

Special Commission of Inquiry into Healthcare Funding

Statement of Hayley Sciuriaga

Name: Hayley Sciuriaga

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Occupation: Acting Executive Director of Nursing & Midwifery Services, Sydney Local Health District

1. This statement made by me accurately sets out the evidence that I would be prepared, if necessary, to give to the Special Commission of Inquiry into Healthcare Funding as a witness. The statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.
2. This statement is provided in response to the letters of 23 May 2024, 1 July 2024 and Issues Paper 1/2024 issued to the Crown Solicitor's Office and addresses the topics set out in that letter relevant to my role.

A. INTRODUCTION

3. My name is Hayley Sciuriaga. I am the Acting Executive Director of Nursing & Midwifery Services of Sydney Local Health District (**SLHD**). My substantive role is as Director of Nursing and Midwifery at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital (**RPA**) in SLHD. I formerly worked as a Registered Nurse. A copy of my curriculum vitae is exhibited to this statement (**MOH.0010.0380.0001**).
4. In my acting role, I am responsible for the overall strategic direction for the Nursing and Midwifery service throughout SLHD, including ensuring that there is a good governance structure for the service across the LHD, looking into recruitment and retention strategies, ensuring policies and procedures are up to date, looking into innovative ways to enhance the service and looking at other services that we can collaborate with to further the Nursing and Midwifery Service.
5. I have been acting in this position for approximately four weeks and my role will continue until 13 September 2024.

B. NUMBER, DISTRIBUTION AND ADEQUACY OF NURSING/MIDWIFERY WORKFORCE

6. According to the SLHD Positions Detail Report dated 15 July 2024 the following permanent nurses/midwives are at SLHD:

Designation	FTE
Registered Nurse	4380
Registered Midwife	327
Nurse Manager	221
Midwifery Manager	6
Nursing Unit Manager	283
Midwifery Unit Manager	14
Clinical Midwifery Consultant	17
Clinical Nurse Consultant	401
Clinical Midwifery Educator	11
Clinical Nurse Educator	139
Clinical Midwifery Specialist Grade 2	4
Clinical Nurse Specialist Grade 2	145
Enrolled Nurse	362 (inclusive of 10 Aboriginal Trainee EN Cadets)
Nurse Practitioner	56
Midwifery Practitioner	1

Graduate Intake and Recruitment

7. In 2023, (for the 2024 program) SLHD had 326 nursing/midwifery graduate positions and 301 applicants. In 2024, (for the 2025 program) SLHD had 303 nursing/midwifery graduate positions and 175 applicants.
8. Prior to 2023, SLHD had an excess of Registered Nursing graduates applying for positions with the LHD. In 2023, for the first time, this was not the case and overall, other than RPA, other facilities within SLHD (Concord Repatriation General Hospital, Canterbury Hospital, Balmain Hospital and the Mental Health Service) were struggling to meet their targeted numbers for graduate programs for Registered Nurses and Midwives. This remains the situation in 2024.
9. Feedback from the graduate recruitment process, either informally or via forums, suggests that this drop of interest in positions in SLHD is due to the high cost of living around the Inner West of Sydney, lack of available childcare at SLHD sites and challenges with transport and parking.
10. RPA often gets more applicants than the other facilities because it is a large teaching hospital known for its highly specialised services and new graduates get quite a diverse range of exposure to specialties which they might be interested in.

11. To address the shortage across SLHD, any graduates who applied to RPA may be offered positions at other facilities in SLHD such as Canterbury Hospital or Concord Repatriation General Hospital.
12. In 2021, coinciding with the opening of COVID-19 vaccination centres, SLHD employed international new graduate Registered Nurses (**RNs**) into vacant new graduate positions when permitted by the Ministry of Health after the domestic candidates on the eligibility list were exhausted. In late 2022, the SLHD Nursing and Midwifery Executive commenced a campaign to employ experienced RNs from overseas. In the time that I have been acting in the Executive Director position, I have not had any direct involvement in any international recruitment processes which fall within the remit of District Nursing and Midwifery Workforce Services but am aware that SLHD has used two agencies to recruit nurses and midwives from overseas. This resulted in 93 staff members being onboarded and 90 being retained in SLHD.
13. There is currently work being done in SLHD to promote SLHD as an employer particularly by increasing our use of social media platforms to promote our facilities and services to prospective graduates. This is being done in collaboration with the Media and Communications Directorate and the Nursing and Midwifery Workforce team.
14. For the first time, in April 2024, RPA held an Open Day for nursing students to showcase surgical nursing opportunities at RPA. SLHD intends to hold similar Open Days for other facilities within SLHD to assist with attracting more undergraduate nursing students.
15. In addition, in 2024, the SLHD Nursing and Midwifery Service entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (**MOU**) with the University of Technology Sydney (**MOH.0010.0378.0001**). Under the MOU the first-year undergraduate nursing students will complete all of their clinical placements within SLHD. Additionally, after their first clinical placement, they will be offered a casual position on the SLHD casual pool as an Assistant in Nursing (**AIN**).
16. Other recruitment strategies include attending the various universities' nursing open days. Members of the SLHD Nursing and Midwifery team attend and provide information to students regarding the SLHD RN Transition to Practice Program and provide them with a flyer to attend the SLHD Grad Start face to face and virtual information sessions held at Sydney Education. In June 2024 there were 110 student attendees.
17. Each year SLHD employs around 100 casual AINs. The recruitment process occurs centrally at the end of each year to recruit finishing first year students and current second

year students. The AINs are then distributed to work on each facility's casual pool. Many of these AINs apply for a New Graduate position within SLHD when they complete their undergraduate nursing degree.

18. This year, SLHD also conducted a review of the number of undergraduate nursing students attending clinical placement across SLHD. A copy of the emails sent to each Director of Nursing in SLHD are exhibited to this statement (**MOH.0010.0382.0001; MOH.0010.0386.0001; MOH.0010.0384.0001; MOH.0010.0388.0001; MOH.0010.0381.0001**). It was recognised that there was scope for us to increase those placements and we have increased the morning (AM) placements by 37.95% and the afternoon (PM) placements by 70.2%. Hopefully that will allow more students in and hopefully they will choose employment within the SLHD.

C. ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND CONTRIBUTIONS MADE BY VARIOUS ENTITIES IN TRAINING OF NURSES/MIDWIVES IN SLHD

19. SLHD runs clinical placements for nursing/midwifery students from the following universities:
 - a. Australian Catholic University
 - b. Notre Dame University
 - c. University of Sydney
 - d. University of Tasmania
 - e. University of Technology Sydney
 - f. University of Western Sydney
20. SLHD has strong relationships with the universities, and I consider that they play a positive role in facilitating training. I have direct involvement with the universities in my acting role but not in my substantive role. From my experience at RPA, I consider that it would be beneficial if there was more collaboration between the facilities and the universities. This would result in the students having a better understanding of what is required of them as a student at each of the different facilities as the facility can assist them with planning for their specialised student placement.

21. Students often come with their own university facilitator who is not part of SLHD and may not understand the ethos of the organisation and what it is we want to achieve. In my view, having a facilitator that is part of SLHD would also better the relationship between the university and students. There were plans to introduce a facilitation model run by SLHD so that facilitators are employed and paid by SLHD. This model remains under review with the SLHD Nursing and Midwifery Executive and Sydney Education with the aim to trial this model within the aged care stream in late 2024.
22. TAFE NSW, the Health Education and Training Institute (**HETI**) and a local Sydney education centre, Sydney Education, also run Enrolled Nurses (**EN**) courses for which SLHD provides placement. In my substantive role, I have observed that the trainee ENs on student placement are not prepared for the transition into the workplace without a significant amount of support from the RNs and nursing teams. My understanding is that there is a high drop out rate from the Enrolled Nursing course and profession. At SLHD, we aim to employ nurses to a ratio of 80% RN and 20% EN but fall well below that benchmark due to issues with the EN cohort. Whilst positions are held within each Nursing profile, attempts are made to employ into these positions, however, there are often a low number of applicants. From my experience many ENs go on to complete their RN training, resign from their EN position and find employment as a RN. To completely understand the challenges, I believe the first step would be to formally review these programs and the strengths and weaknesses of the transition process from student to practitioner.
23. We are always looking for opportunities to strengthen our relationships with universities and increase the flow of students into SLHD. This is beneficial because more student placements in SLHD are likely to lead to more new graduates. Students get familiar with the teams they are working with whilst on placement, which is important because nursing is very much about the team approach to care. If students feel confident within a team they are more likely to apply for a job with that team. Building students' confidence and working with them as a student assists them making the transition once they graduate. This is of benefit to the organisation because once we have provided them with their training and know what their skill set is they can transition into the workforce quite easily.



Hayley Sciuriaga

18.7.2024



Witness:

18/7/2024

Date

Date