

Country veterinarian buys clinic after completing Massey University postgraduate degree



Veterinarian Nicola Pattison signed up for an orthopaedics course at Massey, and liked it so much that she tackled an MVM. The experience opened up her eyes – and a new opportunity.

AN OPPORTUNITY TO step into her boss's shoes led Nicola Pattison to Massey University's Master of Veterinary Medicine (MVM) and she's never looked back.

The New Zealander signed up for an MVM course at Massey when the owner of the veterinary clinic in Casterton, Victoria, Australia, asked Nicola to take over while she was overseas.

"When my boss went to the UK for three months, I thought I'd better do an orthopaedics course so I could fix broken bones," she says.

She initially chose the orthopaedics course at Massey as it appeared to offer the best value and gave her the opportunity to return to her homeland, and ended up enjoying the experience so much she went on to complete the MVM.

"I did the soft tissue surgery course, followed by neurology and an epidemiology course. With an interest in farm dogs, I then did a dissertation on working farm dogs so I could complete the whole thing.

"With Massey, you're actually working towards a degree, not just a certificate, which increases the course's value. You can do one of the courses for about the

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same cost as attending a conference, and you get a lot more out of it."

As a busy working mother with a young family, she appreciated the flexibility that Massey offered. "I gave birth to two children while doing it, already had a two-year-old and was working part-time. When my third child came along, my husband was working as a FIFO [fly-in fly-out] oilfield worker and I ended up in hospital. It was a fairly hectic time in my life, but I was able to work through it with Massey's help, and complete the course without too much drama."

The educators and support team at Massey University were another plus, she says. "All of the admin staff are really good, and I couldn't say enough great things about my supervisor. She was always available to me during my dissertation, and made extra time towards the end of the year so that we could analyse the data and work on statistics together. They really do go above and beyond."

Nicola also valued the hands-on nature of the Massey MVM. "This is for real-world veterinarians," she says. "You'll learn stuff you can take into your practice and use straight away on a daily basis."

In January 2017 she bought the country veterinary clinic in Casterton. In part, it was the postgraduate degree that helped her make the call, she says.

"Without question, I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing now without the MVM. It gives you the confidence to step outside your comfort zone, and it's made me a better veterinarian. The MVM has been brilliant, and even though I've finished the degree I'm probably going to do more courses in the future, just for fun." ■

See more at www.massey.ac.nz/mvm.

