

Submission  
No 188

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

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

## Inquiry into the Veterinary Workforce shortage

I am a small animal veterinarian that runs a private practice in southwest Sydney. I have established this practice 21 years ago and never have I been so concerned about the future of our profession. I am now a sole practitioner having lost veterinarians due to the stress of COVID and the enticement of locuming instead of working full time. I was wanting to submit a detailed submission but unfortunately being extremely time poor and overworked this would have to suffice. Its 11pm and I have just finished a 14 hr shift due to an emergency surgery but am happy the patient is well and we have saved a life.

I will keep this brief as we have run out of time.

1. Lack of veterinarians – I have advertised for the last 3 years for a veterinarian to join our practice. I just like many other practices are very short staffed and unsuccessful in filling our positions. We use well established places to advertise as well as social media and word of mouth. I have offered up to \$200,000 per year and not one applicant has inquired. There are no vets around and those that are available are now locuming as the pay is high as well as the demand. A simple supply demand issue. Unfortunately its unstainable to have locums cover full time shifts all the time.
2. Overseas students and Universities. Universities main focus is becoming a successful business instead of providing high quality education and supporting our economy with high skilled professionals. Just last year I was invited to mentor DVM3 students and give them feedback on their resumes. I left shocked and without hope from what I discovered. Over half of the cohort were overseas students and nearly all of them would leave once they gained their qualifications and return to their homeland. At that point in time metropolitan Sydney had 140 full time positions advertised . If nearly half of that years veterinary cohort left Australia that would have left 50-60 new graduates to fill over 140 positions. In NSW there was close to 227 potions available. This is a large deficit that keeps on getting larger. This is a major blow to our profession. The Australian trained skilled workforce is leaving the country. A short term solution for this large deficit would be to make it mandatory for those NSW veterinary graduates to stay in NSW for 2 years after they finish their degree and give back to the Country that has given them the opportunity to study. This ensures a constant supply of new graduates and helps fill the void we currently have.

We have many issues that face our industry from being overworked, burnout stress and unreasonable public expectations of us. These have been spoken about extensively and I will not dwell into further.

My other experience is that I have employed a Brazilian Veterinarian as a nurse as he could not afford to pay for the local exams. Two others from Argentina have done some work experience to enable them to sit for exams. We should not compromise the standard of our examinations for overseas veterinarians but maybe reduce the costs or have some assistance at this stage to help with the shortage we are facing.

I am so blessed and proud to be a veterinarian and be able to help my community and provide a very valuable and essential service. We need to protect our industry by supporting those that provide

veterinary services to the public, agriculture and government. Vets are important and all aspects of our lives and economy at some level have a veterinarian providing their skill to ensure we have food on our table , our animals are well looked after and are also involved in research and development in many industries.

Thank you for the opportunity to have our say although brief and not to the full extent I would have liked. I hope as a collective we can find solutions and get our industry back on track. There is hope there will be a change and support for our profession and its future.