

Submission  
No 178

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

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

There is no doubt vets are absolutely vital to pet owners and also to native wildlife rescuers. The vet's workload is intense and they are already under very heavy pressure to provide care for all the native wildlife they can, often at greatly reduced or in some cases no fee. This has been made much more acute by decisions from the WIRES organisation. I was until recently a longstanding volunteer (23 years) specialist rescuer and carer with them.

The WIRES decision to implement a new process they call their 101 programme, provides minimal (4 hour) training to sympathetic members of public, who are then tasked to pick up and drop native animals straight to vets. This is very heavily impacting not only on the time and resources of vets, but also causing unnecessary stress to wild animals who in many cases would be far better served by going straight to a competent wildlife carer, especially in the case of orphaned young, or displaced animals (this can often happen because of redevelopment in their habitat area). Obviously if an animal is bleeding or otherwise visibly injured the vet is undoubtedly necessary, but otherwise it is far better all round for the experienced wildlife rescuers who have been trained in care of the particular species, to receive the animal in the first instance for observation and initial assessment.

To my knowledge WIRES has no arrangement in place to reimburse all those vets who assist the animals, and despite having substantial assets, (\$87 million was the last reported credit balance) does not deem it necessary to provide their own veterinary facilities throughout their 28 branches in NSW for carers to utilise.

Instead, they **deliberately** prevent their 101 volunteers from having any communication whatever with the very people (species-trained WIRES carers) who could so greatly assist vets by carrying out the more routine care and lessening the emergency load somewhat. I heard this week that a representative of WIRES has now claimed in court, that every animal in care must be seen weekly by a vet -and also declared that if the volunteer carer cannot afford to pay, they must cease being carers.

In my view WIRES is for some peculiar reason making everyone's life far more difficult than it needs to be and shows no remorse or accountability when challenged by those it should be supporting.

Since the influx of such incredible wealth, which was gained from the bushfire appeals, their goal seems to centre only on growing their own brand- and their media claims regarding their "fleet of Ambulances" and their paid Emergency Responders is very overblown, these are basically vans with drivers, and assorted rescue equipment/cages on board. They claim to have oxygen on board too but that is not often needed- and in any case the vans are not available to most of the state anyway.

Somebody needs to ask some serious questions of WIRES CEO and Board about why they think it is justifiable to load vets with such a punishing level of unpaid work, with no consultation and for no remuneration. I feel very sorry for the vets in my area, they are kind and compassionate people and do not deserve to be taken such advantage of.

My own wildlife caring continues, but now with a much more realistic and supportive organisation. They are already far better placed to support the carers and animals, and they are constantly raising money to get facilities appropriate to the need, yet all without the

benefit of a fat bank balance. They have a far higher regard for the vets, animals and carers too.

I really hope this submission has been useful, thank you for reading it.