

The Closure of the Child Care Service, Port Kembla District Hospital (PKDH) - Plan Proposal for Consultation

1. Reason for the closure / decant plan

The Hillview Child Care Centre (the Centre), located on the grounds of Port Kembla District Hospital (PKDH) is the only service of its kind within the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District (ISLHD).

ISLHD is in the detailed planning stage for the New Shellharbour Hospital (NSH) and redevelopment of the Shoalhaven District Memorial Hospital (SDMH) and there are no plans to incorporate a Child Care Centre into these facilities, or elsewhere across ISLHD. In addition, PKDH is in the process of being decanted, with all services moving off site by the end of 2023, early 2024.

In light of the decision to move away from providing this type of service and taking into consideration that the Centre has had ongoing difficulties maintaining adequate staffing, a determination was made in late 2021 to close the Centre.

Given the timing of this decision, in context of the school year, it was decided to delay the closure until December 2023 knowing that there would likely be ongoing issues maintaining the service, but at the same time giving ISLHD staff and other parents time to find alternative childcare arrangements.

Since then, new plans for the site and difficulties with maintaining the required levels of staff to maintain the service in accordance with legislation coming to fruition, the closure date has been brought forward to 6 October 2023. In the interim, to manage shortfalls in staffing, the Centre has been operating on reduced business hours. In consultation with the Director of the Centre, it is recommended that the Centre remain open on reduced hours until closure to allow families time to source alternative childcare.

With more recent discussions in the past few weeks with families including ISLHD staff who have their children registered to attend it has been proposed for the closure to be Friday 22 December 2023 in line with the school term and Christmas closure period and to allow families the time to source alternative childcare.

There are currently 26 children enrolled at the Centre, and 25 ISLHD staff have their children registered to attend. The Centre has not been accepting new enrolments given difficulties with staffing and the proposed closure of the service. ISLHD intends to provide affected families as much notice as possible of the closure and communicate the key dates.

2. Affected Staff Positions

All positions are located at the Hillview Child Care Centre located on the grounds of Port Kembla District Hospital (PKDH) and the staffing profile is made up of the following:

| ROLE | CLASSIFICATION | FTE | STATUS | COUNT |
|--------------------|--|------|-----------|-------|
| Catering Assistant | Tech Assist.Gde 1.Health Employees.Health Employees | 0.78 | Permanent | 1 |
| Director | Health Mgr.Lvl 1.Health Managers.Health Employees | 1.00 | Temporary | 1 |
| Administration | Admin Off.Lvl 2.Administrative.Health Employees | 0.63 | Permanent | 1 |
| Educators | Child Care Worker..Health Employees.Health Employees | 0.00 | Casual | 4 |

CHILD CARE SERVICE - PKDH

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|-----------|--|------|--|---|
| Educators | Child Care Worker..Health Employees.Health Employees | 6.21 | 1 Permanent Full Time 1 Permanent Part Time 2 Temporary Full Time 1 Temporary Part Time | 5 |
|-----------|--|------|--|---|

Noting that these figures and statuses are as at 3 May 2023 and may change by the time the proposal is implemented.

It is proposed that the following permanent staff whose positions are affected are as follows:

| Affected/Impacted Staff Requiring Case Management | | | |
|---|------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|
| Department | Role | Classification | FTE |
| 173007 | Technical Assistant | Technical Assistant Grade 1 | 0.78 |
| 173007 | Child Care Worker | Child Care Worker | 1.40 |
| 173007 | Administrative Officer | Administrative Officer Level 2 | 0.63 |
| Total | | | 2.81 |

The contracted positions are not included as these staff will be given notice of non-renewal of contract as per the terms of their contracts.

3. Consultation

The discussions with the Health Services Union (HSU) has already begun however will be formally advised in writing of the proposed consultation and invited to provide feedback on behalf of its members. Affected staff will be advised of their status individually of the proposal and closure of the Child Care Centre. A consultation period will be open for two weeks and will include two formal meetings (online and face to face) with all staff members, and their representatives and individual meetings with Workforce Support Representatives (if requested). Additional meetings may be requested if necessary.

For the Child Care Centre’s clients/families of the service there will be two proposed formal staff engagement meetings with families followed by a support pack to assist them in finding new childcare arrangements.

4. Implementation

An implementation process commencement date is yet to be determined based on the finalisation of a number of documents in preparation for the closure/decant of the Child Care Service including responsibilities for a closure, notifications to external organisations, communication plan and letters to affected staff and families, media release (if appropriate), website, FAQs, and support packs. It is intended that SIHG Workforce team will work closely with SIHG management and staff to ensure that staff are appropriately supported during the closure process.

Timetable of Key Dates

| Date | Activities and Deliverables | Desired Outcome | Responsibility |
|-----------------|--|---|----------------|
| To be confirmed | Draft and finalise communication action plan | Agree on communications and Engagement approach for consultation Agree on key messages | ISLHD |

CHILD CARE SERVICE - PKDH

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|------------------|---|---|-------|
| To be confirmed | Prepare communications collateral in conjunction with HR including letters to affected staff and families, media release (if appropriate), website, FAQs, consider support pack | Ensure all communications collateral is drafted | ISLHD |
| To be confirmed | Announce closure of centre to families and staff on | Affected stakeholders are briefed | ISLHD |
| To be confirmed | Issue support packs / FAQs to affected stakeholders | Have packs ready to issue | ISLHD |
| | Have media holding statement ready to issue | Statement approved | ISLHD |
| | Ensure all mention of Hillview Child Care on websites so that closure date is clear | Content drafted ready to go | |
| To be confirmed | Weekly check in with staff to be managed by HR Weekly check in with affected families managed by The Centre Director | Aware of any issues | ISLHD |
| To be confirmed | Support HR and Child Care Centre with any ad hoc communications requirements | | ISLHD |
| 22 December 2023 | Assist the site with any celebrations for the closure of the childcare centre | | |

Timetable of key dates, noting dates are approximate and/or need to be confirmed

The timing of these processes may change. The SIHG Workforce team will work closely with SIHG management and staff to ensure that staff are appropriately supported during the closure process.

5. Counselling and vocational assessment services for staff

All staff will be advised of the availability of counselling and vocational assistance services via our Employee Assistance Provider (EAP), Converge International on 1300 687 327. Additionally, SIHG Workforce Support team will be providing support and guidance to the affected staff members.