

Submission
No 182

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

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 21 July 2023

Partially
Confidential

I was a WIRES volunteer for approximately 9 years and I am very concerned about some recently implemented moves by WIRES and the effect this is going to have on an already over stretched veterinary industry.

The impact of COVID on the veterinary industry was huge, with chronic vet and vet nurse shortages. I don't believe the industry has fully recovered from these difficulties. The pressure these problems caused in an industry that already had a massive mental health issue could not be over emphasised.

I believe WIRES have further negatively impacted the veterinary sector with some of the policies they have recently put in place. The 101 programme, provides minimal (4 hour) training to members of public, who are then tasked to pick up native animals and take them 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 use.

101 volunteers have no communication with the very people (species-trained WIRES carers) who could greatly assist vets by carrying out the more routine care and lessening the emergency load.

A representatives of WIRES has now claimed in court, that every animal in care must be seen weekly by a vet - what impact would that have on an already over stretched industry? Most of the vets provide their services to the wildlife care community free of charge. They could no longer afford to do this if this statement is in fact correct. Also, to the best of my knowledge, this was done without any consultation with or warning to the veterinary sector.

Questions need to be asked of WIRES CEO and Board as to why they think it is appropriate. WIRES has a considerable sum of money following the generous donations from the public in the wake of the Black Summer Bushfires. Perhaps if they intend to increase the demands on vets they could consider some remuneration to the industry.

Thankyou.