



PRIORITIES FOR A SUSTAINABLE VETERINARY PROFESSION



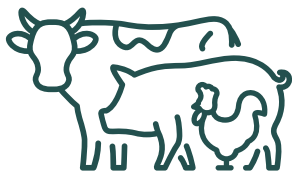
INDUSTRY SNAPSHOT



Assisting
16 million
Australian
pet owners



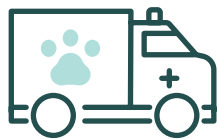
Supporting food
security for
26 million
Australians



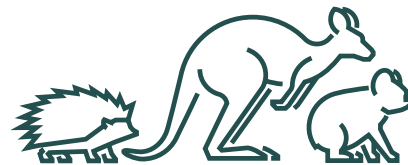
Securing
428,000 jobs
in Australian
livestock industries¹



Servicing
communities
across Australia



Emergency care
for hundreds of
thousands of wild
animals every year



Helping **protect**
Australia's
iconic species

¹ Meat and Livestock Australia State of the Industry Report 2022

Priorities for a sustainable veterinary profession

The Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) is the peak body representing the veterinary profession nationally. Veterinarians are highly regarded, trusted community members who make a vital contribution to the nation's biosecurity, public health and food security outcomes.

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

Despite the value of the veterinary sector being well recognised, in 2025, the profession continues to face ongoing challenges that threaten the viability of its workforce. In 2024, Jobs and Skills Australia reaffirmed that the veterinary profession was facing a critical workforce shortage for the eighth consecutive year and called for a national veterinary workforce strategy to address the ongoing skills deficit¹.

With 75% of new and emerging human diseases originating in animals, vets are the guardians of public health. By identifying, diagnosing and treating animal diseases, vets are at the frontline of zoonotic disease surveillance. **Every Australian is impacted by this important work led by the veterinary profession.**



Without dedicated government investment, the profession's capacity to deliver these essential community services is compromised. Whilst the animal health aspect of veterinary work is clear, their critical role in safeguarding Australia's food supply is less understood.

Veterinarians are essential in providing safe and reliable access to animal food products, an industry worth AU\$35 billion to the Australian economy each year².

To address these challenges, the AVA has identified **5 critical priorities** that safeguard biosecurity, protect animal health and welfare, preserve public safety and advance the wellbeing of the Australian veterinary workforce. **These priorities call for urgent investment to secure a sustainable and resilient veterinary sector.**

¹ <https://www.jobsandskills.gov.au/publications/essential-ingredient-food-supply-chain-workforce>

² <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/animalplan-2022-to-2027.pdf>

OUR CHALLENGE	WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?	WHAT IS NEEDED?
<p>Building a robust veterinary workforce</p>	<p>Vets provide an essential service that supports the growth of the regional, rural and metropolitan communities around them.</p> <p>Facing persistent labour shortages, a national veterinary workforce strategy, with sustained government investment, is needed to revitalise the profession and attract new vets to rural and regional areas where the skills deficit is now critical.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a national veterinary workforce strategy to address critical skills shortages. • \$24 million per year for a HECS-HELP forgiveness scheme that will incentivise new veterinarians to relocate to regional areas by partially or fully forgiving their tertiary education debt upon relocation to target communities.
<p>Supporting veterinary students to futureproof the profession</p>	<p>Veterinary students, who represent the future of the profession, face major challenges during their training. They are required to complete 52 weeks of unpaid practical placement at their own expense, often restricting their access to rural and regional experiences.</p> <p>Early exposure to rural veterinary practice influences graduates' career choices. Ensuring placements in regional areas is essential for sustaining biosecurity, food security, public health, and animal welfare services for these communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$12.2 million per year to include veterinary students in the Commonwealth Prac Payment Scheme. • 30 per cent increase in funding rate per veterinary Equivalent Full-Time Student Load (EFTSL) to partially subsidise vet student training.
<p>Investing in mental health for a thriving veterinary profession</p>	<p>Australia needs resilient vets to support our communities, livestock, biosecurity and food production. However, the veterinary workforce faces critical challenges in addressing compassion fatigue, managing exceptionally long working hours in unsupported conditions, and alleviating the significant financial strain of training and practice.</p> <p>Without urgent government investment, veterinary mental health outcomes will continue to decline, and the profession will be unable to provide this essential service to Australian communities into the future.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$750k per year for 4 years to fund veterinary mental health and wellness initiatives, including the AVA Cultivating Safe Teams project. • \$2.1 million to support delivery of the AVA Thrive Program that supports critical mental health outcomes for vets.
<p>Vets are stewards of public good</p>	<p>The veterinary workforce provides critical biosecurity surveillance, expert animal care during natural disasters and frontline treatment of injured wildlife, often without payment or subsidy.</p> <p>This commitment and high level of care strains the limited financial resources and overburdens a stretched workforce already facing declining mental health outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$7.5 million per year for 4 years for a pilot program subsidising private vets who treat injured wildlife. • Establish a national animal disaster fund that will subsidise private vets caring for animals during natural disasters or extreme weather events.
<p>Vets protecting animal health and welfare</p>	<p>Vets are Australia's frontline in protecting our world class animal health and welfare standards. Vets provide trusted oversight in maintaining and protecting these standards, which underpin the nation's lucrative trade and export relationships and food security outcomes.</p> <p>The veterinary sector supports regular review of the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy. Investment is needed in a national animal antibiotic usage and resistance surveillance system to ensure the success of our livestock industries and the food security of our nation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and renewal of the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy to ensure it remains fit for purpose. • \$5 million per year for a national veterinary antibiotic usage and resistance surveillance system.

VETERINARY IMPACT

Pet care expenditure⁵

\$33.2bn

Dogs \$20.5bn

Cats \$9.1bn



Livestock disposals and livestock products¹¹

\$31.4bn

\$12.8bn

for cattle and calves

\$3.7bn

for sheep and lambs

\$4.0bn for poultry

\$1.7bn for pigs

\$2.7bn for wool

\$6.2bn for milk

Revenue of Australian Veterinary industry³

\$5.6bn

Veterinary Businesses (Practices) in Australia¹

3,651

The Veterinary sector employs:

29,008 people⁴

15,816 vets

with total wages \$2bn⁶

The gross value of fisheries and aquaculture¹²



\$4bn



The gross revenue of racing (horse and greyhound)¹³

\$4.6bn



1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 12, 13 IBISWorld 2024

5 Animal Medicines Australia 2022

11 Australian Bureau of Statistics 2023–2024

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