

THRIVE

An AVA wellness initiative for the veterinary profession.



Dr Helen Jones Fairnie AM
Former AVA President and pioneer for positive mental health in the veterinary profession.

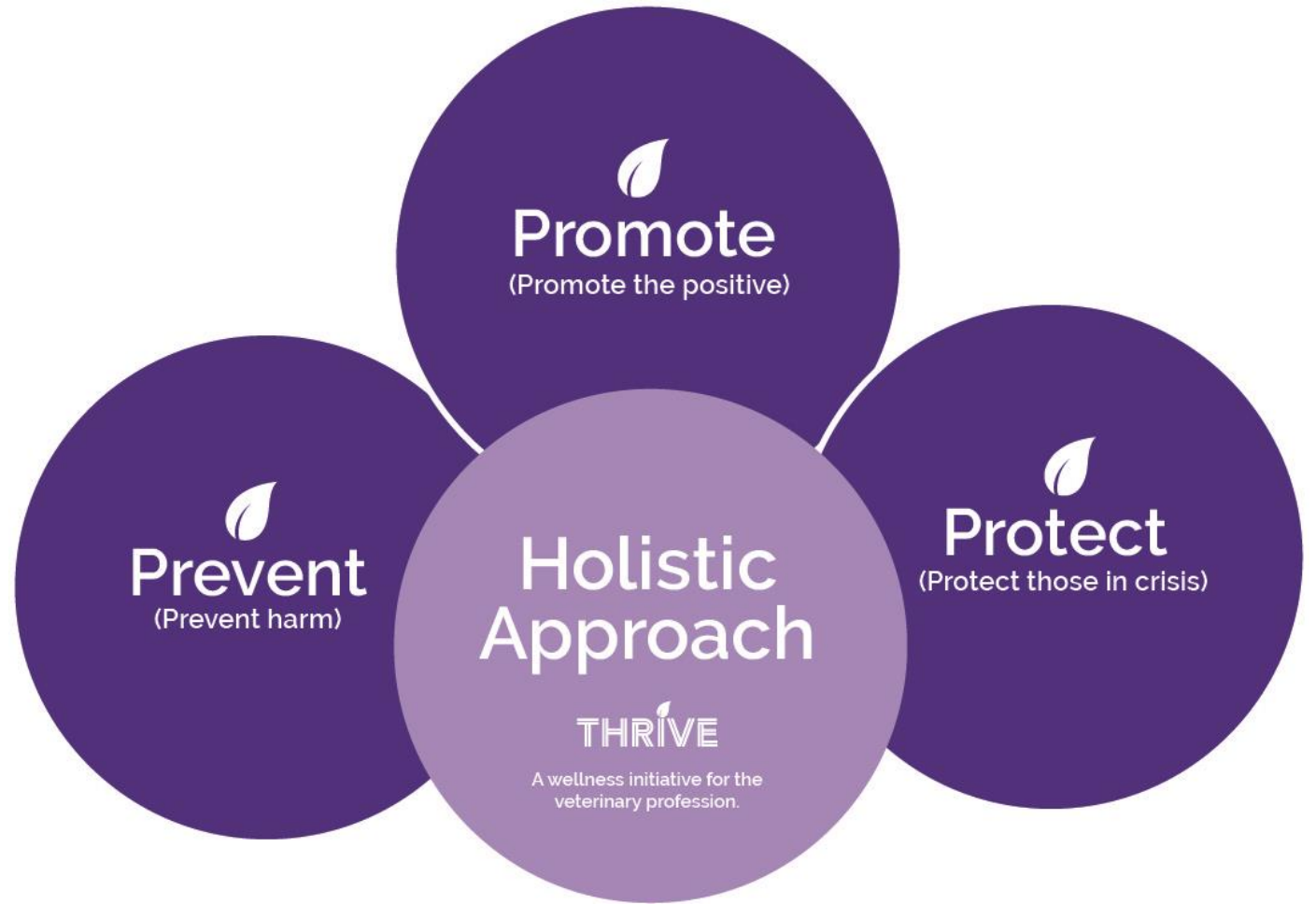
An AVA veterinary wellness initiative that aims to support veterinarians and veterinary staff to lead satisfying, prosperous, and healthy careers.

Our journey

<p>March 21 Literature review and desktop analysis of the profession Veterinary Wellness Steering Group and Project Team formed</p>	<p>March 22 Board announces we are in the process of finalising our wellness strategy, one that will focus on an integrated approach to health and wellbeing: preventing harm, promoting the positive and protecting those in a crisis.</p>
<p>April 21 Industry stakeholders identified for workshop discussions</p>	<p>May 22 THRIVE is launched</p>
<p>June 21 Workshops, and one on one interviews conducted</p>	<p>June 22 Call for EOI Veterinary Wellness Steering Group</p>
<p>July 21 Industry wide survey distributed (close date 12 Aug)</p>	<p>August 22 Executive Officer Wellness is appointed</p>
<p>September 21 Survey results analysed</p>	<p>September 22 AVA Veterinary Wellness Steering Group is announced</p>
<p>October 21 Veterinary Wellness Research Report delivered</p>	<p>October 22 THRIVE Roundtable</p>



THRIVE PILLARS



- Over half (66.7%) of people said they had experienced a mental health condition at some stage, of those 60% said their condition had been diagnosed by a medical professional.
- Women were far more likely (72.1% vs 53.0%) to have experienced a mental health condition, and more likely to have done so in the last 12 months (47.3% vs 27.0%)
- The likelihood of experiencing a mental health condition declines with age. Older workers were far less likely to have experienced a mental health condition in the past 12 months (on average 26% for those 40 years plus and 58% for those below 40 years old).

2,540 people took part in the 'voice of the profession' survey.

72.2% of respondents identified as female.

26.9% of respondents identified as male.

62.5% of respondents reported to work in a full time capacity.

25.2% of respondents were aged between 50-64 years. 30-35 & 40-49 were the next highest represented (16.9%).



Australian Veterinary Association Veterinary Wellness Strategy

Final report

September 2021

"What I need to support my mental health is better industry standards... less client abuse, reasonable work hours, better work/life balance and appropriate remuneration.

Whilst support is important if/when people may struggle with their mental health, this is a band aid fix if the workforce issues aren't addressed.

We need to address the cause, not the result – fix the things that break us... don't try to fix us after we are broken"

“ The public needs to be more aware of positions vets find themselves in – trapped between compromising patient care and meeting the financial needs of clients. No one would ever walk into a doctor's clinic and say 'you are supposed to love people, but you're only after my money'... yet this is commonplace in vet practice. ”

“ Client abuse is the number one thing most of my colleagues are stressed about, complain about, and feel the least supported with. The culture is that it is not just to be tolerated but endured. It's exhausting and demoralizing – all while trying to care for their animals. ”

Top 5 Psychosocial risk factors

1. Client interactions & expectations
2. Relationships with colleagues
3. Long hours
4. Financial strain
5. Workload & pressure

“ The fear of bad reviews and need to 'retain' clients has led to an industry wide expectation that veterinary staff should tolerate abuse from the general public. This has created a culture that places no value on the health and safety of veterinary staff. ”

“ Clients and the way they treat us is the main negative impact. They expect us to be perfect and cost nothing, otherwise they will put in a complaint... People need to understand that it is not ok to treat us like emotional punching bags. The manipulation and abuse on a daily basis really grinds you down. ”

Factors contributing to a mental health condition

Work and non-work related factors were cited by respondents who had experienced a mental health condition when asked about contributing factors. The top 10 work related factors included;

1. Challenging client interactions
2. Workplace bullying
3. Working long hours
4. Managing a high workload
5. Dealing with staff shortages
6. Poor leadership
7. Dealing with COVID-19
8. Poor remuneration
9. After hours & on-call work
10. Poor workplace culture



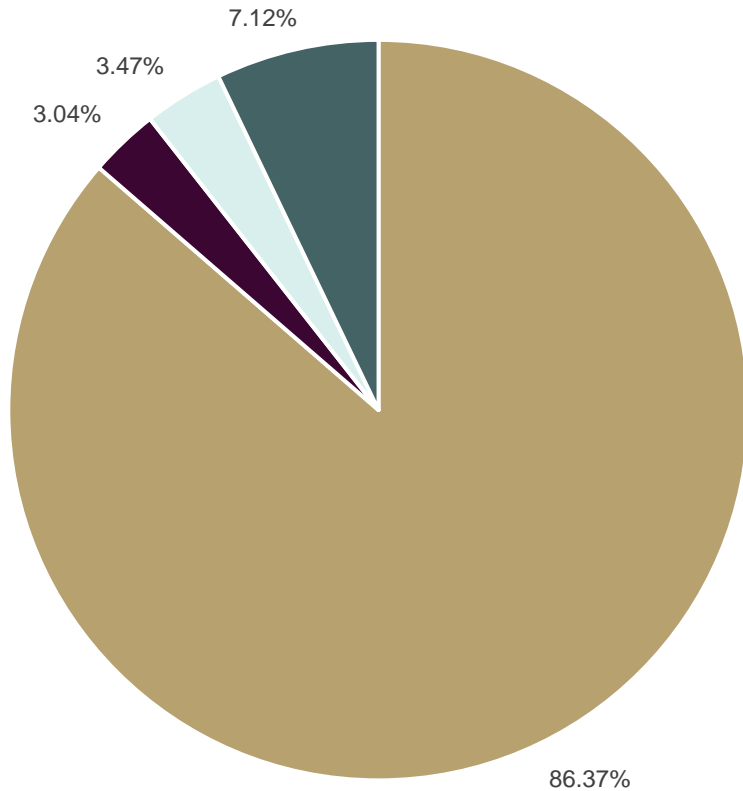
"The work itself is not the problem,

Equine vets like being equine vets."

Veterinary Workforce Demographics



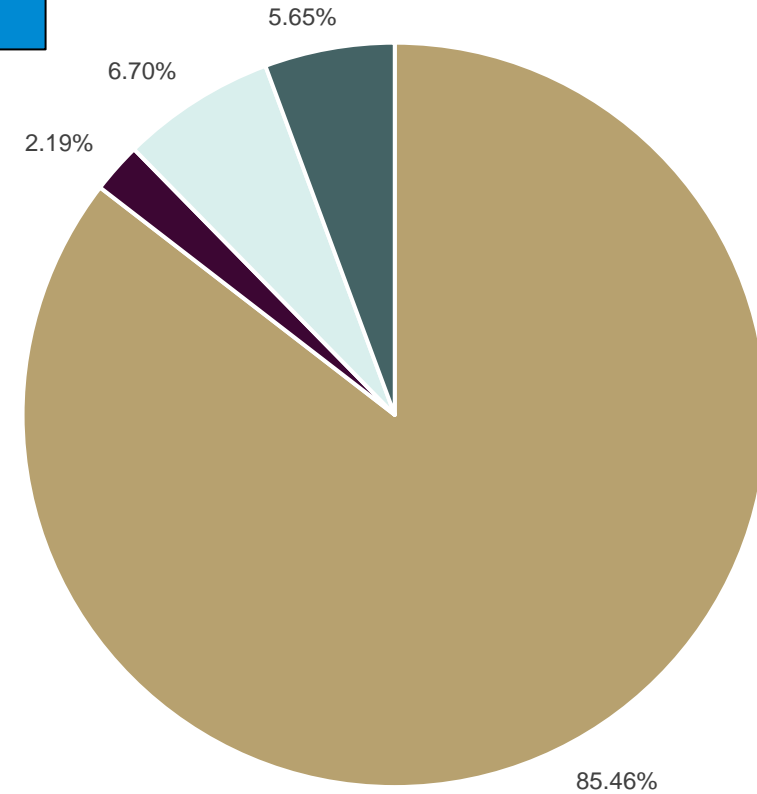
Workforce Report 2021



■ Clinical roles ■ Industry ■ Academia ■ Government



SuperFriends Report



■ Clinical roles ■ Industry ■ Academia ■ Government



Universal concerns

New Zealanders' demand for vets seriously outstripping supply

July 31, 2019 • Source: 1News



Shortage of veterinarians in rural & remote areas

FVE surveyed the shortage of veterinarians in rural and remote areas in Europe.

From 2018 this was evident both in Australian rural and metropolitan areas and globally.

Australian vets leaving the profession 'in droves' over stress and poor pay

Most practices find it hard to fill vacancies and many are struggling to turn a profit, survey finds

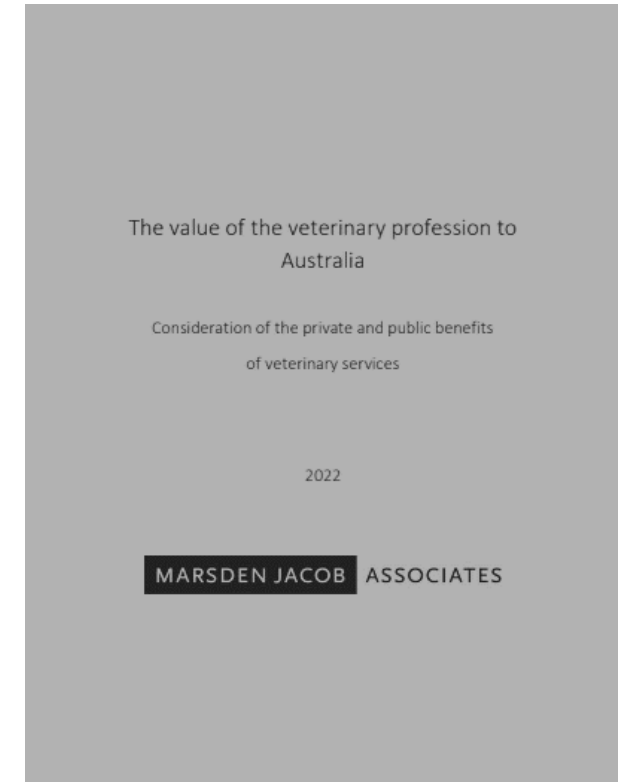
Veterinary workforce reinstated to Shortage Occupation List

29 July 2019 | by FarmingUK Team | Animal Health, Government and Brexit, News

AVMA Census: Veterinary Profession Facing Greater Personnel Shortages



Recent evidence collected by the AVA





Remuneration:

25% less than other professionals with similar educational debt.

78% under 100K

New graduate \$55 K,

Average career salary \$75 K

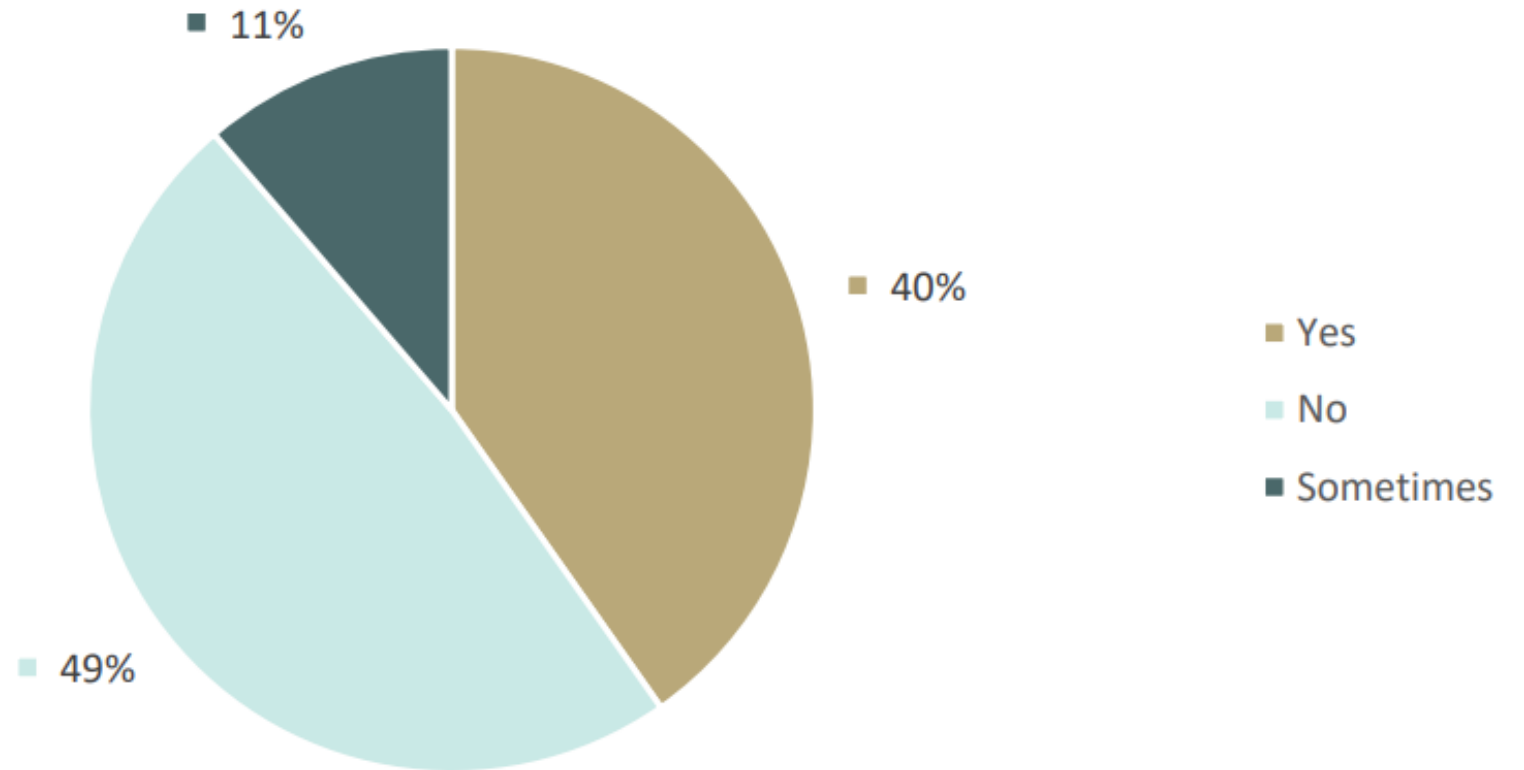
Raw data: salary/hours All employees

Annual salary	Hours/week						Total
	1-10 hours	11-20 hours	21-30 hours	31-40 hours	41-50 hours	51-60 hours	
\$20-40K	9	52	26	17	9	1	114
\$40-60K	3	36	62	57	57	15	230
\$60-80K	0	11	71	148	146	25	401
\$80-100k	2	8	36	140	122	32	340
\$100-120K	0	1	5	73	60	15	154
\$120-140k	0	1	3	14	19	9	46
\$140-160k	0	0	2	7	12	6	27
\$160-180k	0	0	0	6	5	3	14
\$180-200k	0	0	0	4	2	4	10
\$200-250k	0	0	0	1	5	2	8
\$250-300k	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
>\$300K	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total	14	109	205	467	438	113	1346



Remunerated for hours worked

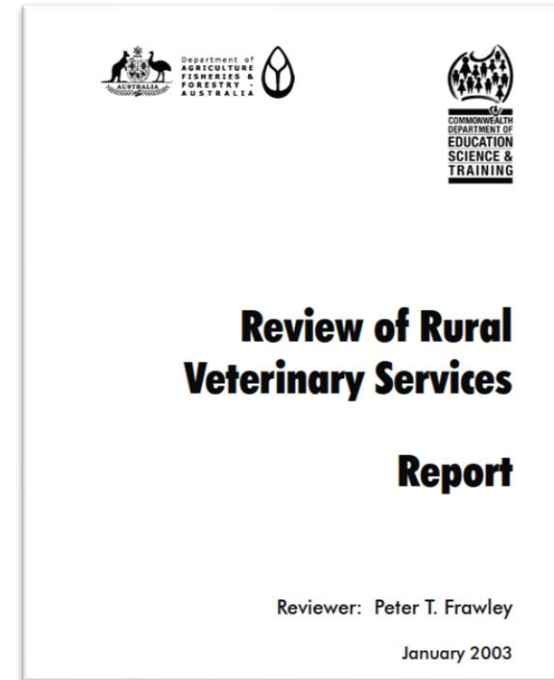
60% of veterinarians are not always remunerated for the hours they work.



Background

- In the early 2000's there was concern around rural vet numbers.
- Frawley report determined sufficient availability but identified risks that if not addressed could lead to a shortage of veterinarians.

“The demand for some veterinary services has a public or collective dimension as well as a private dimension.”



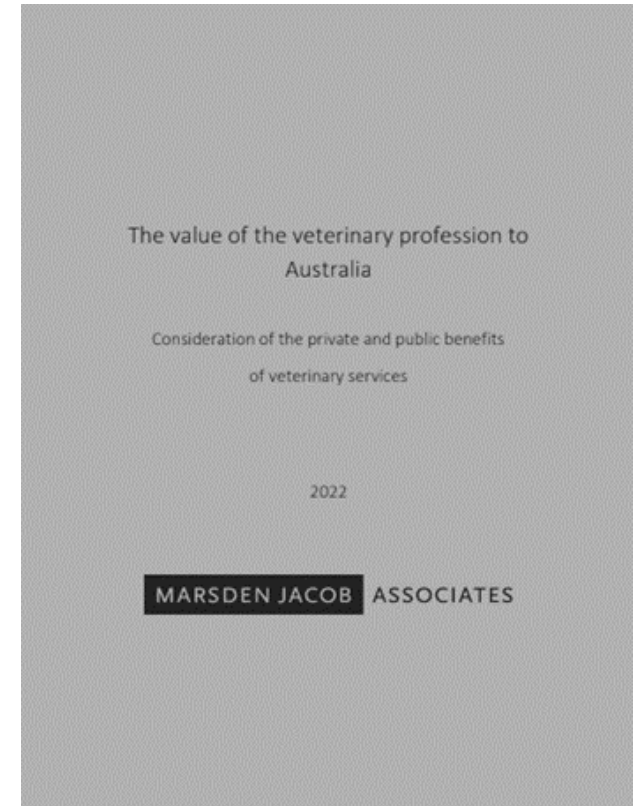
"...the supply of these services is not a simple response to market demand; it requires examination for other potential areas of what can be termed "market failure."



Concerning trends

“There is evidence that the industry is facing what has been called a ‘mental health crisis’ that is not directly revealed by the economic data.....”

"Signs of pressure include the high exit rates of small business and people, and deteriorating mental of some in the industry"



Dwyer G., Clarke R., Clarke M.
The value of the veterinary profession to Australia
Consideration of the private (2) and public benefits of veterinary services 2022 Marsden Jacob Associates

Oath for Veterinary Graduates in NSW

I solemnly swear to practice veterinary science ethically and conscientiously for the benefit of animal welfare, animal and human health, and the community.

I will endeavour to maintain my practice of veterinary science to current professional standards and will strive to improve my skills and knowledge through continuing professional development.

I acknowledge that along with the privilege of acceptance into the veterinary profession comes community and professional responsibility. I will maintain these principles throughout my professional life.



Prevent. Promote. Protect.

PREVENT	Recommendations	PREVENT	Recommendations	PROMOTE PROTECT	Recommendations
Key issue 1: People working in the veterinary profession find it rewarding and engaging, but also demanding and stressful.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A nationally consistent mental health & wellbeing strategy inclusive of a suicide prevention and intervention framework. 	Key issue 5: Challenging client interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a profession wide capability framework inclusive of training, coaching, tools, and resources. Community education campaigns. Reward and Recognition framework. Implement a structured and consistent complaints management framework Triage system and centralized database for serious complaints. 	Key issue 7: Veterinary staff often leave work feeling emotionally drained as difficult and traumatic incidents are common.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create policies and procedures on how to manage workplace incivility with a view to minimise interpersonal conflict between colleagues and encourage inclusive and respectful workplace cultures. Prioritise positive connection with colleagues by encouraging informal debriefing opportunities through social and professional networking opportunities.
Key issue 2: Perceptions of workforce challenges (poor remuneration and award standards)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider review of the veterinary award to set appropriate standards for pay, working hours, breaks, leave, overtime etc. Ensure basic entitlements are consistently aligned with policies and standards. 	Key issue 6: Stigma to maintain competency and keep up.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake an anti-stigma campaign through storytelling by role models in the profession. Revise requirements for mandatory reporting of mental health related issues. Develop targeted and personalised mental health and wellbeing resources. Provide mental health essentials training. 	Key issue 8: Lack of work life balance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a greater understanding of psychological job demands within individual roles and across profession and ensure these are reflected through recruitment and induction. Explore opportunities to address the veterinary shortage.
Key issue 3: Client care/financial stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the possibility of a government subsidised veterinary care scheme (Medicare for pets) Review and revise pet insurance strategy from a whole of profession perspective to align with financial goals and needs of the broader profession. 	Key issue 7: Veterinary staff often leave work feeling emotionally drained as difficult and traumatic incidents are common.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of reflective practice standards and guidelines. Develop a formal peer support framework and program inclusive of support, debriefing, and case management practices. Provide free and confidential triage and counselling service with telephone and face to face options for those needing mental health support. 	Key issue 9: Lack of time to grow and develop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer career mentoring for all roles across the profession irrespective of years of service by providing an opt-in mentoring program. Provide a consistent and structured continuing professional development program. Increase skills and utilisation of paraprofessionals including veterinary nurses and technicians and consider registration or regulation of these roles.
Key issue 4: Younger vets entering the workforce seemingly unprepared	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the selection criteria for veterinary degree candidates. Standardise undergraduate course content. Mandatory graduate supervision or mentoring. 				



**Veterinary Wellness
Roundtable**

**Industry specific mental health and
suicide prevention framework**

**Pilot program to help support
veterinary workplaces to thrive...**

Prevent, Promote, Protect

Working together
to support
the veterinary
profession to
THRIVE



Prevent. Promote. Protect