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MEDIA RELEASE

Peak psychology body supports calls for veterinarian mental health funding

The Australian Association of Psychologists (AAPi) is supporting calls by the Australian Veterinary Association for both major political parties to commit to investing \$3 million over five years to save the lives and wellbeing of Australian veterinarians.

AAPi Executive Director Tegan Carrison said veterinarians had one of the highest rates of suicide in the world and ongoing mental health support was crucial.

"In Australia, a vet takes their own life every 12 weeks. Not only do we need to increase awareness of the pressure they are under and normalise the need to seek support, we need to make psychological services more accessible so help is there when it is needed," she said.

Dr Nadine Hamilton, AAPi psychologist and a leading expert on veterinarian mental health, said she made a number of submissions for grant funding for vet mental health but all had been rejected, including a pre-budget submission by AAPi in 2021.

"I feel the government is not seeing the desperate need in this profession. The funding we applied for would have gone towards counselling, wellbeing workshops and educational resources," she said.

Dr Hamilton, founder of the charity Love Your Pet Love Your Vet, said although community awareness of vets and their mental health had improved, there was still a stigma among vets about seeking help in the first place.

"A lot of vets feel ashamed about asking for help and often don't want to go to their GP in the beginning to get a referral to a psychologist - if they could self-refer it would streamline the process," she said.

"Vet nursing staff are also under pressure and often need counselling but for them it is often a budgetary issue that stops them from going."

Ms Carrison said the Medicare rebate for all psychologists needed to be raised to \$150 so those who needed mental health care could afford it.

[Dr Hamilton](#) is the author of "Coping with Stress and Burnout as a Veterinarian" and provides reduced cost counselling via her [website](#).

Tegan Carrison is the Executive Director of the Australian Association of Psychologists Inc (AAPi), a not-for-profit peak body representing all psychologists in Australia.

About Australian Association of Psychologists Inc (AAPi)

The AAPi is a not-for-profit peak body for all psychologists that aims to preserve the rich diversity of psychological practice in Australia. Formed in 2010 by a group of passionate grassroots psychologists, the AAPi's primary goal is to address inequality in the profession and represent all psychologists and their clients equally to government and funding bodies. Its primary mission is to lobby for equitable access for the Australian public to professional psychological services funded under the current Medicare Better Access Scheme.