

Victorian Livestock Veterinary Scholarship Program

Veterinary Support Services has received a grant from the Cattle Compensation Fund to deliver a 24-month structured livestock veterinary scholarship program for 8 early career veterinarians across regional Victoria commencing January 2025.

The scholarship program provides candidates with:

- clinical supervision, training and support in their livestock veterinary work up to 5 days per month for the first 6 months, then reducing as experience is gained (i.e. fortnightly for the subsequent 6 months then monthly for the 2nd year of the program).
- after hours phone and on-farm clinical support for livestock animal calls (as needed) in the first 12 months of the program.
- up to 8 days per year structured, relevant livestock and professional skills training with all associated accommodation and travel costs covered.
- facilitated monthly online peer support and learning within the candidate cohort.
- opportunity to write one individual animal (year 1) and one herd-based (year 2) case study and present it within the candidate cohort and to a wider audience to develop critical reading, scientific writing and public speaking skills.
- directives and tools for regular case logging and self-reflections to be submitted quarterly.
- HECS debt relief payments of \$20,000 per year in the subsequent 2 years post program completion (i.e. January 2028 and January 2029).*

*HECS debt relief payments are subject to remaining employed within a regional Victorian veterinary practice performing 50% livestock veterinary work.

Scholarship Candidate Eligibility Criteria

- Hold a nationally recognised veterinary science degree
- Registered to practice as a veterinary surgeon in the state of Victoria
- Less than 2 years graduated by December 2024**
- Commenced full-time employment in a Victorian rural/regional practice on/before January 31st 2025
- Able to carry out a minimum veterinary workload of 50% livestock duties
- Strong interest and commitment for continued veterinary work with production animals

**Candidates graduated more than 2 years will still be considered if they have had limited exposure to production animal work in their career to date.

Candidates meeting eligibility criteria will be selected through an application and panel interview process in late 2024. Successful applicants will then be appointed an individual experienced veterinary supervisor to support them throughout the program.

Supervisor Eligibility Criteria

- Hold a nationally recognised veterinary science degree
- Registered to practice as a veterinary surgeon in the state of Victoria
- More than 5 years clinical mixed/large animal focused veterinary experience
- Either internal or external to the candidate's practice (i.e. work within the same practice as the candidate or work independently of the candidate's practice but NOT employed by a competing veterinary clinic)**

** Decision about supervisor origin is at the discretion of the candidate's employer and their appointment will be made after negotiations with and by VSS in a contractual agreement with the candidate's clinic.

Supervisor Job Description and Expectations

- Accompany their candidate (in the candidate's vehicle) to livestock calls up to 5 days per month for the first 6 months of the program, then reducing as experience is gained (i.e. fortnightly for the subsequent 6 months then monthly in the second year of the program).
- Deliver practical training, support and guidance for candidates in their farm animal calls.
- NOT simply perform the veterinary tasks for the candidate, rather train and assist them in how to safely perform the relevant tasks.
- Be paid an hourly rate, negotiated with and set by VSS at program commencement, for:
 - accompanying the candidate (as described).
 - completing assessments and evaluations (outlined below).
 - attending meetings with VSS management (as required).
- Provide paid after-hours support (where possible) to the candidate in their rostered production animal on call work during the first 12 months of the scholarship program. This does not require attendance at every call, rather serves as a back-up support if required.
- Attend 8 hours of supervisor training at program commencement residential.
- Perform 6-monthly candidate progression assessments and evaluations to provide a quantitative measure of clinical competency development.
- Attend 6-9 monthly face-to-face evaluation meetings with VSS management, their scholarship candidate and host clinic to evaluate program logistics, implementation, functionality and efficacy.
- Complete 2 program satisfaction and feedback surveys at each year end to qualitatively evaluate program performance.

For further information on this VLVS program, visit www.veterinarysupportservices.com.au/victorian-livestock-veterinary-scholarship or contact Dr Becky Dickinson at becky@veterinarysupportservices.com.au.