March 20, 2003.

Commissioner Tony Hinton
MRA Review,
Productivity Commission
PO Box 80,
Belconnen ACT 2616

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Re: Workforce mobility of Veterinarians between Australian States and Territories and New Zealand.

In my capacity as President of Veterinary Surgeons Board of NSW I frequently see that the process and cost of individual State registration acts as a barrier to the mobility of veterinarians who wish to carry out acts of veterinary science in NSW.

There are two situations that arise commonly. One is where a NSW veterinarian is injured or becomes ill and urgently needs to find a veterinarian to carry on the work of his/her practice. This can be particularly difficult for country practitioners as the wide range of skills required are generally only present in other rural veterinarians and it is often that the only people available are interstate. The need to submit particular documents and fees, with the resultant delay is often enough to deter interstate veterinarians, particularly when they are doing it as a favour for a colleague.

The second situation which is becoming more common is that where the circumstances require that the veterinarian has particular skills. For example, unusual species such as marine mammals or other rare breeds where there are only a few veterinarians in Australasia that have the experience to give valuable veterinary advice. Again, the delay in processing and the fees required are often a barrier to making these people available for the duties the public and animal owners of NSW require.

Mutual Recognition has established the fact that somebody registered in one jurisdiction cannot be refused in an other but there are still barriers. While the NSW Board is restrained in expressing its view by its charter, it is my personal view that a system of national registration of veterinary surgeons is the only way the barriers to movement of the veterinary labour force between States and Territories can be removed.

Yours sincerely,

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