



Pro forma for SOL 2013 Submission

The Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency (AWPA) (formerly Skills Australia) is currently updating the **Skilled Occupation List (SOL)** for 2013 and is seeking your input concerning the occupations/industry sectors represented by your organisation. In particular, we are seeking evidence of:

- demand and supply imbalance¹, both nationally and regionally
- medium-to-long term demand and supply trends which may impact upon the employment outlook
- formal licensing or registration requirements

(N.B. For the purposes of this exercise, 'medium-to-long term' is defined as a period of around 2 to 10 years).

Please note that the SOL is concerned *only* with medium-to-long-term skills needs rather than immediate skills shortages. As such, AWPA is only seeking to obtain information on longer term trends, rather than immediate shortages and costs.

1. The industry (or industries), and occupation(s) represented by your organisation, for the purposes of this submission, are:

Industry/industries:

Veterinary Industry

Veterinary Surgeons (Veterinarians)

Veterinarians work in a variety of different fields in Australia. These include, but are not limited to: providing veterinary services to companion animals, production animals, laboratory animals, zoo and wildlife animals; government roles in food safety, food security, quarantine and biosecurity; public health; academic and other teaching roles; research; medicine and animal health and animal welfare.

¹ **Skill demand and supply (im)balance** occurs when the quantity of a given skill supplied by the work force and the quantity demanded by employers diverge at the existing market conditions. Labour market supplies and demands for occupational skills are continuously fluctuating. At a certain point in time, there will be labour market imbalances and accompanying skill imbalances because of the disequilibrium between the demand for and supply of skills.



2. Are there any occupations that you represent where there is evidence of imbalances in the demand for and supply of skills in the medium-to-long term?

(Can you please provide a quantified estimate of the demand and supply for your nominated occupation(s) out to 2020, if possible)

Australia currently has 30% more veterinarians per capita than the USA and UK, countries with comparable numbers of animals per capita and expectations of veterinary service levels. There are 10,318 registered veterinarians in Australia as of 30 June 2012. From the early 1960s until 2003 there were four veterinary schools in Australia and approximately 320-350 graduates entered the workforce each year.

There are now seven schools and approximately 3000 veterinary undergraduates, with the most recently opened school to graduate its first class in 2013. The percentage of international students has increased from 7% in 2001 to 20% in 2010. The first graduates from James Cook University and Charles Sturt University graduated in 2010. This increased the supply of Australian graduates by 73 in 2010. In 2011, 456 new veterinarians graduated in Australia, while in 2012, 537 are expected to graduate. A further 40 are expected to graduate from the University of Adelaide in 2013.

Figures currently available suggest that there will be approximately 640 graduates from all Australian schools next year based on admission figures. Of these 140 will be foreign students, some 40 of whom will remain in Australia, leaving a net total of 540.

Information from the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council states that from a total of 8977 registrants in 2008 a further 1000 veterinarians, 300 of whom were skilled migrants, registered with Australian boards in four years to reach 10,004 registered to practise in 2011. Less than 10 of these were National Veterinary Examination (NVE) graduates.

Below are statistics from the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council of how many veterinarians have migrated to Australia in the last 5 years. In total 258 veterinarians have entered Australia in the last 5 years on top of the approximately 400 per year of our own graduates.

Migration Program Outcomes by Category (General Skilled Migration) and ANZSCO (234711 - Veterinarian) for program year 2007-08, 2008-09, 2009-10, 2010-11 and 2011-12

Category	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Skilled Australian Sponsored	9	<5		6	5
Skilled Independent	23	37	<5	83	74
State/Territory Sponsored Visa Classes	<5	<5	<5	<5	6
Total	36	40	5	92	85

Note 1: Outcomes reflect visa grants in person net of provisional cases which don't proceed to the 2nd permanent stage.

Note 2: Includes secondary applicants.

Note 3: Occupation detail is applicable only to principals within the Skill Stream

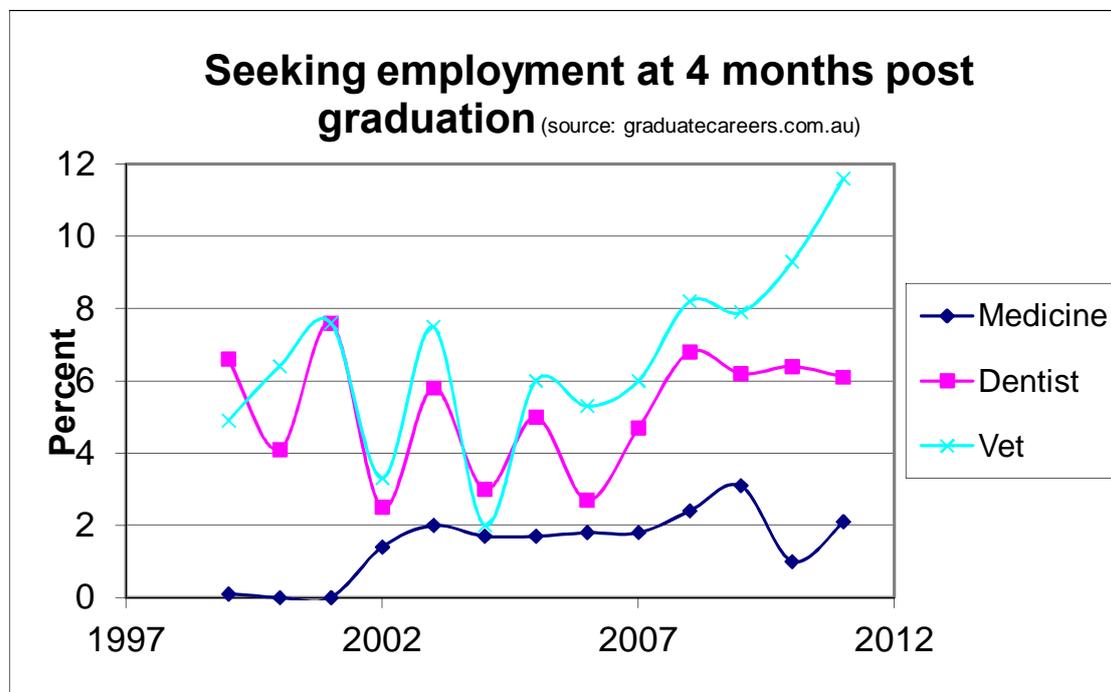
Note 4: ANZSCO was introduced in DIAC on 1 July 2010. Applications lodged prior to that date using the Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO) 2nd Edition have been converted to an ANZSCO code using a standard DIAC mapping approved by the ABS.



Recent research has indicated that only 400 replacement veterinarians will be required per annum (Pratley, JE 2012. *Education for the veterinary profession* *Agricultural Science*, 24;1:30-33. <http://search.informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=404921340616954;res=IELHSS>).

There has not been a comparable increase in the numbers of animals requiring veterinary care. The number of dogs and cats per 100 people in Australia has declined from 34 in 1994 to 27 in 2009 . a decline of 20% over 15 years (Australian Companion Animal Council, 2009. *Contribution of the Pet Care Industry to the Australian Economy*, 7th edn). There has been no indication that there has been a significant increase in the number of animals involved in agriculture or recreation that will increase the demand for veterinary services in these sectors.

In addition, there is evidence of an increasing number of graduates still seeking employment 4 months after graduation compared to similar professions.



Considering all this evidence, it is highly probably that Australia is experiencing the early stages of a significant oversupply of suitably qualified and registrable veterinarians.

The Australian Veterinary Association's (AVA) recommends that veterinarians be removed from the SOL.

3. Is there evidence of non-metropolitan imbalances in the demand for and supply of skills in the medium-to-long term?

(If so, can you indicate in what part of Australia and the number in the occupation in over- or under-supply)



In common with other professions, there are difficulties in the placement and retention of veterinary practitioners in some rural areas. Many factors contribute to this including lifestyle, partner employment, education access for children, working hours and remuneration that is generally lower than in cities.

These are areas that the new veterinary schools seek to address in their selection processes by selecting candidates from, and with an interest in, rural veterinary services, biosecurity, food safety and food security, aquaculture, equine medicine and wildlife.

There is little evidence of the success of this strategy as yet and it may be years before any real progress is made.

4. Are there any occupations which require formal licensing or registration arrangements in order to practice/perform in this occupation?

For example:

- *Midwives are required to register with the nurses board in their state or territory;*
- *Panelbeaters are required to be registered or certified with the state Motor Vehicle Repair Industry Authority*

Veterinary surgeons in most areas of employment are required to be registered with a state or territory-based veterinary board.

Registration without additional examination is limited to graduates of Australia, New Zealand, the UK, Canada, South Africa and selected schools in the USA. Graduates of institutions in other countries are required to sit the National Veterinary Examination which is a rigorous and costly process with a high failure rate (<http://www.avbc.asn.au/exam.htm>).

5. Is your employment sector expected to be impacted by any medium-to-long term trends (excluding costs associated with training, labour hire, and international sponsorship) which will impact upon demand and/or supply? Please provide evidence (e.g. data source, policy document) which substantiates these claims.

For example:

- *New benchmarks for childcare centres will be introduced by the Australian Government on 1 January 2013, which will mandate increased staff-to-child ratios and higher qualification standards for childcare workers.*

The most significant expected trends are those relating to a significantly increased supply of veterinarians as outlined under the first question above.



The profession has undergone significant demographic change over the last 30 years. Current intakes of undergraduate veterinary students across all schools are overwhelmingly (approximately 80% - 90%) female. This demographic change has had an impact on veterinary practice ownership, part time work and job sharing and temporary losses of veterinarians from the workforce due to family commitments.

Increasing numbers of veterinary graduates are undertaking post-graduate study. This is generally to become Members or Fellows of the Australian and New Zealand College of Veterinary Scientists. Fellowship enables registration as a specialist. College records show that in 2002 there were 102 Membership exam candidates and 9 Fellowship candidates. In 2012 the numbers were 2098 and 28 respectively.

This trend to advanced or specialist training is reflective of the demands of modern society on the level and standard of veterinary science.

6. Please provide any other information you consider relevant evidence to support your submission

(for example, you may know of some independent studies about your occupation that supports your advice to us).

The AVA is currently conducting a comprehensive survey of current and future needs for veterinary services in Australia.

However, the existing data provided above underlines the high likelihood of an expanding oversupply of Australian graduate veterinarians over the coming decade.

Therefore the Australian Veterinary Association requests that veterinarians be removed from the Skilled Occupations List for 2013.

7. Please provide the name, position and contact details of a person within your organisation who is willing to be contacted if any further information or follow-up is required.

Name: Mr. Graham Catt
Position: Chief Executive Officer
Contact details: (02) 9431-5000

Or

Name: Dr Kevin Doyle
Position: National Veterinary Director
Contact details: (02) 6273-0064
Email: kdoyle@ava.com.au





All information (**including name and address details**) contained in submissions will be made available to the public on the AWPA website unless you indicate that you would like all or part of your submission to remain in confidence. Automatically generated confidentiality statements in emails do not suffice for this purpose. Respondents who would like part of their submission to remain in confidence should provide this information **marked** as such in a separate attachment. Legal requirements, such as those imposed by the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*, may affect the confidentiality of your submission.

Please attach additional pages if needed.

