

Submission
No 173

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

I am a wildlife carer in the Central West of NSW I specialise in Large macropod rescues and rehabilitation. over the 10 years I have been rescuing macropods getting into see a vet has become harder and harder. Our vets love wildlife, they are trained with the bare minimum of knowledge of the different species. They want to help but they are booked solid.

If I can get in and have booked a week or so in advance I go to to see the wildlife vets at the volunteer run Sydney Wildlife mobile vet clinic in Frenches Forest area. They are only open on Wednesdays. It is a 5 hr journey for me. And not a journey to be undertaken lightly with a large injured macropod in your car, I can only take smaller animals there as it's just to dangerous to take the big boys all the way down there and back. My other option is the 8 hr round trip to the Taronga wildlife hospital at the zoo in Dubbo, they are open Tuesdays and Thursdays and you have to book ahead. Once again I can't take critically injured large animals there as it's just not feasible.

So basically it's me and my giant injured macropod in the back of my car the carpark at the local vet waiting for her to spare us 5 mins for a quick look between patients. I don't take the macropods inside the vet if I can help it as it is so stressful for the animal with the noise of howling dogs and the smell of fear. It's a terrifying place to be a pray animal.

As wildlife rescuers we need to be resourceful and have the knowledge to know what the injury is and what the vet should be looking for, so they can quickly triage and get the animal in and out as quickly as possible.

In my area which is Lithgow, the 2nd of 2 vet hospitals closed down at the end of last year. (the owner /vet retired) This has left all the dogs and cats going to the one vet hospital in Lithgow. This vet hospital does not see wildlife because WIRES will not pay their vet bill, therefore they will not see any more native animals. This has us relying on the Hartley Valley vets, who are the large animal vets for the area, hundreds of kilometres they cover seeing large animals on farms, so the vet is often not at the surgery.

Most vets see wildlife for free, so they are a low priority.

It's very distressing as a wildlife carer, I know some animals, given proper vet care can be saved, but that care is not available so it's easier to just euthanise. I do my best and travel more than 20,000 kms a year travelling to vets and to and from rescues. We travel all the way to Wagga to see a vet who will do osteo surgery on wildlife.

The other wildlife clinic is Possumwood at Bungendore, but only open once a month. We also have Dr Howard Ralph at Braidwood, he is so busy and the 6 hr round trip I have never done.

The vet shortage is a crisis for our wildlife and an added stress for the volunteers who rescue the animals...they want to help but that help is just not available for the animal.

Thank you.

Here's some photos of Curtis the kangaroo, hit by a car and doing so very well in care.