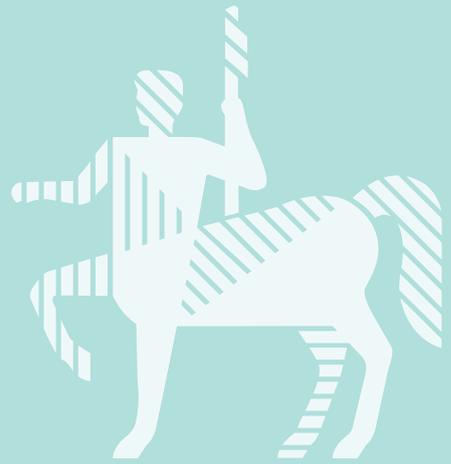




# 2025 WA STATE ELECTION PRIORITIES





**The Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) is the peak body representing the veterinary profession in Australia.**

Veterinarians are highly regarded, trusted community members.

The AVA has provided a united voice for the veterinary profession for over 100 years and is committed to championing and empowering the veterinary profession to thrive.

# INDUSTRY SNAPSHOT

## WA SECTOR



**1958** registered veterinarians<sup>1</sup>



**92** registered veterinary specialists<sup>1</sup>



**472** registered veterinary practices<sup>1</sup>



**2211** registered veterinary nurses<sup>1</sup>



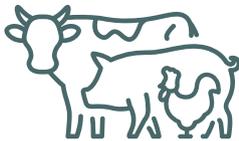
**450** veterinary students enrolled at Murdoch University<sup>2</sup>



Over **700,000** Australian households with pets



Supporting **animal health and welfare** in regional and urban communities.



Maintaining WA's leadership in **animal health, benefiting** the state's over **\$3 billion** livestock sector.



Providing **public good** including care for unowned animals, wildlife, **animals during disasters** and animals in the care of vulnerable communities

1. VPB WA Annual Report 2023-2024 2. Murdoch University SVM personal communication



# TOP PRIORITIES FOR WA



To ensure sustainable veterinary care for animals and the community, the AVA has identified five urgent priorities:

- 1. RURAL AND REGIONAL VETERINARY WORKFORCE SUPPORT**

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- 2. SUPPORT FOR VETERINARY STUDENTS**

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- 3. SUPPORTING THE PUBLIC GOOD PROVIDED BY VETERINARIANS**

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- 4. MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR VETERINARY PROFESSIONALS**

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- 5. LEGISLATIVE REVIEWS TO REDUCE REGULATORY BURDENS ON VETERINARIANS**

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Veterinary services help secure Australia's animal health and livestock supply chain, protecting hundreds of thousands of jobs nationwide and easing cost of living pressures through a safe and reliable food supply.

Vets also protect the mental health and wellbeing of Australia's pet owning population, ensuring a strong human animal bond.

# 1

## RURAL AND REGIONAL VETERINARY WORKFORCE SUPPORT

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### INVESTMENT NEEDED

- > Support for veterinarians working in remote and regional areas equitable to that afforded to other health professionals.
- > Enhanced data collection and planning for the veterinary workforce in WA.

### WHY THIS MATTERS

- > Veterinarians are integral parts of communities, providing preventative and emergency care to family pets, livestock, and wildlife. They play a critical role in maintaining animal health and welfare, supporting food safety, production, and biosecurity for Australia's economy.
- > Limited access to veterinary care in rural and regional communities is distressing for pet-owning families and places strain when people must travel long distances to seek veterinary care. Critical workforce shortages in underserved areas also heighten risks such as poor animal welfare, disease outbreaks, and reduced food security.
- > Equitable support for rural and regional veterinarians, akin to other health professionals, will help ensure sustainable veterinary services, safeguarding community well-being, animal welfare, and economic stability.

# 2

## SUPPORT FOR VETERINARY STUDENTS

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### INVESTMENT NEEDED

- > Financial assistance to address “placement poverty” for regional and rural practice exposure.
- > Veterinary students are required to each undertake 52 weeks of practical placement during their undergraduate degree. A \$1.7million annual investment (based on similar support to that provided to other essential professionals under the “Commonwealth Prac Payment” scheme) would significantly assist students, especially during a cost of living crisis.

### WHY THIS MATTERS

- > Veterinary students are future veterinary health professionals whose practical placements provide crucial exposure to diverse clinical scenarios, particularly in underserved areas.
- > “Placement poverty” limits students’ ability to afford rural and regional placements, reducing their exposure to rural veterinary practice and reducing their likelihood of working in these areas post-graduation.
- > Financial support for placements enhances students’ access to experience the value of rural practice and helps them see it as a positive career option post-graduation.

# 3

## SUPPORTING THE PUBLIC GOOD PROVIDED BY VETERINARIANS

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### INVESTMENT NEEDED

- > Financial support for the currently unpaid veterinary services provided by private veterinarians for the care of wildlife, unowned animals, and animals of vulnerable populations.

### WHY THIS MATTERS

- > Veterinarians deliver vital public goods such as wildlife care, disaster response, and biosecurity, which benefit the broader community.
- > Decades of underfunding for this public good work have strained private veterinary practices, jeopardising their ability to sustain these essential services.
- > Increased financial backing supports private practitioners who provide public good veterinary services, enabling consistent care and safeguarding animals, public health, and community safety.



# 4

## **MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR VETERINARY PROFESSIONALS**

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### **INVESTMENT NEEDED**

- > Funding for AVA mental health programs, including the Cultivating Safe Teams training program, mentoring, and 24/7 counselling.

### **WHY THIS MATTERS**

- > The veterinary workforce plays an integral role in animal and public health, requiring a resilient, healthy professional community to meet growing demands.
- > High mental health risks within the profession, driven by factors including burnout, financial stress, and workforce shortages, threaten retention and productivity.
- > Dedicated mental health programs and workplace support systems reduce psychosocial risks, enhancing professional well-being and ensuring service continuity.

# 5

## **LEGISLATIVE REVIEWS TO REDUCE REGULATORY BURDENS ON VETERINARIANS.**

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### **INVESTMENT NEEDED**

- > Development and implementation of the regulations under the Veterinary Practice Act 2021, which support contemporary veterinary practice and animal welfare expectations and standards.

### **WHY THIS MATTERS**

- > Veterinarians contribute critical expertise to modern animal welfare and public health, requiring legislative environments that enable effective practice.
- > Regulations that fail to align with contemporary veterinary practice and modern animal welfare standards can risk animal health, and create undue stress for veterinary professionals, diminishing efficiency and job satisfaction.
- > Legislation informed by veterinary expertise that reflects current practice standards, harmonised across Australian jurisdictions, enhances operational efficiency and supports the long-term sustainability of veterinary services.

# A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR WA VETERINARY SERVICES

To preserve the role of veterinarians in WA as essential health workers, investment in these priorities will:

**Address critical veterinary workforce shortages**



**Promote animal and community wellbeing**



**Support a resilient and thriving veterinary sector**



AVA Public Affairs and Advocacy Team  
[publicvetaffairs@ava.com.au](mailto:publicvetaffairs@ava.com.au)



[ava.com.au](http://ava.com.au)

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