

Submission
No 212

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

Name: Liberty Hall
Date Received: 25 November 2023

Proposal for Addressing the Veterinary Workforce Crisis in Rural Australian First Nations
Communities: A Two-Way Learning Approach

Introduction:

The veterinary workforce crisis is not only in New South Wales but is also drastically affecting rural Australia. This presents a unique opportunity to engage in a collaborative and reciprocal learning process with First Nations communities. This proposal not only aims to provide essential training and resources to empower these communities but also recognizes the value of learning from their traditional first aid treatments for animals. This two-way approach seeks to foster a mutually beneficial relationship that enhances both veterinary practices and the preservation of traditional knowledge.

Due to the impact this could have Australia wide, I recommend sending this for Federal review rather than keeping it as solely for the New South Wales proposal.

Objectives:

- To address the shortage of veterinary professionals in rural communities across Australia and therefore alleviate the mental and physical burden on the vet industry.
- To empower community members with the skills and knowledge necessary to provide basic veterinary care and support services.
- To facilitate a cultural exchange by incorporating traditional First Nations animal care practices into mainstream veterinary knowledge.
- To enhance the overall health and welfare of animals in rural areas through community - driven initiatives.

Program Components:

Community Training Workshops:

- Develop and implement training workshops tailored to the specific needs of First Nations communities, integrating both modern veterinary practices and traditional knowledge.
- Encourage community members to share their traditional animal care practices during the workshops.
- Collaborate with local elders and community leaders to ensure cultural sensitivity and relevance.

Certification Programs:

- Establish certification programs in partnership with accredited training institutions that acknowledge both modern and traditional veterinary skills.
- Recognize and celebrate the importance of traditional knowledge in community certifications.

Mobile Veterinary Clinics:

- Introduce mobile veterinary clinics equipped with essential resources and staffed by trained community members.
- Actively engage with community members to understand and incorporate traditional treatments into veterinary care practices.
- Foster a reciprocal learning environment, where veterinary professionals share modern practices and learn from traditional methods.

Resource Allocation:

- Secure funding to provide necessary resources, including veterinary kits, medications, and equipment for community members.
- Incorporate traditional tools and remedies into the resource allocation strategy.

Community Outreach and Education:

- Develop educational materials that highlight the importance of integrating traditional and modern veterinary practices.
- Conduct outreach programs to exchange knowledge and celebrate the diversity of approaches to animal care.

Evaluation and Sustainability:**Monitoring and Assessment:**

- Implement a robust monitoring and evaluation system to assess the effectiveness of the program, considering both modern and traditional practices.
- Gather feedback from community members and veterinary professionals to make data - driven improvements.

Long-Term Sustainability:

- Establish partnerships with local organizations (such as AMRRIC), government agencies, and non-profits to ensure ongoing support for the dual - learning approach.
- Explore opportunities for continued education and skill development for community members, emphasizing the importance of preserving traditional knowledge.

Budget:

- Providing a detailed budget is difficult from my behalf as this project could reach high scale however, I understand one would be needed for outlining the costs associated with the training workshops, certification programs, mobile clinics, resource allocation, and community outreach initiatives. I suggest looking at past budgets for rural medical services

and after doing some research I believe that an initial budget of approximately \$5 million could be a sufficient starting point.

Conclusion:

- This proposal not only addresses the veterinary workforce crisis but also embraces the rich cultural heritage of First Nations communities. By fostering a two-way learning approach, we can aim to create a sustainable solution that benefits both veterinary practices and the preservation of traditional knowledge.

I look forward to hearing further information from the Portfolio 4 Committee on the implementation of this culturally sensitive and reciprocal proposal for the betterment of rural First Nations communities and their animals, as well the wide - spread benefit this has the potential for in the Veterinary Shortage Crisis.

Sincerely,

Liberty Hall

UK qualified and Registered Veterinary Nurse

Addressing the Veterinary Workforce Shortage Crisis: Inclusion of Veterinary Nurses on the 189 Visa Skills Set List

For the attention of Sarah Newlands, Kate Mihaljek and Gareth Perkins,

I am writing to draw your attention to the pressing issue of the veterinary workforce shortage crisis that our nation is currently facing and make a proposal that could have a great impact on alleviating some of the shortage. As stakeholders in the healthcare sector, it is crucial that we explore innovative solutions to address this crisis and ensure the well-being of not only the veterinary professionals but consequently, our animal population.

One promising avenue to alleviate the shortage is the inclusion of veterinary nurses from outside of Australia and especially Ireland, the UK, and the United States, on the 189 Visa Skills Set List. By doing so, we can tap into a pool of highly skilled and experienced professionals who are equipped to contribute significantly to our veterinary healthcare system.

Even though this current portfolio is for NSW only, if we make this proposal Federal, it will help the entire Veterinary Workforce Australia wide. Having worked in Victoria as a Veterinary Nurse for last 5 years, I know that this crisis is far wider than NSW.

Key Reasons for Inclusion:

Expertise and Training: Veterinary nurses from outside of Australia including and expansive of Ireland, the UK, and the United States, undergo rigorous training and education programs, ensuring they possess a comprehensive skill set. Their knowledge in animal care, disease prevention, and client communication is invaluable and can greatly enhance the quality of veterinary services in our nation.

National Finance Benefit: This proposal will require minimal funding whilst generating high revenue from the visa applications and the working professionals then funding their lives in Australia, and therefore the local and state economies.

Immediate Impact: Given the immediate nature of the workforce shortage crisis, recruiting veterinary nurses from these regions provides a quicker solution compared to training new professionals from scratch. Their existing qualifications and experience enable them to seamlessly integrate into the workforce, addressing the urgent need for skilled veterinary personnel.

Diversity in Skill Sets: The inclusion of veterinary nurses from different regions brings a diversity of experiences and perspectives to our veterinary healthcare system. This diversity can lead to innovative problem-solving, improved patient care, and enhanced efficiency in veterinary practices.

Potential Challenges and Mitigation Strategies:

While advocating for the inclusion of veterinary nurses on to the 189 Visa Skills Set List, it is essential to address potential challenges such as licensure and regulatory differences. Collaborative efforts between relevant regulatory bodies can streamline the accreditation process, ensuring that these professionals meet our nation's standards.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the inclusion of veterinary nurses from Ireland, the UK, the United States and other countries that have exceptional training standards on to the 189 Visa Skills Set List, presents a strategic and immediate solution to the veterinary workforce shortage crisis. By recognizing their qualifications and facilitating a seamless integration process, we can strengthen our veterinary healthcare system, alleviate many of the courses for the current mental health crisis in the profession and ensure the continued well-being of our nation's animals.

I urge you to consider this proposal seriously and work towards implementing the necessary measures to enable the inclusion of veterinary nurses on the 189 Visa Skills Set List.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I look forward to positive developments that will benefit our veterinary healthcare system.

Sincerely,

Liberty Hall

UK qualified and Registered Veterinary Nurse