

To: The Hon John Ajaka,
The Board Chair,
Sydney Local Health District;

and

The Board,
Sydney Local Health District.
Via email: [REDACTED]

From: Winston Cheung,
Chair, Medical Staff Council,
Concord Repatriation General Hospital.
Email: [REDACTED]

27th October 2023.

Re. Result of Concord Hospital Medical Staff Council Vote of No Confidence in SLHD Board on 26th October 2023

Dear John and SLHD Board Members,

The Concord Hospital Medical Staff Council held a vote of no confidence in the Board of the Sydney Local Health District on Thursday 26th October 2023.

The motion was passed, with 59 MSC members voting "for" (58.4%) and 42 MSC members voting "against" (41.6%).

I thank the Board for engaging with the Medical Staff Council last night, and for acknowledging the distress of the staff.

I have been working at Concord Hospital now for 18 years. Working conditions here right now are the worst that I have seen during my entire time here. Our workforce at Concord Hospital is now broken and demoralised because of years of progressive failures of the hospital to help staff keep up with demand for services. The colloquial term used by staff for this is a "death by 1000 cuts".

There are few efficiency gains left to be made. Many management decisions from this point to improve efficiency will instead only result in a reduction in services to the public, and further adverse effects for the health and wellbeing of staff.

Staff have left and more are leaving.

Another radiologist resigned yesterday.

Many issues were articulated to the SLHD Board, by nine speakers at the meeting of the Medical Staff Council, nursing staff, allied health staff and the SLHD Board on the 9th August 2023. A start has been made to address some of the resourcing issues, but the major issues remain unresolved.

There is a culture of fear at Concord Hospital. There is a culture of intimidation, bullying and harassment. There is a culture of concealment, cover-up and denial. There is a culture of spin.

A “culture review” will not provide justice for the staff who have been bullied and harassed, many of which have now left. Only an independent external investigation will provide justice.

The Medical Staff Council is still not allowed to have a members’ only meeting without the Executives being invited to attend. The presence of the Executives at what should be confidential private discussions between staff are considered by many members to be an attempt to influence discussion and to intimidate. It is not acceptable that MSC members have been barred from having their own confidential private meetings in preparation for the more formal meetings with the Executives.

Staff at Concord Hospital have a desire to achieve excellence in service to the community. This ambition should no longer be denied to them.

We look forward to a brighter future for Concord Hospital, and to the root causes of the problems that have afflicted Concord Hospital finally being addressed.

There must be major change at Concord Hospital.

Yours Sincerely,

Winston Cheung,
Chair,
Medical Staff Council,
Concord Repatriation General Hospital.
Senior Staff Specialist,
Intensive Care Unit,
Concord Repatriation General Hospital.
Clinical Associate Professor,
Sydney Medical School – Concord, University of Sydney.