in the industry have not been matched by changes in veterinary education, rather there is an increased emphasis on companion animal care.
- The combination of these realities is that our industry is not able to source adequate veterinary care in some areas of the State and the industry is becoming increasingly vulnerable to exotic disease.

### Possible actions

Engage with the Federal Minister for Education to address the veterinary education failures.

Outcomes may include

- Screening of all candidates for entry to the veterinary degree to ensure a greater emphasis on rural veterinary medicine.
- Greater review of curricula to address needs for Australian agriculture, rather than qualification for DVM degrees acceptable to the USA and other nations.
- Consideration of establishment of 'Sites of excellence' to create critical mass of skills for educating veterinarians and aligned professions.
- Consider increasing PhD stipends for selected skills areas to at least the equivalent of \$80,000 tax free.
- Consider supporting the AVA proposal for a rural bonding scheme to the Federal Government.

### NSW actions

- Improve facilities at Tocal to provide a more attractive focus for technical education. A well-designed site will incorporate aspects of dairy circular economy and improved efficiency of sustainable production.
- Consider short backgrounding courses based in Bega or Nowra and Gatton with a view to conducting modules at Tocal.
- Support for a new dairy facility at SU could create a world class teaching and research facility that should address aspects of modern intensive design.
- A similar scheme for HECS forgiveness for veterinarians and aligned professions may be used to attract teachers for secondary school agriculture.
- A similar scheme could be used to provide veterinary graduates for Department of Primary industry and aligned entities (eg LLS) in NSW.
- Support for private veterinary practices and consultancies to investigate disease outbreaks to provide i) exotic disease readiness ii) greater farm access, bonding and familiarity iii) increase farm profit.

- Consider support for post-graduate placement in companies that provide dairy farm consultancy at a high level in Production Medicine, farm advisory services in agronomy, reproductive management, nutrition, facility design and milking plant function, repair and design.

Consider whether support might be provided for requests to the Immigration Minister regarding

- Temporary Skill Shortage Visa (Subclass 482): It would be very beneficial if the requirement for applicants to have two years of experience to apply for a 482 visa is abolished or put on hold for a period to assist with the current critical shortage.
- Working Holiday Visa (Subclass 417) and Work and Holiday Visa (Subclass 462): Abolition of the 6 month limit to a single employer is recommended.

## Rationale

The committee has had numerous conversations with farmers and veterinarians about the lack of skilled veterinary support for farms. The farmer concerns extend to milking machine support technical services, independent nutritional and / or agronomy advice and facility design support. There are considerable cross-industry similarities and needs for support.

In some areas the concern with suitably trained support extends to technical training courses with areas such as Bega and the South Coast and Northern NSW and Queensland no longer having TAFE courses in dairying.

While the committee is aware of substantial reports into veterinary manpower and also into secondary education for agriculture, we wished to provide the Minister with a series of fresh perspectives on the education and support environment. The geographical spread and diversity of NSW agriculture provides a considerable challenge in terms of the service industries.

These challenges were identified in the NSW Dairy Industry Action Plan

As part of the NSW Dairy Industry Action Plan 'Point 14. ...the Panel has identified that the NSW dairy industry should identify high-priority vocational training needs for dairy farm employees and partner with the NSW Government to address those needs – including through identifying gaps and addressing fragmentation in existing programs, and considering barriers affecting industry uptake.'

Further, under the heading Service provider capacity, the NSW Dairy Industry Action Plan identified 3 areas of limitation that needed further development of response by the advisory committee to the Minister, all of which are addressed in this document.

'15. To encourage the next generation of dairy industry service providers, the Panel has identified that the NSW dairy industry should promote dairy service provision as a career path and fund a pathways program for new service providers (for example, through a graduate program or internship scheme).

16. In order to maximise the value of the service provider sector, the Panel has identified that the NSW dairy industry should develop programs aimed at upskilling dairy industry service providers – particularly in terms of agronomy, nutrition, systems thinking and facility design.

17. To respond to the needs of contemporary businesses and adapt to new technologies, the Panel has identified that the NSW dairy industry should develop skills attraction programs to promote the transfer of relevant external skills into the dairy industry, and develop means of sharing relevant knowledge across different agricultural sectors.'

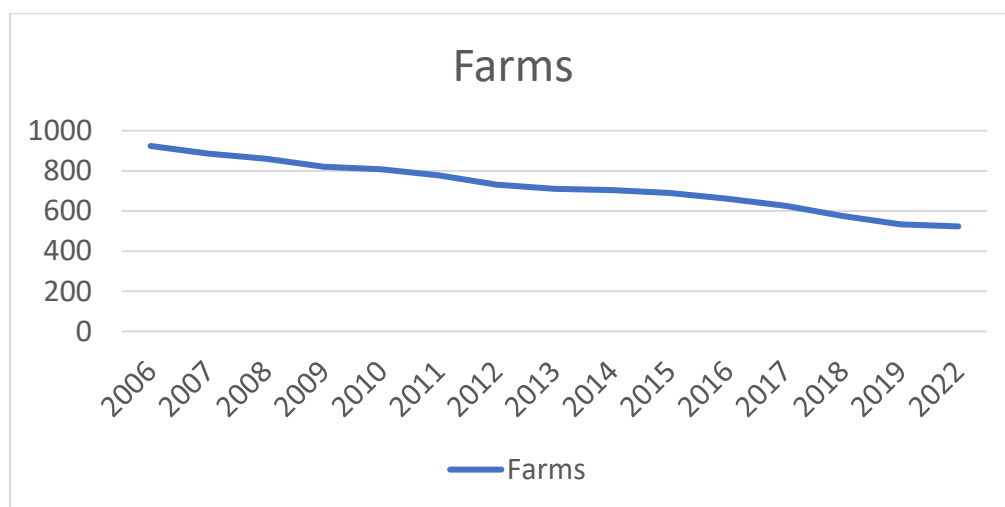
## Historical perspectives

There are a number of critical factors that have altered over time that may have influenced outcomes.

### Industry Factors

Numbers of farms: Figure 1 shows the decline in number of NSW farms, representing an approximately 44% decline since 2006; a decline that matches that in Victoria of 43%.

Figure 1. Farm numbers NSW 2006 to 2022



However, milk production per cow has increased by 45% in NSW over the same period (ie 2006 to 2023) indicating the remarkable ability of the industry to adapt; Victorian milk per cow by contrast has only increased by 22% over the same period.

Demand for local milk is high: Notwithstanding the decline in farm numbers and increased performance, demand for milk in NSW and QLD is unmet by approximately 2 billion litres per annum, indicating that demand alone is not stimulating sufficient production to meet local markets and farms continue to leave the industry over a long period of time.

(Source Australian Dairy Industry in Focus 2021)

Geographical: The industry is widely spread in NSW as Figure 2 shows and with declining farm numbers there is a challenge for service industries to maintain a viable client base within proximity.

Demographic changes: Large farms > 600 cows are emerging and are associated with increased production and facility design. These require sophisticated management and advisory support.



Prolonged adverse business conditions: Declining real returns for agricultural produce is a long-term economic trend that has influenced the loss of farms and, likely, resulted in less use of service providers.

Cow numbers per farm have markedly increased over time. This is anecdotally associated with reduced focus on individual cow health reflecting time challenges for farmers.

Many activities identified as acts of veterinary science have been adopted by other providers resulting in decreased viability of veterinary large animal practice.

## Veterinary and aligned industries

The critical shortage of veterinarians in rural areas has been noted by the Australian Veterinary Association (**AVA**) who provided the following comments in 'AVA Federal Government Pre-Budget Submission (May 2023 Budget)'. These comments echo discussions between committee members with farmers and veterinarians.

'Vets are highly valued and trusted by the communities they serve, however there is a critical shortage of veterinarians in Australia. This shortage is significantly more acute in rural and regional areas. Regional practices have in recent years been closing clinics because of a lack of veterinary staff.'

'Lack of adequate supply of veterinarians has direct negative flow on effects to biosecurity, animal health and welfare, and human health. The sustainability of veterinary service provision is under threat from decades of labour under-investment, coupled with the cost of delivery of 21st century veterinary care and the situation in regional areas is increasingly untenable'

Mark Eagleton of Vetlink, a veterinary recruitment company, notes that 'In my 25 years of veterinary recruitment, I have never seen such a severe veterinary shortage'. He further notes that 'veterinarians are critical in ensuring the Nation's biosecurity'. Those on this committee with knowledge of veterinary employment support his observations and the whole committee expresses its concern in regards to the national biosecurity vulnerability.

Simply, if there are not enough well-trained veterinarians having regular farm contact the risks of severe exotic disease and serious endemic disease is greatly increased.

There has been an increase in Veterinary Schools in NSW with Charles Sturt University (CSU) providing graduates since the early 2000s.

The selection process applied at CSU to screen veterinary candidates for interest in rural communities and production environments has had some success in providing rural veterinarians.

Further, as veterinary graduates from other states can readily gain registration in NSW it is important to note that new veterinary schools at Adelaide and Townsville have also been established with the key aim of increasing number of graduates taking up careers in rural practice. The success of the latter is quite limited.

However, Sydney University (**SU**) has become a post-graduate degree with a high intake of overseas students. Very few of these students appear interested in rural Australian practice.

There has been an ever increasing emphasis on companion animals in Veterinary Courses. While this emphasis may reflect student and faculty interest, it offers little to the vital food producing industries of Australia. Consequently, committee members have raised concerns that the Universities may not be suitable to trust with curricular direction and design.

There is a serious shortage of agriculture teachers in NSW schools.

This shortage may reflect the high demand for agriculture and rural science graduates from SU, CSU and the University of New England (**UNE**). Currently, agriculture new graduates are earning more than veterinary new graduates.

There is a need for highly qualified agriculture teachers at the secondary and technical college level to meet needs for interested and qualified graduates on farms. There is only one site now providing technical teaching in Dairy in NSW and Queensland (Tocal).

There is no degree in Agricultural Engineering in NSW. As farms intensity including poultry, piggeries, beef feedlot and dairy farms, this is an area of deficiency.

Farmers noted a lack of independent nutritional and / or agronomy advisors. Emphasis on these skills has markedly decreased in the Agriculture and Veterinary Biosciences and Veterinary course at SU.

The impact of post-graduate degree courses in veterinary and aligned university courses is to make post graduate specialisation less likely due to debt incurred and extraordinarily low rates of remuneration for PhD students. Simply, these are paid less than milkers on many dairy farms!

For many of the skills required to service the emerging larger and more sophisticated farms, post graduate training will be required for any of the production animal advisory industries, as is the case in the USA.

There are no facilities for dairy training at CSU or UNE and those at SU are aged and in need of renewal for education and research requirements for all vocations.

## Spheres of influence

It is recognised that tertiary education is primarily a federal matter. Secondary and technical education are primarily a State domain. We also note Mr Eagleton's contact with the Federal Immigration Minister in regards to some possible areas to provide increased access to Australia for overseas veterinary graduates.

## Suggested strategies to address

Engage with the Federal Minister for Education to address the veterinary education failures.

Outcomes may include

- Screening of all candidates for entry to the veterinary degree to ensure a greater proportion have a genuine interest in a career in production animal medicine, but critically also have the fundamental prerequisite life-skills to sustain them in this demanding 'front-line'
- Greater review of curricula to address needs for Australian agriculture, rather than qualification for DVM degrees acceptable to the USA and other nations.

- Consideration of establishment of 'Sites of excellence' to create critical mass of skills for educating veterinarians and aligned professions. Arguably, none of the current Australian University Faculties have sufficient critical mass of Faculty with essential skills to provide appropriate undergraduate and post-graduate education in areas such as veterinary production medicine, nutrition, facility design or advanced agronomy. These are cross-industry skills relevant to beef, dairy, pigs, poultry and aquaculture.
- Consider increasing PhD stipends for selected skills areas to at least the equivalent of \$80,000 tax free. This could be done on a targeted basis and may be extended to the aligned professions. Candidates with a history of engagement with the dairy industry (similar models could be developed for other rural industries) would be preferred.

Improve facilities at Tocal to provide a more attractive focus for technical education. A well-designed site will incorporate aspects of dairy circular economy and improved efficiency of sustainable production.

Consider short backgrounding courses based in Bega or Nowra and Gatton with a view to conducting modules at Tocal.

Support for a new dairy facility at SU could create a world class teaching and research facility that should address aspects of modern intensive design. A well-designed site will incorporate aspects of dairy circular economy and improved efficiency of sustainable production. A focus on reduced environmental impacts and co-generation strategies would help engage faculties such as engineering and environmental studies.

Consider supporting the AVA proposal for a rural bonding scheme to the Federal Government.

'Introduce a Rural Bonding Scheme (HECS Forgiveness Scheme) for graduate veterinarians. The AVA estimates that this would cost \$19.23 million over four years (\$4.80 million per annum) and would wipe the HECS debt of 80 new graduates per year, boosting the veterinary workforce in these critically important regions'

A similar scheme could be used to provide veterinary graduates for Department of Primary industry and aligned entities (eg LLS) in NSW. Similarly, HECS Forgiveness may be used to attract teachers for secondary school agriculture.

Support for private veterinary practices and consultancies to investigate disease outbreaks to provide i) exotic disease readiness ii) greater farm access, bonding and familiarity iii) increase farm profit. Current cost-recovery models inhibit proper investigation and decrease farmer willingness to risk investigation.

Consider support for post-graduate placement in companies that provide dairy farm consultancy at a high level in Production Medicine, farm advisory services in agronomy, reproductive management, nutrition, facility design and milking plant function, repair and design. In some instances, these can and should be aligned with obtaining post-graduate qualification. With the low level of graduate preparation for industry engagement, there is a very considerable cost in training before graduates are able to self-support.

Consider whether support might be provided for requests to the Immigration Minister regarding

### **Temporary Skill Shortage Visa (Subclass 482)**

Both experienced and new graduate veterinarians are in high demand in Australia. Many employers are willing to employ new graduate vets from other countries with recognised qualifications. There is a large pool of new graduate veterinarians from the UK and South Africa, for example, who would like to work in Australia. Currently, the 482 visa requirements preclude them from entering Australia as they do not have two years of experience. For your interest, these veterinarians are instead relocating to New Zealand, where they can secure a visa. It would be very beneficial if the requirement for applicants to have two years of experience to apply for a 482 visa is abolished or put on hold for a period to assist with the current critical shortage.

### **Working Holiday Visa (Subclass 417) and Work and Holiday Visa (Subclass 462)**

Under the existing conditions, veterinarians on a 417 or 462 visa can only work for an employer for up to six months (with some exceptions). Recruiting, induction and training veterinarians who can only stay at one practice for six months is time-consuming and expensive. Once veterinarians have established themselves at a practice, formed a solid client base and become familiar with local diseases, they must move on. Countries, including the UK and Canada, don't have a similar clause in equivalent visas. Working Holiday Visas with no 6-month clause would greatly benefit Australia and help solve staff shortages. Abolition of the 6 month limit is recommended.

### References

Dairy in Focus 2021 Dairy Australia 2022

Vetlink Letter to Minister for Immigration dated 30 November 2022

Vetlink Letter to Senator the Hon Murray Watt dated 14 February 2023

# Addendum following the release of the Review of Veterinary Education – Veterinary Schools of Australia and New Zealand (vsanz.org)

## Background

There has been the release of a substantive report on Veterinary Education in Australia and New Zealand conducted by 3 authoritative experts. The report makes a strong contribution to understanding future directions for the veterinary profession and we highlight the recommendations that we can support from that document (Appendix 1). We provide a limited commentary on them.

We provide this comment in the context of being an advisory panel on dairy matters and have, consequently, an unabashed bias towards the needs of this industry. However, the dairy industry has been a very major user of veterinary and aligned skills in rural regions.

The rationale for government (in general) support of the costs of training the professions is in their critical and most important role of serving the rural industries to maintain food availability and the economy of the State and nation. We wish to return the focus of the veterinary and aligned professions to this role.

## Areas of weakness

While the academic and industry credentials of the proponents of the report are impeccable, there are some limits to their perspectives.

- None have recent engagement with agricultural practice.
- Their focus was on the veterinary profession, not the agricultural community.
- Hence, we provide some areas of difference to the recommendations, highlight differences in emphasis and some additional recommendations.

## Supported recommendations from the Review of Veterinary Education and comment

**Recommendation 2: Veterinary schools should widen their mainstream admissions processes to select students on a broader range of excellence, equity and diversity than solely academic achievement and collaborate on admissions research to evaluate new approaches.**

*Comment:* We support this recommendation with the following caveat. It needs to be recognized that the skills required to advise large agricultural enterprises are high level. Many of these enterprises exceed an asset value in excess of \$20 million and are very complex.

The technical delivery aspects of veterinary science and aligned professions differ markedly in skills and orientation from the higher-level skills required for advisory work. The latter may be considered post-graduate, but without a sound undergraduate exposure to those skills, the pathways to postgraduate achievement become more tenuous.

We see an urgent need for more ‘streamed’ or ‘targeted’ education with the potential to have either a different degree structure or a limited license model such that the companion animal component

of courses are markedly reduced and a different series of skills emphasised for those seeking to work in agriculture.

**Recommendation 3: Veterinary schools consider supplementing the mainstream admission process with an additional entry pathway targeting applicants committed to rural or government veterinary practice, subject to demand.**

*Comment:* We strongly support this recommendation. This has specific relevance to the NSW Government as it would be a decision within the State to create this opportunity. NSW has a unique structure with the Local Land Service veterinary services and with a very strong laboratory at Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute.

**Recommendation 5: The core of veterinary curricula remains based on a broad but integrated body of knowledge, principles and skills that equip students with the potential to transition between different career paths within the veterinary profession.**

*Comment:* We strongly agree that there is a core of knowledge that applies across species. However, this core does not exist when considered on a production system basis. There is a much greater need to emphasise the different core knowledge that is needed to understand and service dairy farms. Similarly, and importantly, the same challenges exist for beef cattle, pigs, poultry and aquaculture.

The recommendation is an example of a finding that is, in the narrow sense, correct and supportable, but is in the broader sense flawed as it relates to a traditional veterinary education model rather than one designed to meet the needs of the rural industries.

The skills required for modern agriculture include the ability to integrate agronomic knowledge with nutrition, deep nutritional knowledge, epidemiology, and data management. People skills and management skills are vital as is a deep knowledge of production systems and facility design (We note the lack of evident awareness of these needs in the report). Very few of these areas are deeply addressed in the current curricula, whereas medical and surgical skills are relatively well-addressed in current courses.

**Recommendation 6: Veterinary schools continue to engage in collaborative educational research nationally and internationally.**

*Comment:* Global networking is essential to train students and bring new knowledge to industry. This is only facilitated if the collaborators consider that the Australian colleagues are of sufficient quality to interact with. In other words, there is a real need to ensure we are internationally competitive.

One compelling conclusion from evaluating the report and our considerations is that there is a need to have a critical mass of faculty skilled in a particular industry from both a teaching and research perspective. The current academic model of teaching 'all things to all people' does not allow for this.

If there are to be veterinary schools with critical mass and expertise in a species or production systems, then students should be directed towards these in a 'streaming or tracking' model. For example, the University of Sydney may be the site with NSW for dairy education and Charles Sturt for sheep.

One recommendation from our report above (Page 8) is critical in this sense. PhD salaries need to be competitive. Paying a 30-year-old or older, highly intelligent and capable graduate, with a debt load

a salary of \$35,000 does not work! We will not recruit the people we need for the future with the current punitive structure.

**Recommendation 8: Veterinary schools progressively expand the proportion of the curriculum devoted to 'tracking' to produce new graduates with a higher level of proficiency (including technical skills) in their chosen early-career paths.**

*Comment:* This recommendation is pivotal to effecting change but needs to be more deeply considered as indicated in our comments on recommendation 5.

**Recommendation 9: AVBC/VSAAC continue to review the extent to which their accreditation standards permit increased tracking.**

*Comment:* The regulatory bodies will need to change standards to allow the profession to evolve and better serve the rural industry.

**Recommendation 10: Veterinary professional associations, AVBC, and schools explore veterinary apprenticeship models relevant to Australasia and the cost-sharing options that might facilitate them.**

*Comment:* We consider that the correct term is veterinary internship but agree with the comment as this recommendation is consistent with our comment on Recommendation 6 above. We also support the need for resource sharing outlined in 5.6 of the report.

**Recommendation 14: All eight universities with veterinary schools jointly contribute to a shared strategic-change fund to unlock effective veterinary school, resource-sharing models.**

*Comment:* While we are confident that there are faculty within Universities to provide the knowledge to re-orient the profession, we have concerns that these may be too few and their input be dismissed by those deeply wedded to the existing paradigm for the profession. We consider that a strong external advisory panel that includes farmers from different production systems and leading advisors to industry be tasked with engagement in the process.

**Recommendation 15: The Australian Government move quickly to increase the funding rate per veterinary EFTSL by at least 30 per cent – and, where relevant, lift the maximum basic grant funding of universities to accommodate this increase in revenue.**

*Comment:* This change would be pivotal to the Universities being able to fund a re-orientation of the profession and reduce their dependence on foreign students who are less likely to engage with agricultural production and currently represent an impediment to teaching in the production-oriented areas. These students are also an impost on farmers who have provided undergraduate education through farm-based externships but are more reluctant to do so because of the lack of interest and aptitude of many of these students.

**Recommendation 16: Governments consider providing clinical training loadings for a designated number of veterinary students clinical training in priority areas.**

*Comment:* We agree and is consistent with our support for the AVA initiative outlined on page 8 above.

**Recommendation 17: The Australian Government continue to facilitate international veterinary student access via favourable immigration settings, competitive in study and post-study work rights, and a clear pathway to residency**

*Comment:* We consider that this recommendation be more applicable to post-graduate veterinary applicants (See Pages 8-9 above). This recommendation should only apply to those with a bona fide interest in agriculture.

**Recommendation 18: Veterinary professional associations assist employers in taking charge of the workplace issues that affect recruitment, retention, and well-being and in developing their members' business and management experience to help hone veterinary business models.**

*Comment:* This recommendation is valid but fails to recognize the extraordinary contribution of the rural community in fostering rural veterinary practice, nor the long-term change in that environment.

Farmers were incredibly generous with their time and wisdom in training young veterinarians and making them welcome in rural communities. The decrease in retention time for veterinarians in practice, lack of readiness for rural practice, markedly large and fewer farms have acted to reduce that opportunity. As noted above, the presence of many students who lack an empathy or interest in agriculture has led to a reluctance to provide opportunities for students to stay on farm and be engaged in day to day management during their undergraduate training.

We consider that there needs to be an active program to re-engage the veterinary and agricultural communities. Part of this will be input from the agricultural communities towards curricula redesign. This approach could be led by NSW.

**Recommendation 20: Veterinary schools collaborate with Animal Health Australia and governments in Australia and New Zealand to explore and develop their role in upskilling veterinarians for biosecurity and emergency disease preparedness.**

*Comment:* We agree.

**Recommendation 21: Governments consider contracting a network of rural veterinary practices to provide teaching and government services in the regions in collaboration with veterinary schools, including teaching livestock clinical practice and government veterinary services.**

*Comment:* We do not necessarily agree as the deeper problems lie within the paradigm for the existing professional degree. This would only become effective with considerable reform of the current degree structure.

**Recommendation 22: The Australian Government extend to veterinarians the student debt**



**relief provided to doctors and nurse practitioners who live and work in rural and remote Australia via a rural veterinary bonding scheme.**

*Comment:* We agree and note that this increases the potential to attract graduate to post-graduate specialisation in the delivery of high-level advisory and research services to industry.

**Recommendation 23: Veterinary professional associations develop a leadership role in continuing professional development for the profession in collaboration with other providers, including veterinary schools.**

*Comment:* We agree and extend that suggestion to a role for leading agricultural producers in shaping this.

**Recommendation 24: Governments and industry increase the amount of full-cost funding in the research priorities of the animal and public health sectors and encourage the co-location of veterinary schools and government research institutions while actively incentivising collaboration.**

*Comment:* We strongly agree and note the success in the developing linkages between The University of Sydney, Scibus and NSW DPI arising from the NSW Government initiative proposed and supported by DIAP.

There are now more than 70 people involved in the initiative, and connections are formed with University of Sydney Technology, Charles Sturt University, Agribio Victoria, University of California, Davis and others.

We recommend above that in order to have world class outcomes in terms of graduates and research, there need to be contemporary facilities. On page 8 we detail the need to support new centres of excellence and the need to support a new teaching and research dairy at the University of Sydney. We consider that the Recommendation 25 below is consistent with the proposals on Page 8.

**Recommendation 25: Australasian veterinary schools and their R&D partners collaborate to develop a complementary set of postgraduate education and research programs to address key national, regional and global needs.**

*Comment:* We agree and it is important to be working to collaborate on these programs at a National level due to limited resources and funding.