

6 January 2026

Mr Gerard Hayes  
Secretary  
Health Services Union  
Locked Bag 3  
Australia Square NSW 1215

By email: [secretary@hsu.asn.au](mailto:secretary@hsu.asn.au)

Dear Mr Hayes

I am writing to advise that NSW Health Pathology (NSWHP) is consulting with NSWHP staff, Western NSW Local Health District (WNSWLHD) staff, and other key stakeholders regarding a proposed six-week trial of an alternate service model for the Forbes Laboratory.

Following initial discussions with WNSWLHD, the proposed trial is scheduled to commence on 9 February 2026 and includes the following changes for consideration:

- Extended operating hours at Forbes Laboratory:
  - Weekdays: 8:00am–7:00pm (currently 8:00am–5:00pm)
  - Weekends: 9:30am–6:00pm (new)
- Modification of the existing out-of-hours pathology service outside these operating hours.
- Enhancement of Point of Care Testing (PoCT) services available to WNSWLHD staff at Forbes and Parkes Hospitals through the addition of three advanced devices:
  - PixCell Hemoscreen (full blood count)
  - Abbott Afinion 2 (CRP testing)
  - Gem 5000 (user-friendly blood gas analyser requiring less staff interaction. Note: Parkes already has a Gem 5000 in use).
- No changes to the on-site collection service.

Relevantly, while NSWHP does not operate a laboratory at Parkes Hospital, all out-of-hours pathology work for Parkes is currently performed at Forbes Laboratory by Forbes-based staff.

Analysis of current call-back patterns indicates most occur:

- Weekdays: 5:00pm–9:00pm
- Saturdays: 7:00am–5:00pm
- Sundays: 8:00am–7:00pm

The proposed hours aim to provide coverage during these peak periods. In consultation with Forbes and Parkes Hospital clinical teams, a revised out-of-hours call-back process has been developed to clearly define situations warranting a call-back. Importantly, there will be no changes to procedures for accessing the blood fridge or emergency release of blood products.

While the proposed trial involves expanded operating hours for the Forbes Laboratory, it is important to note that, while existing staff will be required to participate in extended weekday and new weekend shifts, these changes are not expected to require additional staffing. This is due to the anticipated reduction in unnecessary call-backs, which will help streamline workflows and minimise after-hours disruptions for staff. NSWHP views this as a positive step towards improving staff work-life balance while maintaining high-quality patient care.

These adjustments are expected to:

- Reduce unnecessary out-of-hours call-backs, ensuring staff have greater certainty regarding shift patterns and are contacted out of hours only when clinically appropriate.
- Maintain high-quality laboratory and pathology services for patients across the region.

Through this trial, NSWHP aims to:

- Align laboratory hours with clinical demand and hospital activity.
- Leverage advanced PoCT technology at the bedside.
- Minimise delays for critical results.
- Improve staff wellbeing through revised rostering and reduced after-hours interruptions.
- Support clinicians with education and competency in PoCT.
- Achieve more efficient budget management through reduced call-backs.

At the conclusion of the trial, NSWHP will assess whether these changes should be adopted permanently. NSWHP remains committed to delivering high-quality, efficient, and reliable public pathology services across NSW while supporting the growth and wellbeing of our staff.

We welcome your feedback and invite you to contact us with any comments or to arrange a meeting to discuss this proposal by close of business 19 January 2026. Consultation with you will continue throughout the trial period. Thank you for your ongoing collaboration as we work to enhance pathology services for our communities.

Kind regards



Tammy Boone  
Acting Director People & Culture  
NSW Health Pathology  
[Tammy.Boone@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Tammy.Boone@health.nsw.gov.au)