

**Private & Confidential**

8 June 2023

Mr Gerard Hayes  
Secretary  
Health Services Union

Via email: [secretary@hsu.asn.au](mailto:secretary@hsu.asn.au)

Dear Mr Hayes,

**Re: Transition out of Social Support Groups (Day Care Centres) by Hunter New England Local Health District**

I am writing to advise of the pending transition out of five (5) Social Support Groups (Day Care Centres) managed by Hunter New England Local Health District and funded by the Department of Health and Aged Care Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP).

Three (3) Groups are managed by Community and Aged Care Service – Greater Newcastle Sector (CACs-GNS), namely Wattle Grove and Allawah located on the Wallsend Health Campus and Marlin located at the Tomaree Health Centre facility. There is a further one (1) Group managed by Lower Hunter Sector (LHS) located within Kurri Kurri and one Group managed by Hunter Valley Sector located at Muswellbrook.

Social Support Groups assist frail older people who have functional limitations to participate in community life and feel socially included through structured, group-based activities, designed to support independent living and wellness goals.

These Groups have been suspended or operating at reduced capacity since March/April 2020 with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The District started providing Social Support Groups when there were few social support services operating in these areas. This has changed over time.

We acknowledge the value these groups provide to frail and vulnerable members of the community, however it has been identified by the Commonwealth that they would be more appropriately run by NGOs under the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care Commonwealth Home Support Program.

The Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care recognised the importance of this service and are in the final stages of contracting local experienced Community Aged Care providers to continue to run this important service.

A meeting was held on Thursday 8 June 2023 to discuss the upcoming changes with key staff and we are supporting affected staff.

There is a total headcount of three (3) health services staff that hold positions within the Social Support Groups. Two (2) of these staff hold permanent positions, equivalent to an FTE of 1.57. The following table provides the relevant summary detail.

#### Staffing Summary

Status	Headcount	FTE
<b>Permanent Staff</b>		
Diversional Therapist (with Diploma)	1	0.84
Welfare Worker (Non-Grad) Grade 1	1	0.73
	2	1.57
<b>Temporary Staff</b> (ending 30 June 2023)		
Allied Health Assistant	1	0.32
	1	0.32
<b>Casual Staff</b>		
	N/A	N/A
	N/A	N/A
<b>Summary Total</b>	3	1.89

The effective transition date out of Social Support Group services has been confirmed as 30 June 2023.

As per NSW Health Policy Directive, PD 2012-021 **Managing Excess Staff of the NSW Health Service** redeployment for affected permanent staff will be considered in the first instance. Where redeployment is unsuccessful, consideration may be given to a formal offer of Voluntary Redundancy.

If you have any concerns or questions regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact Eve Youman, Human Resources Manager on ph. 4985 3283 or via email on [Eve.Youman@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Eve.Youman@health.nsw.gov.au)

Yours sincerely,



**Christine Osborne**  
A/Executive Director  
Greater Metropolitan Health Services