

Anna to tackle bird flu

JANNE SELETTO

NORTH Shore vet Anna Dean is leaving the world of injured pets for a far more challenging role.

The Waverton resident left for Vietnam this week to work on public health measures to control bird flu and other animal-to-human transmissible diseases.

She will be working with a World Health Organisation (WHO) team to try to influence government policy on the avian influenza strain that has ravaged poultry flocks in Europe, Africa and Asia.

While only 243 humans have died of the illness so far, Dr Dean said scientists were worried that if the virus mutated to a form that passed easily from human to human, a pandemic could result.

She said the disease had already caused widespread culling of chickens and ducks, affecting the livelihood and food sources of Asian families.

Dr Dean, 27, a 2003 Sydney University graduate, worked at the North Shore Veterinary Hospital in Crows Nest for four years.

She has completed a masters in international public health, joined the Australian organisation Vets Beyond Borders and



GUESS WHO IS HEADING OVERSEAS? Vet Anna Dean at North Shore Vet Hospital in Crows Nest with the clinic's favourite chihuahua Peppa.

Picture: JOHN APPLEYARD PP163757

has won an AusAID grant to fund her 12-month Asian posting.

"I will be working in bureaucracy, in policy development," she said. "I really love working with animals and I will really miss my vet work, but I think my future is in public health."

Dr Dean's brief is to help the

Vietnamese Government's health and agriculture ministries work to control disease spread.

"I'm a bit anxious because my task is pretty massive," she said.

"And I don't look very old, and I'm female and I don't speak Vietnamese. But I'll be working with WHO and they will help."