

Mr Gerard Hayes
Secretary
Health Services Union (HSU)
By email: secretary@hsu.asn.au

Evaluation and recommendations: 9 day fortnight for full-time staff based in Western NSW LHD Dental Clinics

Dear Mr Hayes,

The Western NSW Local Health District Oral Health Service has undertaken a 9 day fortnight trial on an opt in basis for full-time staff based in Dental Clinics. This commenced on Monday 27 October 2026. Prior to the trial the HSU was notified on 11 August 2026 inviting feedback and comments, which the HSU provided on 28 August 2025. Staff consultation was also undertaken prior to proceeding with the trial.

An evaluation has been completed with overwhelming support from Oral Health Staff for the 9 day fortnight to continue.

Key findings from the evaluation include:

Staff Survey (anonymous)

- 40 staff responded, 29 were participating in the 9 day fortnight, 11 were not participating for various reasons (eg part-time, not based in a clinic, opted out)
- 29/29 (100%) respondents who were participating in the 9 day fortnight trial would like to continue the 9 day fortnight.
- 35/40 staff believe the 9 day fortnight has been successful and should continue (4 were unsure and 1 said no).
- 33/40 staff believe the 9 day fortnight option should be extended to all other full-time staff in the Oral Health Service (7 were unsure).

- 34/40 staff believe that clinics have been able to maintain the same amount of appointment time and productivity under the 9 day fortnight, compared to ADO arrangements (3 were unsure and 3 said no).
- Many staff (25) reported that patients/carers appreciated the later appointment time, particularly for child appointments.

Other findings

- The evaluation panel reviewed single day sick leave absences and noted a reduction this financial year which coincided with the implementation of the 9 day fortnight.
- Single day sick leave absences on a Monday reduced significantly across the same timeline.
- An additional appointment at the end of each clinical day was observed to be available and was well utilised by patients. Parents made a number of supportive comments about the desirability of this time slot for child patients.
- Managers and administrative staff reported that the 9 day fortnight was less time consuming to manage in comparison to ADOs.
- The operational success of the 9 day fortnight was attributed to the day off being selected and fixed for each staff member, enabling better rostering of clinicians with dental assistants, and appropriate distribution of clinician type and experience across the Friday or Monday days off.

It is anticipated that the Oral Health Service will seek to make the 9 day fortnight roster permanent for all existing full-time staff who seek to opt in, and for all new full-time staff employed who are based in dental clinics.

Further it is anticipated that the 9 day fortnight roster will be available to request for other full-time staff in the Oral Health Service. Approval of requests would be dependent on operational needs of the service.

I am seeking any further feedback or comments from the HSU. Please email any feedback to me: Jennifer.Floyd@health.nsw.gov.au by close of business Tuesday 21 April 2026.

Yours Sincerely,



Jenni Floyd
Director Oral Health Service