

Mr Gerard Hayes
Secretary
Health Services Union NSW
gerard.hayes@hsu.asn.au

Re: Response to your NSW Health Rural Incentive Policy Feedback

Dear Mr Hayes

Thank you for the Health Services Union NSW (‘HSU’) feedback on the NSW Health Rural Health Workforce Incentives Scheme Policy Directive (‘the Policy’). We have reviewed the feedback and summarised our response in this letter.

Consultation with unions

No changes to the Policy regarding this matter were implemented at this time.

The process of assessing and classifying positions is a matter of internal decision-making for each health organisation. In some instances, health organisations might seek the advice of external associations, such as their relevant Registered Industrial Organisation (‘union’). Unions are welcome to raise any queries or concerns through established local consultative arrangements.

Health organisations are encouraged by the Ministry of Health (‘the Ministry’) to consult with local union branches if required and through other established local consultative arrangements where available.

Application of the Policy in health organisations

No changes to the Policy regarding this matter were implemented at this time.

The Policy provides criteria for identifying eligible locations, classification of positions with either hard-to-fill or critical vacancies and the eligibility of health workers. Health organisations lead this assessment to respond to their workforce requirements.

Health organisations are provided a platform through shared resource libraries and a fortnightly Community of Practice and have access to continuous support and advice provided by the Ministry.

We are aware of concerns raised in previous correspondence by unions pertinent to this matter, which have been addressed locally. Health organisations continue to be guided and seek advice from the Ministry where required.

Reducing review periods of positions under the Policy

No changes to the Policy regarding this matter were implemented at this time.

The Policy requires health organisations to review positions approved for incentives regularly. Twelve months is recommended for positions with hard-to-fill vacancies and is mandatory for critical

vacancies. The decision to review positions earlier than this timeframe is at the discretion of the health organisation.

Further, the health organisation is responsible for reviewing other positions that may not currently be eligible for incentives. Local business processes determine the frequency of this assessment, but notably, a position can become eligible for incentives as hard-to-fill or critical at any time.

Inclusion of Tweed, Murwillumbah, and Queanbeyan within the Policy

No changes to the Policy regarding this matter were implemented at this time.

The three locations referenced have been provided exemptions and can offer incentives under the Policy framework as determined by the government. This determination does not form part of the RHWIS policy directive. It has been provided based on authority (including by delegation) that exists separate from authorities delegated within and across NSW Health.

We will continue to work with the relevant public health organisations and Chief Executives to ensure compliance with the RHWIS policy and the appropriate provision of permitted incentives.

Pro-rata application of incentives to part-time health workers

We have considered the HSU's feedback, and the wording has been amended from "may be" to "will be" for health workers engaged in less than full-time equivalent hours.

Performance management and removal of incentives

We have considered the HSU's feedback, and this section has been removed from the Policy.

Repayment requirements

No changes to the Policy regarding this matter were implemented at this time.

Repayment requirements are primarily only applicable to monetary allowances and not expenses incurred by the health worker resulting from accommodation or relocation. Advice has been provided to health organisations on applying the repayment requirement on each available incentive as part of the business process. The application of any waiver of repayment requirements remains at the discretion of the Chief Executive.

Applying incentives across a classification of roles

We require further clarification and context from the HSU regarding this matter.

Further to our writing here, we will arrange a meeting with the HSU regarding the Policy, the feedback received, and our responses provided here.

We thank you again for your feedback on the revised Policy and have enclosed the now published RHWIS Policy Directive PD2024_012.

If you require further information, please contact Cassandra Walton, Director Workforce Operational Strategic Unit, at cassandra.walton@health.nsw.gov.au or 0408 610 807.

Yours sincerely



Desiree Blackett

Acting Executive Director, Workforce Planning and Talent Development
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CC:

Lauren Hutchins, Assistant Secretary Operations HSU, lauren.hutchins@hsu.asn.au

Edmund Fry, Director Industrial Relations HSU, edmund.fry@hsu.asn.au

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Encl. Rural Health Workforce Incentive Scheme Policy Directive PD2024_012