

Submission
No 180

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

As a volunteer Wildlife rescuer who is very aware of the pressure under which our valued and highly trained vets are under, it is disappointing that our Head Office are:

- expanding a service of employee staffed vans that rescue wildlife where every animal must be taken to a vet;
- promoting 101 rescuers who are not allowed to work with carers and must take every animal to a vet
- are taking legal action against carers unless animals are taken for weekly vet checks.
- not using any of the millions in donations they received from the bushfires to support veterinary services, develop in-house veterinary services or support charities that do provide these services. i.e. \$80m is unspent 3 years later and yet the Byron Bay Wildlife Hospital is campaigning for funds and facing closure
- actively by-passing access to qualified carers who can often observe and assess a rescued bird or animal first, reducing the number of animals that require a vet visit and / or are able to provide the vet with more information from which a more informed consultation can result.

The Wildlife Rescue & Rehabilitation (WRR) sector officially operate under licence from DPIE. However DPIE are focused on the outcome and not the process. The DPIE 3 year strategy review of the Volunteer Wildlife Sector has no oversight of the actual operations of the respective WRR organisation, support for volunteers, access to resources, etc.

There is no governance or accountability of the WRR sector and how they operate.

The Board and Management of our state based WRR organisation openly claim they are accountable to no-one and do not have to consider or consult with anyone. They are increasingly putting pressure on veterinary resources with no consideration of the impact, which will be compounded further with the proposed changes to the Constitution and by-laws.

To better support Australian wildlife and our veterinary resources, a separate enquiry needs to be raised into the Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation Sector with the aim to deliver:

- much tighter governance and accountability of all operational aspects
- clearly define the interdependencies within the community i.e. veterinary services
- transparency of how public donations / funds are being applied
- transparency of costs e.g. legal action against volunteers
- long-term strategy and sustainability i.e. assets and investments
- why there is a high turnover of volunteers with many experienced leaving the sector
- a means by which volunteers can raise concerns re the Board & Management

Given the interdependencies, the Veterinary sector should have strong influence into how the WRR sector is operated. It cannot continue in the current direction with the WRR sector placing increasing pressure on already strained veterinary resources for their own agenda