

17 January 2022

Mr Gerard Hayes
Health Services Union
L2/109 Pitt Street
SYDNEY NSW 1215

Attention: Jeremy Lappin – Industrial Officer

Via email: Jeremy.Lappin@hsu.asn.au and secretary@hsu.asn.au

Dear Mr Hayes,

Re: Dispute – New Maitland Hospital (NMH): Proposed Security & Wardsperson Model

Thank you for your correspondence dated 7 January 2022 and the subsequent discussion via the Dispute Committee meeting held on the same date providing your members feedback and the HSU response including proposals for resolution; and further correspondence dated 12 January 2022.

On behalf of the District, I provide the following response:

As you are aware Security and Wardsperson staffing transitioned from HealthShare NSW on 20 December 2021 back to the management of the District. This complement of staff is made up of:

Classification	Current FTE
Security Officer	1.8
Wardsperson	4.4
Health & Security Officer (HSA)	10.8
Total FTE	17.0

As previously stated the new Maitland Hospital has been constructed and will operate on a “same level transfer” principle. There has been no decrease in the number of FTE allocated for Security/Wardsperson staffing at the New Maitland Hospital.

The proposed staffing profile for the New Maitland Hospital is based on a change to the current Security/Wardsperson model that relies predominately on the HSA classification which undertakes the dual role and duties of that of a Security Officer or Wardsperson.

The proposed new model for Security/Wardsperson is based on allocating the HSA to either a distinct role of Security Officer or Wardsperson for a period of three months; with the HSA then rotating to the alternate role. As the HSA will retain the current salary of a HSA when performing either role; this model will ensure the HSA will maintain their skills required in the performance of both roles.

An increase of 1.4FTE Wardsperson and 1.0FTE Security has been provided, giving a staffing profile of:

Classification	Current FTE
Security Officer	7.1
Wardsperson	12.3
Total FTE	19.4

The position of LHS Manager – Security/Wardspersons has been created at the level of Health Service Manager Level 1.

HSU Proposal: At a minimum, HNELHD implement its own recommendations: two Security Officers on each shift 24/7 and immediately recruit for a casual pool to cover guarding requirements and leave (subject to those casuals being made permanent where the pool is regularly relied on).

Further, we request HNELHD answer the following questions:

1. On what basis has HNELHD decided to ignore its own Risk Assessment and recommendations therein?

2. Why has HNELHD decided to staff NMH Security at a lower level than that of smaller hospitals such as Calvary Mater Newcastle and Tamworth?

HSU Proposal: All five current Wardsperson roles to be maintained and additional FTE allocated to ensure two Security Officers are on duty 24/7.

Our response: The proposed staffing profile for wardspersons and security does not deplete or diminish security officer coverage across New Maitland Hospital.

Wardsperson travel times

HSU Proposal: Continue to monitor Wardsperson workloads, including by seeking feedback from Wardspersons and clinicians and monitoring response times, with a view to further increasing Wardsperson FTE over time. Maintain the current Wardsperson coverage, with no reductions in employees undertaking Wardsperson duties.

Our Response:

Wardsperson travel times will continue to be monitored in the New Maitland Hospital including seeking direct feedback from Wardsperson and clinicians. It is expected that overall travel times for staff will be improved throughout the facility given that the new facility has provided dedicated staff lifts which are separate from the public lifts meaning that patient transfer to the various units will be expedited. Work has been undertaken with relevant staff to determine the most efficient travel times throughout the hospital.

An additional 1.4FTE Wardsperson has been provided. Any decision regarding increasing Wardsperson FTE overtime will take this information into consideration in the future.

Rotating of employees through positions and remuneration

We note the apparent abandonment of HNELHD's proposals to act in accordance with the Anderson Report, to remove HSA positions by attrition, and to allocate employees exclusively to Wardsperson or Security positions. Further we note the response of HNELHD that if HSAs choose to work as either Wardspersons or Security exclusively, they should be remunerated accordingly.

The HSU objects to HNELHD's new proposal to rotate members through Wardsperson and Security positions once every three months for the following reasons:

- 1. this does not align with the Anderson Report and will cause role confusion, tension between employees, rostering and staffing issues, and reduce the expertise required in both roles,*
- 2. employees cannot organise their lives on the basis of being moved into different shift lengths and shift patterns once every three months,*
- 3. there will be significant administrative, rostering and HR issues created by this proposal, and*
- 4. it is unclear how leave and ADOs will be managed.*

Proposal

The HSU proposes that HNELHD abandon the proposal to implement three monthly rotating rosters.

Our Response: The proposed new model for Security/Wardsperson is based on allocating the HSA to either a distinct role of Security Officer or Wardsperson for a period of three months; with the HSA then rotating to the alternate role. As the HSA will retain the current salary of a HSA when performing either role; this model will ensure the HSA will maintain their skills required in the performance of both roles.

The HSU further proposes that HSAs be given the option to choose their preference of either Wardsperson duties exclusively, Wardsperson/HSA duties, or Security Officer duties exclusively.

Our response: HSA's are a distinct classification within the relevant industrial instrument and it is unreasonable to restrict their scope of practice to working duties exclusively as either a wardsperson or security officer as a matter of personal preference/choice by the individual HAS. This proposal by the HSU cannot be supported.

Impacts on particular employees

Some members have individual work arrangements made to suit their personal circumstances. It is unclear in the information provided to date whether these work arrangements will be maintained.

Proposal

The HSU proposes that HNELHD maintain all individual work arrangements on an ongoing basis.

Our Response:

Management of employee requests for Temporary Individual Rostering Arrangements (TIRA) or other flexible work practices are reviewed by line managers regularly and at least on an annual basis to review individual circumstances and to consider any implications that might affect business operations and that they are fair and equitable for all staff without compromising service delivery and meet rostering best practice principles.

Questions posed by members

Members have posed the following questions:

Question: How will employees be selected for transition into Security or Wardsperson roles?

Answer: It would be proposed that individual meetings are held to discuss the employees skills and preference for a particular role.

Question: Who will lead the team when the manager is off-site, on leave or otherwise unavailable?

Answer: When the manager is on extended leave, the position will be filled by a suitably qualified staff member. When the manager is off site or otherwise unavailable, the manager will determine the need for backfill dependent on the duration of their unavailability.

Question: For over 30 years the night shift has been the 1st shift of the day on rosters, if that remains the case, the new rosters show employees working from afternoon directly onto night shift (i.e. 16 hour shifts). Is that correct?

Answer: It is not the intention for security officers to be working 16 hour shifts. If that has occurred on a roster it will be amended accordingly.

Escorting to outpatients

Wardspersons are frequently being requested to escort patients from the entry of the Old Maitland Hospital into the hospital. Those requests often occur during their already high workloads. This is likely to continue and worsen in the New Maitland Hospital because of the additional outpatient clinics and larger footprint. This significant additional workload further illustrates the need to increase Wardspersons FTE in the New Maitland Hospital.

Our Response: The New Maitland Hospital has incorporated current and contemporary wayfinding signage to assist with the movement of patients and visitors throughout the hospital using easily understood language and signage for directory boards. The Maitland Hospital Volunteers will be available to direct patients and visitors around the hospital.

In relation to the concern that Wardsperson are frequently requested to escort patients into the current hospital site, this anecdotal report will require further investigation and interrogation of data and will need to be reassessed in the new hospital to support the claim for additional Wardsperson staffing beyond the current staffing profile.

Security Risk Assessment and proposed staffing

HSU: We again refer to the Risk Assessment undertaken by HNELHD in relation to security staffing.

*Members have highlighted that many hospitals in NSW Health, including John Hunter, Campbelltown and Singleton Hospitals have a higher security to patient ratio than proposed at the New Maitland Hospital (being approximately 1 to 100 at John Hunter and Campbelltown and 1 to 72 at Singleton, as compared to **1 to 175** at the New Maitland Hospital). This further demonstrates the unreasonableness of the proposed security resources at the New Maitland Hospital.*

Our Response:

There is no current provision to determine the required number of security staffing based on a patient ratio at any individual hospital. To make that assessment on one factor does **not** take into account the size of a particular building, whether there are multiple other buildings on site and the overall size of particular sites.

Singleton Hospital has 1 HSA and no dedicated security onsite.

John Hunter Hospital staffing ratio is inaccurate and does not consider the size of the building, and multiple other buildings that security is required to cover on-site.

HSU: Further, we understand that the security incidents considered when deciding on the resourcing of security at the New Maitland Hospital was based on IMS reporting. It is common knowledge that IMS is an underutilised tool likely to pick up a small fraction of incidents. Further, we understand the process commonly used prior to moving staff from HealthShare to HNELHD was for security to document incidents informally. Having proposed staffing levels partially on the basis of IMS reported incidents and without regard to informally reported incidents, HNELHD must reconsider its proposal which under resources the New Maitland Hospital.

Our Response:

As part of the risk assessment undertaken to inform the level of Security/Wardsperson staffing required for the New Maitland Hospital which is based on a the "same level" transfer principle, I am advised that in addition to the review of IMS reported incidents, security incident reports were also reviewed as part of this process. In addition, consultation was undertaken with the HealthShare NSW Manager responsible for Security and Wardsperson's services at the time including other relevant stakeholders.

We consider that the proposed staffing for Security and Wardsperson is appropriate for the New Maitland Hospital. As is usual practice the monitoring of security incidents and IMS reporting is continually monitored to inform whether there is any changes required to staffing or work practices.

Other issues

In relation to the engagement of a manager of Security and Wardspersons, members request reassurance that HNELHD will ensure the appointee will have, or be required to obtain, all relevant security licences.

Our Response:

The appointee to the role of Manager – Security and Wardsperson will be required to hold all of the relevant security licences as required under the positions description.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C Osborne".

Christine Osborne
A/General Manager
Lower Hunter Sector