

Plain Language Statement

Faculty of Veterinary Science



Project:

Veterinarians, what don't you get paid for?

Free, low cost and discounted veterinary and community services, knowledge and information and the use of private infrastructure.

Human ethics application: 26670

Principal investigator: Dr Kristen Steele (PhD student)

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Additional Researchers:

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Introduction

Thank you for your interest in participating in this research project. The following few pages will provide you with further information about the project, so that you can decide if you would like to take part in this research.

Please take the time to read this information carefully. You may ask questions about anything you don't understand or want to know more about.

Your participation is voluntary. If you don't wish to take part, you don't have to. If you begin participating, you can stop at any time.

What is this research about?

This research is to understand and measure what is being provided free, low cost or discounted by the Australian veterinary profession, such as veterinary services, community services, knowledge and information and the use of private infrastructure.

In 2003, “pro bono” veterinary services by privately owned veterinary practices were approximated at \$30 Million and \$17 Million in 1999.¹

This voluntary and anonymous survey forms part of PhD research and is a collaborative area of research by the University of Melbourne and the Australian Veterinary Association across Australia’s veterinary profession.

Anonymous information is being requested from veterinarians and veterinary workplaces, whether fully paid, inadequately paid or volunteer.

The purpose of collecting the information is to identify and gain financial data on suggested areas of public good. This may assist in recommendations, further research and to advocate for the predominantly private Australian veterinary profession to service the community, more sustainably.

What will I be asked to do?

Should you agree to participate...

Survey questions will ask for anonymous information on what veterinarians and veterinary workplace provide *paid, free, low cost or discounted* by asking about case load and services, financial data, other information and comments.

You or your workplace cannot be identified from your answers.

Include every service that is not fully paid: veterinary services, community services, giving knowledge and information etc.

Also, the costs incurred to provide it: such as infrastructure, staff time, education and compliance requirements (e.g. veterinary education and registration).

Realistic estimations are acceptable if this information is not currently being recorded.

The survey asks for information from:

1. Veterinarians, both paid and volunteer work, **one survey person**.
2. Veterinary workplaces, both paid and volunteer agencies, **one survey per workplace**.
- *veterinary practices, businesses, not-for-profit organizations, sole practices, locums, consultants, government etc.*

The nominated veterinarian/s will need authority to access workplace data.

¹ Members donate \$34m! AVA/s 1999 Animal Welfare Survey results - \$7600 per head. Australian Veterinary Journal, 2000, 78: 361-361.

The online survey may take from 20 minutes to 1 hour depending on the breadth of work that you do, the number of sections you choose to fill out and the length of your text responses. Your information is appreciated.

You can stop and return to your survey, which will be saved as you progress if using the same computer and browser when you resume.

What are the survey questions about?

Survey questions are about what is being provided free, low cost or discounted- therefore, what is not being fully paid at free market rates, and the costs incurred to provide it.

The main areas being asked are:

1. Wildlife, feral, pest animals.
2. Stray/ shelter/ lost animals
3. Large scale disaster response.
4. After-hours services.
5. CLINICAL veterinary services

Essential veterinary care, desexing, vaccination, parasite control, other biosecurity inc. surveillance, identification, euthanasia and disposal, pathology, milage, human social services etc.

6. NON-CLINICAL veterinary services

Information for government, media, certification, animal ethics committees, research and academia, membership or leadership of boards or committees, reporting etc.

7. Education and training of veterinary students and veterinary nurses.
8. Community services, information, use of private veterinary infrastructure and staff:

High school work experience, over the counter information, media, local council administration, support of non-government organisations, etc.

You can also add more services, information and infrastructure if it doesn't quite cover your valuable contribution. You do not need to answer every section, only what is relevant to you.

The questions will ask:

1. What is provided?
2. Who is requesting this?
3. What payments are being received,
4. Source if payment

5. What would the invoice be for the SAME indicated care of a private case or service with secure funding and no discounting?
6. Any out-of-pocket costs incurred.
7. Any income forgone.
8. What is needed to provide it? Such as facilities, equipment, staff, education and compliance requirements (e.g. veterinary registration).
9. Have injuries, illnesses or negative impact on well-being occurred in the provision of this work?
10. Why provide it, if not fully paid at free market rates?
11. Your valuable comments and opinions which reflect your lived experience.

It is important that all costs are included in calculation of your rates, such as:

- Facilities and equipment
- Fixed costs eg. Utilities, insurance etc
- Staffing (registered veterinarian, veterinary nurse or administrative staff time),
- Drugs and consumables,
- Milage and travel,
- Costs of maintaining registration (annual veterinary registration, licenses, educational debt, CPD, insurance, professional association)
- Others

What are the possible benefits?

Key benefits from the survey for veterinarians and veterinary workplaces will be to identify what is being provided free, low cost or discounted and begin to record and acknowledge these costs. Participants may feel a sense of acknowledgement and positive well-being for the contribution they make to the community, regardless of the payment received.

There will be an overall benefit for the Australian veterinary profession to get an accurate picture of free, low cost and discounted veterinary and community services, information and infrastructure provided.

This will help to provide recommendations, direct future research and advocate for the Australian veterinary profession to service the community, more sustainably.

What are the possible risks?

Participants may identify negative emotions (eg. upset, frustration) when asked about financial losses incurred, injury, illness or negative impact on well-being from free, low cost or discounted work.

Financial stress can challenge mental well-being. There are resources below to assist.

The Australian Veterinary Association provides telephone counselling support for all veterinarian members, their team who may not be members and their families, which can be found at:

- ava.com.au/Thrive?how-we-help-you/
- AVA counselling 1300 687 327

Additional resources are:

- Lifeline 13 11 14
- Beyond Blue 1300 22 4636
- MensLine Australia 1300 789 978
- SANE Australia 1800 187 263

Do I have to take part?

No. Participation is entirely voluntary and anonymous. It is appreciated that you are considering taking part.

You are able to withdraw at any time from completing the survey. If you do not submit the survey, your data will not be included. As your data is not identified, it cannot be removed once submitted.

Will I hear about the results of this project?

The results will be made available to the Australian veterinary profession through the mechanisms used to distribute the survey, such as the Australian Veterinary Association database and other electronic databases, electronic direct marketing, website, newsletters, continuing professional education conferences and exclusive veterinary social media sites and published in an academic journal. Also lecture presentation and face to face communication at relevant veterinary conferences.

What will happen to information about me?

The anonymous raw data and comments will be compiled and stored on University of Melbourne computers until completion of the PhD which are password protected, and only accessed by authorized personnel from the University of Melbourne. Raw electronic data will then be destroyed on completion of the PhD research period.

The information may then be used to communicate the research findings, inform future research, and advocate for sustainability of the veterinary profession through research publications, industry publications, submissions to government, information for media and social media, AVA website, newsletters and other forms of communication etc.

Is there any potential conflict of interest?

This anonymous survey forms part of PhD research and is an area of collaborative research by the University of Melbourne and the Australian Veterinary Association across the veterinary profession in Australia.

Who is funding this project?

The PhD, through the University of Melbourne, is being supported through staff resource, infrastructure and access to information.

The AVA is supporting the project through staff resource, infrastructure, information and access to distribution channels such as databases.

Where can I get further information?

If you have any questions, you are welcome to contact the principal investigator:

Dr Kristen Steele: steele.k@unimelb.edu.au

Who can I contact if I have any concerns about the project?

This project has human research ethics approval from The University of Melbourne. If you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of this research project, which you do not wish to discuss with the research team, you should contact the Research Integrity Administrator, Office of Research Ethics and Integrity, University of Melbourne, VIC 3010. Tel: +61 3 8344 1376 or Email: research-integrity@unimelb.edu.au. All complaints will be treated confidentially. In any correspondence, please provide the name of the research team and/or the name or ethics ID number (26670) of the research project.

Thank you

Veterinarians, thank you for considering contributing to this survey, but more importantly, you're your dedication, generosity and personal investment towards animal health and welfare and the impacts on human health and well-being.