



# Impact of the IV Fluids shortage on the Australian veterinary profession – report.

Prepared by the  
Australian Veterinary Association Ltd

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## The Australian Veterinary Association

The Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) is the peak professional body representing the veterinary profession in Australia. With more than 7,500 members involved in all aspects of the veterinary sector, the AVA plays a crucial role in representing their interests. Our members come from all fields of the veterinary profession. Clinical practitioners work with companion animals, horses, livestock, and wildlife; government veterinarians work with our animal health, public health, and quarantine systems; and veterinarians in research, industry, academia, teaching and veterinary students are also active members of the Association.

We have provided a united voice for the veterinary profession for over 100 years. We are committed to championing and empowering the veterinary profession to thrive by providing a voice, education, community and support.

### 2024 IV Fluids shortage - Impact survey report.

A survey on the impacts of the IV fluid shortage on the veterinary profession was conducted to provide essential data to advocate for fluid access for the veterinary profession with suppliers and at the federal level.

The survey was open from 4 September to 14 October 2024. 149 responses were received from AVA members, revealing the widespread but varied impact the IV fluid shortage has had across Australia's veterinary practices.

Survey responses came from various veterinary professionals, most working in small animal, mixed, or equine practices. A smaller portion of responses were from specialty, emergency, and critical care practices. Most respondents were from independent clinics, with some from corporate or larger veterinary groups.

The majority of respondents (89%) indicated that they were affected by the shortage, with over 65% noting that it had compromised the standard of care they could provide to their patients. An equal split of respondents reported that the shortage had impacted their business.

The duration of current IV fluid supplies varied greatly, with some practices facing an imminent crisis while others had been able to plan ahead or stock up. Many clinics reported being at critical levels, with some having only days of stock remaining. Other clinics reported they were in an OK position, with sufficient supplies for up to 3-6 months.

Veterinary clinics have adopted various strategies to conserve fluids, including deferring elective surgeries, using compounded fluids, and rationing their remaining stock.

A section of comments from the survey that reflect the diversity of sentiment among the respondents:

*"It's hard to believe this could have happened! We need to manufacture IV fluids in Australia. This shortage is a huge vulnerability for both animal and human healthcare."*

*"Our clinic sees over 250 snake bites per season. We've had 5 so far and only have 20L of fluids left. How do we explain this to owners?"*

*"Thanks for providing guidance around the fluid shortage— I think the AVA communication has been great!"*



*"I feel the companies that make and sell fluids are increasing prices due to the shortage. Supply and demand!"*

*"We had horses die from septic shock due to compounded fluids contamination. We needed more help with techniques to make compounded fluids, but unfortunately, it was trial and error, with fatal outcomes."*

*"AVA has been vocal, but I don't feel that they have achieved anything to help funnel fluids from human health to the veterinary space."*

### **2024 IV Fluids shortage – next steps**

The AVA will continue to represent the veterinary profession at national forums and with suppliers, and advocate for increased veterinary access to supplies.

The AVA advises continuing conservative or judicial use until supply becomes more secure.

AVA resources to assist veterinarians:

- a document provided by the Executive of the ANZCVS Veterinary Anaesthesia & Analgesia Chapter to assist with managing the IV Fluid shortage,
- material that can be used for client communication, and
- AVA guidance for unregistered/off label use.

### **Contact**

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