

Submission  
No 205

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

**Name:** James Rodger

**Date Received:** 23 July 2023

---

To whom it may concern

I would like to make a submission into the committees inquiry into the Veterinary workforce shortage.

I have no objection to my submission or my name being made public.

We have an acute shortage of veterinary practitioners throughout the world. My home in the Upper Hunter of New South Wales is no exception.

I propose the following factors contribute to the situation:-

In this area young people leaving school can be employed in industry, particularly the mining industry, If they leave school at 16 years they can rapidly start earning sums of money equal to that a new veterinary graduate might earn. This means that the new veterinarian could easily be \$100,000 behind the school leaver contemporary, often more. By this stage the early school leaver can be established with a house, possibly a young family. The new veterinarian is not only behind financially but is then further burdened with an astronomical Hex debt.

It is suggested the young professional (be it a Medical practitioner or a Veterinarian) can rapidly make up the shortfall. This is not the case.

There is a limit to what an inexperienced new graduate can earn, particularly in rural practice where the shortage is felt the most.. Rural veterinary practices servicing the farming industry have a limit to what they can charge clients and hence pay their employees. This is demonstrated in the number of sole practitioners.

Hence those new graduates faced with a wage relatively low compared with the early school leaver in industry have to find accommodation, face extra expenses establishing themselves in a new country district and feel they will never catch up. Chasing the dollar may restrict their ability to do the many varied things their profession offers and trying to repay their Hex debt, try to buy a house (with no earnings to pay a deposit) and the more they earn taxation plus Hex contribute to a state of despair and depression.

Little wonder this group of people are over represented in the suicide rates.

The logical answer is to not join the rural veterinary workforce.

The same applies to our Medical colleagues.

Thank you for your attention and the opportunity to express my opinion

J A Rodger BVMS, MRCVS, MANZCVS (Eq. Med.), FANZCVS (Eq. Repro)  
Registered Specialist and Consultant in Equine Reproduction