

# Rata Kararehe

## Veterinary Services and Animal Care



### Key challenges

- Attraction and retention of staff
- Mental well-being
- Low remuneration

### Industry overview

- New Zealand has one of the **highest pet ownership rates** in the world.
- Over **80% of the workforce identify as female**, higher than any other Muka Tangata industry.
- **Enrolment numbers** for Veterinary Nursing and Animal Care have **almost doubled** in the last five years, peaking in 2021.

## Insights

### Industry

- It is **expected that revenue growth will continue** as the expanding agriculture sector contributes to greater demand for veterinary services.

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### Workforce

- The **workforce has been steadily increasing** since 2015, with an increase of 9% in 2021.

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### Learners and Providers

- The **practicality of completing qualifications on the job** is a barrier to work-place based learning. Almost all learners are provider-based, with workplace-based enrolments sharply declining since 2019.

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## Opportunities

### Qualifications

Providers are finding it difficult to develop a programme for the new Level 6 Diploma in Veterinary Nursing.

- Education providers have had difficulties in designing a programme to meet the qualification specifications for the new Level 6 Diploma in Veterinary Nursing.

### Mental Health and Wellbeing

The industry reports an increasing impact of stress on its workforce due to the nature of the work and conflicts with customers.

- The industry has highlighted increasing concerns for the mental health and resilience of staff who face emotionally and mentally challenging responsibilities.

### Attraction and Retention

There is a perception across the industry that retention is a key issue, due to a variety of barriers including low remuneration and lack of a visible career path.

- There are several issues in Veterinary Nursing which may be influencing how long employees stay in the industry.
- While veterinarians are required to be registered in Aotearoa, it is not currently compulsory for veterinary nurses to be registered.

## Roadmap Actions

| Action   | What is the problem?   | What are we doing about it?   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>Revise the Diploma in Veterinary Nursing</b>                          | Providers are finding it difficult to develop a programme for the new Diploma in Veterinary Nursing.   | We worked with industry and providers to revise the Diploma to make it easier to deliver. In particular, we explored the practicum requirements with stakeholders. The Diploma was reviewed and listed by NZQA in August 2023.  |
| <b>Investigate an introduction to STEM qualification</b>                 | Many veterinary industry roles require STEM-based skills and expertise not held by all learners.       | To promote access of non-traditional learners to veterinary services and overcome potential barriers of access, we will investigate whether a short introduction to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) qualification is suitable to bring learners up to speed in the sciences. This may also have wider application and we will explore if it is valuable in other industries. |
| <b>Encourage greater participation by Māori and underserved learners</b> | Māori, Pacific peoples, and tangata whaikaha are greatly underrepresented in the veterinary workforce. | We will work with industry and providers, including through our programme endorsement function, to identify potential barriers and encourage greater participation of these groups.   |

Action

**Support industry and providers to improve mental health and resilience**

What is the problem?

The industry reports an increasing impact of stress on its workforce due to the nature of the work and conflicts with customers. The industry has taken steps to address these issues through the Vet Futures wellbeing workstream, the development of a mental health framework, and promoting resources and help.

What are we doing about it?

We will work with industry and providers to raise awareness and promote potential training that could assist both employers, employees, and learners. We will explore with industry and providers whether these skills should become part of the qualifications.

**\*Keep up to date with progress on our Workforce Development Plans**

This represents a snapshot in time of the workforce development plan. For the most up to date information, please visit: [mukatangata.workforceskills.nz](https://mukatangata.workforceskills.nz) or [sign up to our mailing list](#) for updates.