

5 June 2023

Mr Gerard Hayes
Health Services Union
Level 2, 109 Pitt Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Delivery via email: secretary@hsu.asn.au

Dear Mr Hayes,

NSW Health Pathology – Proposed Restructure John Hunter Hospital Microbiology

This letter is to advise you that NSW Health Pathology proposes to restructure the Microbiology Laboratory at John Hunter Hospital and commence a consultation period.

The John Hunter Hospital Microbiology Laboratory currently employs three Senior Hospital Scientists; one Senior Hospital Scientist I/C Section – Bacteriology, one Senior Hospital Scientist I/C Section Molecular/Serology and a third Senior Hospital Scientist (classification awarded through credentialing committee) within Bacteriology.

The incumbent of the third Senior Hospital Scientist position referred to above has retired and the position will be vacant as at 1 July 2023

With the transition of traditional culture and basic serological based assays (historically performed by Bacteriology) to Molecular based platforms, there is a pressing need to allocate a Senior Hospital Scientist I/C Section to lead the Molecular section of Microbiology solely.

Current and proposed organisation structures are attached which demonstrate a repurposing of the vacant Senior Hospital Scientist position within Bacteriology to become a Senior Hospital Scientist I/C Section – Molecular.

It is noted that whilst it is proposed that each section of Microbiology will be led by a Senior Hospital Scientist I/C Section all scientific and technical staff within Microbiology report to the Senior Hospital Scientist I/C Laboratory - Microbiology, cross training across sections will continue to ensure that our highly skilled staff are supported to work across the sections of Microbiology to aid their professional development and flexibility of rostering.

Further to this proposed change, it is also proposed that the staffing establishment of Microbiology is bolstered by an additional 0.5 Hospital Scientist to meet the expected increase of validations required to be completed by the Bacteriology section.

Finally, there are currently 21.8 FTE available for the existing afternoon shift within Microbiology of 3.30pm – 12.00am, historically made up of staff members aligned to Bacteriology. More recently staff members historically aligned to Molecular/Serology have also joined the afternoon shift pool of Microbiology staff and it is proposed that this arrangement is made permanent for all existing shift workers.

This would see an increase to 29.3 FTE available for afternoon shift and mean that Microbiology staff would only be required to fill on average 71 afternoon shifts per year rather than currently needing to fill 79 shifts per year. This reduction in the number of afternoon shifts required by the majority of Microbiology staff would assist the fatigue management of shift workers.

Separately, approval has been provided to extend Covid funded temporary contracts of 1.5 FTE for a further 12 months until 30 June 2024. This FTE will be recruited to shortly on the basis of a permanent afternoon shift.



NSW Health Pathology is open to considering individual staff circumstances by way of our Temporary Individual Roster Adjustment (TIRA) process.

It is proposed that these changes take effect on 1 July 2023.

Consultation will be undertaken with all Microbiology Staff over the coming weeks and I welcome the Health Services Union's comments.

Please make contact with me on 0436624612 should you wish to discuss the proposal and share any feedback or concerns with me by close of business 14 June 2023.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in grey ink, appearing to read "T. Pollock".

Tarquin Pollock
Associate Director Human Resources Operations
NSW Health Pathology