

CCLHD enhances some services – but at what expense?

Dear Member,

Yesterday HSU met with the Central Coast LHD Executive and raised the issue of unfilled positions we have identified through our District-wide survey. The HSU has now provided the Executive with a list of these identified vacant roles and requested an update on the recruitment status of these roles. We have demanded that any position not currently approved for recruitment be approved immediately.

What we now know is that while there have been delays in recruiting to vacant roles, members are carrying the burden in picking up extra workloads and duties. Over 70% of our members have told us that over the past 12 months, they have picked up extra duties to cover vacant roles or unfilled leave.

During yesterday's meeting, the Executive were quick to point out there have been some areas of budget and staffing enhancements – a good start. However, when we questioned at what expense these enhancements were made, the Executive wanted to move on and did not provide an answer.

Let's not forget that on 15 August this year, the Chief Executive issued a memo which stated "This year's Budget Allocation reflects a more sustainable approach to funding taken across the state. **This means that we will need to work together to manage our expenses which currently exceed available funding.** The challenges of managing increased demand and its associated cost with finite resources are not unique to us, with similar experiences nationwide as the population grown and we live longer."

Reading between the lines, this statement means we cannot afford to provide the services and healthcare the community deserves, and we need every health worker to do more with less.

Central Coast LHD need to be up front, honest and transparent with HSU members about the real budget pressures they are facing.

Are vacant positions not being filled, or approval delayed, to save money in the budget?

What areas, resources or services are being cut to fund areas of increased or expanded services?

How are the surge beds being funded and resourced at Gosford Hospital? For the month of October this year, at least 20 of the 30 surge beds were in use every day.

CCLHD can no longer keep expecting staff to carry the ever-increasing pressure of workloads. We understand that in the last 12 months alone, Gosford Hospital has seen an increase in activity of 13%.

Without any solutions forthcoming we believe one of two things will occur. Either staff will burn out and resign – 55% of our members are tell us they have considered this over the past 12 months – or patient care will suffer. Neither outcome is something we want to see occur.

Something has to give.

Now more than ever, health workers need to be union members. Encourage your workmates to join online at www.hsu.asn.au/join or phone 1300 478 679.

In unity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gerard Hayes', with a long, sweeping underline.

Gerard Hayes
Secretary, HSU NSW/ACT/QLD