



12 November 2021

Mr Gerard Hayes
Secretary
Health Services Union NSW
Locked Bag 3
AUSTRALIA SQUARE NSW 1215

Email: secretary@hsu.asn.au

Dear Mr Hayes

Kempsey District Hospital, Mental Health Inpatient Unit is Reopening

I write further to recent correspondence and consultation meetings between the Mid North Coast Local Health District (MNCLHD) associations and employees regarding the temporary closure of the Mental Health Inpatient Unit (MHIPU) at the Kempsey District Hospital (KDH).

I committed to our teams to review the situation in line with the rapidly changing environment. On that basis, I am pleased to inform that the decision has been made to re-open the unit to mental health patients from Wednesday 17 November 2021. We will be commencing consultation with the staff regarding their views on rostering arrangements and preferences for transitioning back to Kempsey in accordance with our obligations under the award.

As you are aware, the decision to close the MHIPU was made in line with the MNCLHD Surge plan for the COVID-19 pandemic and on the basis of limited medical support for the unit, an inability for the ward to house COVID positive patients and to give our employees a level of certainty for the rest of the year and through the Christmas and New Year period.

In reconsidering this decision, we are responding to changes such as the introduction of Rapid Antigen Testing (RAT) now being available and when used in conjunction with the ability to redirect COVID patients to Port Macquarie MHIPU we are confident we can provide a safe workplace for our teams. Additionally, we have now secured dedicated medical support which will commence as of 22 November 2021.

This pandemic is ever changing and as you are aware our highest priority is to our employees and the communities we care for. As we inform our employees, I am sure there are elements of this decision that you will want to discuss in more detail. Should you wish to discuss further, please contact me by phone on 02 6691 1920 or via email at penny.jones@health.nsw.gov.au

Yours sincerely

Penny Jones
Director Integrated Mental Health, Alcohol and other Drugs
Coffs Harbour Acute Mental Health Unit

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