

23 September 2024

Mr. Gerard Hayes
General Secretary
Health Services Union NSW/ACT/QLD
Locked Bag 3
AUSTRALIA SQUARE NSW 1215

By email: secretary@hsu.asn.au

Re: NSW Health Pathology – Research Governance Structure

Dear Mr Hayes

I am writing to you following correspondence from Health Services Union Industrial Office dated 19 September 2024, seeking clarification on the consultation and realignment of NSW Health Pathology (NSWHP) research coordinator positions currently within NSWHP Clinical Operations.

As it stands, NSWHP most recently have obtained internal senior leadership endorsement to create a Statewide Research Coordination team to provide support in the delivery of the research services to NSWHP. Following this as intended, NSWHP anticipate commencing formal consultation with the identified position incumbents on the proposed reporting changes to align to the Research Governance structure.

During early September 2024, the Research Governance portfolio held separate online forums to share the anticipated leadership and reporting changes with key NSWHP Clinical Operations management stakeholders and research staff to encourage questions and comments. These forums generated a lot of interest and positive discussion around the creation of a centralised research coordination team as a Statewide service.

Background:

The current identified research employees are employed to primarily support the larger NSWHP research hubs of Prince of Wales/RPA, Westmead and John Hunter. Several other identified NSWHP Statewide Clinical Operations areas, particularly rural and regional, do not receive the essential research coordination support and services.

Furthermore, the NSW Office of Health and Medical Research is embarking on a strategy to attract clinical trial funding into the NSW Health system. This, and the increase in precision cancer medicine, will create an even higher demand on NSWHP's archival tissue and diagnostic data in support of Statewide research.

Proposed Changes:

We have been working closely with our Governance leadership team to create a new centralised Research Coordination Team as a Statewide service. As we anticipate change for the staff, we have had a primary focus on providing for the research staff a:

- Consistent approach to the application of the roles and responsibilities.
- Retaining talent, providing career growth and development within the team.
- Standardisation and consistent ways of working within the team.
- Consistent application of research processes, systems and activities across the State.

The current identified NSWHP research staff have historically been employed across the various State Awards:

- Health Employees' Administrative Staff (State) Award
- Health Managers (State) Award
- Hospital Scientist (State) Award
- Health Employees' Technical (State) Award

In order to align the centralisation of the Statewide research coordination reporting and activities, we propose to align the classifications as per NSW Health broader strategy using the Health Managers (State) Award. Recently a Research Coordinator position description enclosed was consolidated for the purposes of internal NSWHP endorsement and graded as a Health Manager, Level 1.

The position description (HSM1) classification is yet to be implemented with the staff, with the exception of recruitment to identified vacant positions to proceed.

It was the view that we would formally consult with the identified research staff from Tuesday 24 September 2024 on the proposed changes and position description. Staff may wish to decline the offer provided to them, and remain on their current award, however, will be required to perform the role requirements and commence reporting into the Statewide Research Coordination team (from a date proposed).

I reiterate with the proposed changes there is no intention to reduce staff headcount, whereby the changes anticipate retaining the valued skills, experience and competency of staff within the proposed NSWHP Statewide Research Coordination team.

Noting that the dispute resolution clause has been invoked, we are available to meet with the HSU with a view to discuss the Research Governance structure. In the meantime, please feel free to reach out with any questions or feedback by email baiden.pepperall@health.nsw.gov.au, or alternatively if you would like to discuss this in more detail, a suitable meeting can be arranged.

Yours sincerely



Baiden Pepperall
Statewide Senior HR Manager
NSW Health Pathology

Enclosed:

- Position Description – Research Coordinator (HSM1)