



Ref: DT21/92411

Mr Gerard Hayes  
Secretary  
Health Services Union ACT/NSW/QLD  
Via email: [secretary@hsu.asn.au](mailto:secretary@hsu.asn.au)

Attention: Ms Eileen McEvoy

## **Re: Special Health Accommodation (SHA)**

Dear Mr Hayes

I am writing to advise of the Special Health Accommodation (SHA) to be established in the “old IRT” side of the Bulli Hospital and Aged Care Centre (BHACC) as part of Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District’s (ISLHD) covid response.

The use of hotel style rooms for the isolation of people in quarantine or infected with COVID-19 is being implemented across NSW so hospital facilities can be prioritised for those with more complex needs. These facilities are not considered health facilities, and the occupants are considered ‘guests’. Guests are people identified as COVID-19 positive, negative, pending a result, or who require self-isolation but who do not require hospitalisation. It is expected that guests accommodated in a Community Supported Accommodation (CSA) and SHA would not have symptoms and be largely self-caring. If the home is deemed not suitable or if for any other reason, they cannot effectively self-isolate from others in their current residence, they will require access to alternative accommodation.

ISLHD has investigated the establishment of these facilities with private hotel providers in the Wollongong LGA. We were successful in securing Belmore Serviced apartments for the CSA but we were unable to identify an appropriate hotel for the SHA. The “old IRT” side of the BHACC has been identified as an ideal facility to support the functions of a SHA.

The establishment of this option for quarantine accommodation is urgent in this escalating pandemic and to ensure that we do not overburden our acute health facilities with people who do not require acute clinical intervention. Due to the urgency of ISLHD’s response to the pandemic, the SHA is due to commence operating from Monday 13 September 2021.

Informal discussion has occurred with Ms Eileen McEvoy, HSU Industrial Organiser Public Health both last week and this week to discuss the establishment as part of consultation with the Health Services Union.

Please be assured that the safety of our staff is paramount in establishing this service and the operating functions have been based on the protocols and models of care utilised in other SHA facilities in NSW. The below provides some further information about the SHA:

### **Workforce**

There will be a dedicated workforce for the SHA, consisting of nursing, administration, hotel services staff and security. Generic EOI requests have been circulated to all current casuals across the district (nursing, administration and other groups) in the same way as previous recruitments for the Mass

Vaccination Centre and COVID testing sites. Unfortunately the response has not been overwhelming, particularly in relation to cleaners. The SHA workforce will consist of ISLHD staff and contract staff (refer to Security and Cleaning below). SHA-specific staff will enter via fire stair entrance or via the courtyard. Please note that to minimise staff movements, ISLHD staff working in the SHA will not work at other facilities, including the inpatient areas at BHACC.

### **Vaccination and Fit Testing**

Staff working in the SHA are required to be fully vaccinated. All staff working in the SHA will be fit tested.

### **Airflow and Air-conditioning**

There is no shared air-conditioning between the current ISLHD occupied areas and the old IRT section of the building. The level 2 link corridor also has a completely separate Air Conditioning system and control. The single rooms on the old IRT side each have their own dedicated air conditioner that can be controlled centrally at the staff station. The external windows to each room will be closed during the operation of the SHA.

### **Food Service**

Food will be provided to the SHA by HealthShare NSW. Food will be prepared in the kitchen and transferred to a dedicated B-Pod heating device located in the Level 2 Link area. Meals will be transferred into the SHA at the main entry doors via a trolley and delivered by dedicated SHA staff. All consumables will be disposable.

### **Linen and Waste**

Linen will be delivered via HealthShare linen. The removal of linen and waste will occur using the same process currently in place at Wollongong. This will be transported out via level 2 to the loading dock and back of house for pick-up using specific workflows. All PPE is disposed of in the same way as all patients under airborne precautions.

### **Cleaning**

ISLHD does not have the capacity to staff the SHA with internal cleaning staff. An external cleaning company will be engaged to provide cleaning services to the SHA. Cleaning will be completed daily in the common areas occupied by staff and a "terminal clean" in each room once vacated.

### **Security**

ISLHD does not have the capacity to staff the SHA with security staff. Insight Security have been engaged to provide security services to the SHA. There will be 24/7 on site security at the SHA to ensure the safety of all staff and guests at accommodation sites. This security will involve patrol and monitoring SHA guests CCTV 24 hours a day (SHA). Any breaches of self-isolation protocols will be escalated to the site team leader. The security will respond to Emergency Code activations within the SHA and take direction from the site team leader or emergency personnel. NSW Police will be notified and assistance requested when required.

### **Entry and Exit of Guests**

Transfers to the SHA will occur as a planned process. Arrivals will be directed specifically to an entrance at the end of the old IRT southern fire exit on Hospital Road. Signage and additional processes will be put in place to ensure direction to the appropriate entrance is maintained.

### **Guest Management**

Guests will be monitored via the Virtual Community Care Centre, the guests are admitted into this episode of care via EMR and monitored via a specific application.

### **Deteriorating Guests**

Guests who have a change in condition will be transferred for ongoing care using NSW Ambulance. Guests will be exited in the same way they have entered. If this is not reasonable due to the guest's

condition, a process will be in place to exit the guests via the ambulance bay. There is no expectation that any BHACC staff member will be required to respond to a deteriorating guest in the SHA.

### **Parking**

There will be no changes to parking. Staff are free to park within designated areas.

Please be advised that the utilisation of the old IRT side of the BHACC for the SHA has been raised with staff, and responses to the feedback received has been provided to staff. There will be a further forum on Thursday 9 September 2021 for BHACC staff, where the SHA will be discussed further, prior to the SHA opening on Monday 13 September 2021.

Should you require any further information, or have any feedback, please contact Ms Kestrel Brown, Senior Manager Workforce Relations, Workforce Operations, as a matter of urgency. Ms Brown can be contacted on 0448 241 676 or via email to [Kestrel.Brown@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Kestrel.Brown@health.nsw.gov.au).

Yours sincerely



Deborah Cameron  
**Executive Director Nursing, Midwifery and Clinical Governance**

Date: 08/09/2021

*Cc: Ms Eileen McEvoy, HSU Industrial Organiser Public Health, [Eileen.McEvoy@hsu.asn.au](mailto:Eileen.McEvoy@hsu.asn.au)  
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