

Mr Gerrard Hayes  
General Secretary  
Health Services Union (HSU)  
L2/109 Pitt St  
Sydney NSW 1215

Attn: Kym Morgan

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

Dear Kym

### **RE: Ryde Hospital Sterilising Services Department (SSD)**

I write with reference to our meeting on 13 June 2023, which was attended by Ms Adrienne Stern, Site Operations Manager, Ms Georgina Rees, A/Sterilisation Services Manager, Mr Brennan Wawrzyk, A/HR Manager, Ms Katie Fox, HR Business Partner, Mr Greg O'Donohue, HSU Industrial Relations Officer, Mr Tasso Foufas, Sterilisation Supervisor, Ms Theresa Buanne, Sterilisation Supervisor, myself and yourself.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the on-going weekend roster issue in SSD and allow further conversation and consultation in relation to Northern Sydney Local Health District's (the District's) correspondence sent on 25 May 2023.

At the meeting, the District outlined a proposal of reintroducing the Saturday shift to the Ryde Hospital SSD.

In summary of the meeting, the following concerns were raised by the HSU and staff in relation to the weekend staffing arrangements:

1. The Sterilising Services Department is staffed by Sterilising Technician Grade 2 employees who are required to have supervision while working, meaning two staff are required on a shift

As per the award, Sterilising Technician Grade 2 staff are required to have general supervision, as opposed to routine supervision of a Sterilisation Technician Grade 1. The District is of the view a sole Sterilisation Technician Grade 2 working on a Saturday would have adequate general supervision from the After Hours Nurse Manager, Theatres Staff, and an on-call link to the Sterilisation Manager. In addition to this, the District has implemented further measures including conducting a WHS and IPAC assessment, arranging for additional security check ins and installing a mobile duress alarm within the department.

2. There are staff who are unable to work weekends

The District is willing to accept and review Temporary Individual Roster Arrangement (TIRA) forms and applications on their merits for staff who have difficulties working in accordance with roster requirements.

3. Employees were compelled into changing their working arrangements to shift work in the past

The District recognises this is an issue from many years ago, however disputes that staff were compelled into changing their status to shift workers, noting they were already classified as shift workers due to working the afternoon shift. The District confirms each new staff member has been recruited with the knowledge weekend work is part of the role, and acknowledges there are two day workers within the department who will not be impacted by this.

4. The staff do not want to work independently

Colloquially, management are of the view staff are wanting, willing and able to work the Saturday shift as it provides additional remuneration. Our internal conversations indicate staff have no issues with working autonomously.

The District sees great benefit, including:

- Reduced workload on Monday morning
- Additional penalty shifts for staff
- A day off on either the following Monday or previous Friday for the staff member completing the Saturday shift
- Additional support for the Theatres staff
- Reduced likelihood of degradation of instruments
- Reduced operating delays with patient care as patient flow is not impeded with theatres staff cleaning instruments
- Greater stability for staff to know when they are required to work and for how long, rather than the uncertainty of on-call periods

There is a genuine commitment to continuing recruitment for the casual SSD pool, which will alleviate any roster shortages created through leave and absences. However, as noted in the meeting, there have been difficulties regarding the talent pool of applicants.

SSD currently has a 0.63FTE vacancy and there has been a formal request from an employee to reduce their contracted hours on a permanent basis by 0.42FTE. If this request is approved and combined with the existing vacancy, there will be 1FTE in the department. This will be advertised and recruited to pending the outcome of re-establishing the Saturday shift, with the incumbent having full knowledge of their weekend responsibilities.

Regarding the observational report, it was determined Ryde is adequately staffed in accordance with the workload by the SSD Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Manager, an independent party.

District IPAC confirmed probes require reprocessing every 72 hours. The District has confirmed they are willing to review any information the HSU has on processes implemented in other districts, however noted the current process is required due to the storage facilities available. Ms Jo Tallon, NSLHD Director IPAC, can be contacted via [Jo.Tallon@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Jo.Tallon@health.nsw.gov.au) for further information.

Based on all the information at hand, the District is proposing to implement a SSD Saturday Shift, which will operate from 09:30hrs –18:00hrs mirroring the hours of Theatres and ensure the shift is aligned to the workload requirements. The same staff member who worked the Saturday Shift will then complete an on-call shift on Sunday and be rostered a day off on either the following Monday or previous Friday, depending on where the shift falls within the pay period to ensure contracted hours are maintained. Please see attached example roster of the proposal,

noting the rotation of weekday shifts is subject to change depending on the needs of the service **(TAB A)**.

As mentioned, staff will have the ability to apply for TIRAs which will be assessed on their individual merits.


The implementation date for this new weekend roster arrangement will be once the vacant 1FTE has been recruited and filled. The District will keep the staff and HSU updated on this as more detail comes to hand.

I invite you to provide any feedback, comments, questions or concerns on this proposal. Please forward your feedback within two (2) weeks from the date of this letter. The feedback can be emailed to Katie Fox, Human Resources Business Partner via email [Katie.Fox1@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Katie.Fox1@health.nsw.gov.au) or alternatively if you wish to schedule a meeting, please advise me and we can make these arrangements.

Following the consultation period, NSLHD will consider your feedback prior to implementing any changes. If you do not provide feedback on the proposal or request a meeting within the two (2) weeks from the date of this letter it will be deemed that you have no concerns with the proposal, and I will progress with implementation accordingly.

We thank you for your support on-going on this matter and if you require any information, please contact me via email to [Jennifer.McConnell@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Jennifer.McConnell@health.nsw.gov.au).

Yours sincerely



Jennifer McConnell  
**A/General Manager**  
**Ryde Hospital**  
**Northern Sydney Local Health District**

Date: 5 July 2023

Cc: Brennan Wawrzyk, A/People & Culture Manager, Katie Fox, Human Resources Business Partner

Encl.

**TAB A** – Roster Example