

13 May 2026

Mr. Gerard Hayes
General Secretary
Health Services Union NSW/ACT/QLD Locked Bag 3
AUSTRALIA SQUARE NSW 1215

By email: secretary@hsu.asn.au

Dear Mr Hayes

Re: Proposed realignment of services provided by the Chemical Criminalistics Unit

I write to formally advise the Health Services Union (HSU) of a proposed realignment of services provided by the Chemical Criminalistics Unit within NSW Health Pathology's Forensic & Analytical Science Service (FASS).

The proposal follows a comprehensive review of the current operating model for the Chemical Criminalistics Unit, and broader criminalistics forensic chemistry services. The purpose of this review was to assess the long-term sustainability and strengthen workforce resilience and support for these services in an environment of increasing complexity, workforce mobility and evolving service demands.

Case for change

The Chemical Criminalistics Unit currently operates as a standalone service with a broad range of specialist disciplines delivered by a relatively small workforce. The review identified that the current operating model presents inherent structural and system level risks associated with operating small and highly specialised standalone unit, including:

- Limited scalability and workforce flexibility
- Concentration of specialist knowledge within a relatively small number of roles
- Limited training and succession capacity within a small standalone unit
- Increased vulnerability to workforce turnover and leave arrangements

These challenges are not unique to NSW Health Pathology and are not reflective of workforce capability or performance issues. Rather, these challenges are consistent with those currently experienced nationally across the forensic chemistry services and relate to structural and system level constraints.

The proposed realignment seeks to proactively address these risks by strengthening the operating model to better support staff, strengthen service capability, ensure long-term service sustainability, and position FASS as a national leader of these services.

Overview of the proposal

The proposal involves the realignment of services provided by the Chemical Criminalistics Unit within the existing Illicit Drugs Analysis Unit (IDAU) structure to form a consolidated Forensic Chemistry service.

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Key features of the proposal include:

- No reduction in staffing numbers or overall FTE
- Retention of all existing forensic chemistry services
- Realignment of some reporting lines and management structure
- Consolidation of existing management roles with the proposed deletion of:
 - 1 x Manager Chemical Criminalistics Unit (Health Manager Level 4)
 - 1 x Group Manager Chemical Criminalistics Unit (SHS IC Lab)
- Creation of new opportunities with the creation of:
 - 1 x Training Officer (Health Manager Level 2)
 - 1 x Team Leader (SHS IC Section)
- Expanded opportunities for cross skilling, career development and workforce flexibility with access to a larger pool of forensic chemists.

Impact on staff

While there is no proposal to reduce overall FTE, some roles will be affected by changes to reporting lines and management arrangements. All efforts will be made to minimise impact to staff with any staff whose positions are directly impacted and unable to be placed in the new structure to be managed as affected employees in accordance with the NSW Health Managing Excess Staff of the NSW Health Service policy directive and NSW Government Workforce Mobility Placement Policy.

Consultation with affected staff has commenced, focusing on the rationale for change, potential impacts, and opportunities arising from the proposed model. Feedback received through this process will continue to inform the final design and implementation approach.

Consultation

Consultation has commenced with staff to discuss the proposed changes and address any questions, concerns, and/or feedback on the proposed changes. Feedback received through this process will inform the final model and implementation approach. A copy of the staff presentation on the proposal, which includes current and proposed structures, is attached at **Attachment A**.

NSW Health Pathology invites the HSU to provide feedback on the proposed changes or request a meeting to discuss the changes by close of business **Thursday 28 May 2026**. If there is no further comment or feedback provided, the proposed changes will be implemented after this date. If you have any questions, please contact Yasmin Fashik, Associate Director Human Resources, via email at Yasmin.Fashik@health.nsw.gov.au

Yours sincerely



Clint Cochrane
Operations Director, Criminalistics
Forensic & Analytical Science Service
NSW Health Pathology

cc: Yasmin Fashik, Associate Director Human Resources
Deanna Paulin, Director Forensic & Analytical Science Service

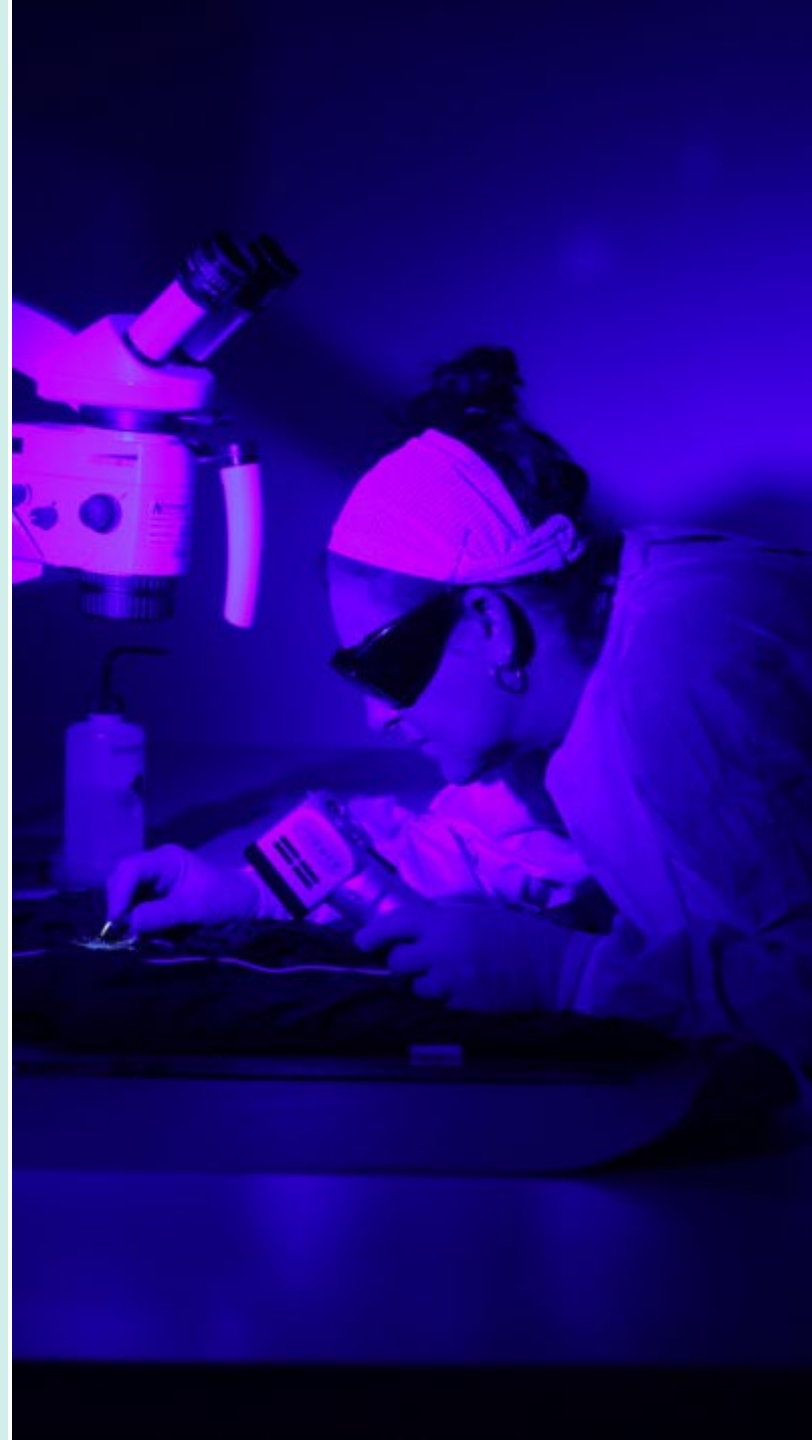
Review of the Chemical Criminalistics Unit

Clint Cochrane

Operations Director - Criminalistics

NSW Health Pathology Forensic & Analytical Science Service
(FASS)

May 2026



Background

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Why review CCU?

- Persistent challenges
 - Staff turnover
 - Work capacity
 - Service delivery
 - Training burden
- Feedback
 - Staff (People matters/ exit interviews/ direct conversations)
 - Stakeholders
- National picture



Review findings

Areas of review



Staffing/
skill
shortages



Stakeholder
demand and
capacity
pressures



Service
delivery
against
agreed KPIs



Training



National
picture



Potential
opportunities

Staffing/ skill shortages

Sample numbers

- ~1300 samples per year
- Stable demand
- Staffing level has previously met demand

Staff turnover

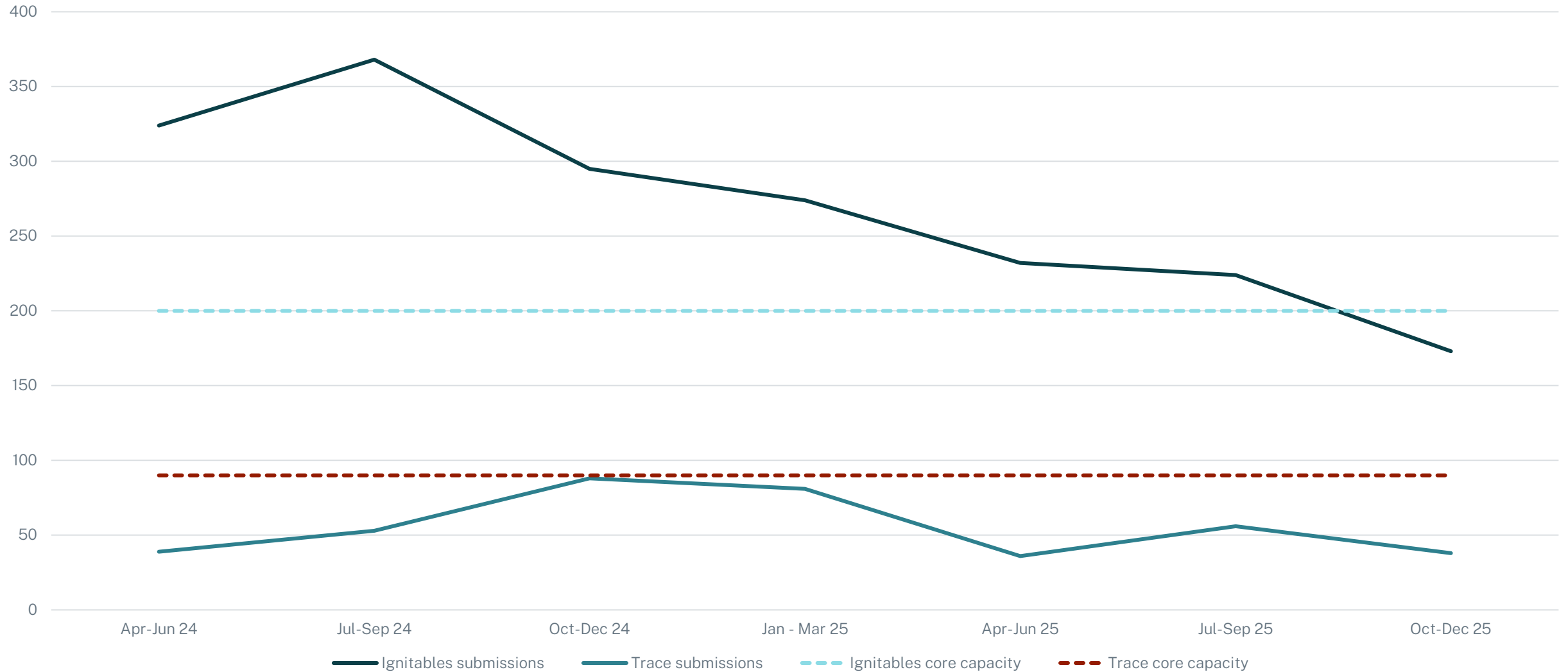
- Over 15 staff have left since 2021
- Loss of experience
- Concentration of complex tasks
- Cross-skilling

Development opportunities

- Size of CCU limits opportunity
- Key driver for staff loss
- People Matters and exit interviews

Stakeholder demand and capacity pressures

Sample submissions vs. core capacity



Stakeholder demand and capacity pressures

In October 2025:

- ~50% samples on-hand were >1 year old
- Over 300 trace samples on hand (~ 9 months of work)
- NSWPF mass withdrawal of exhibits

Considerable stakeholder feedback

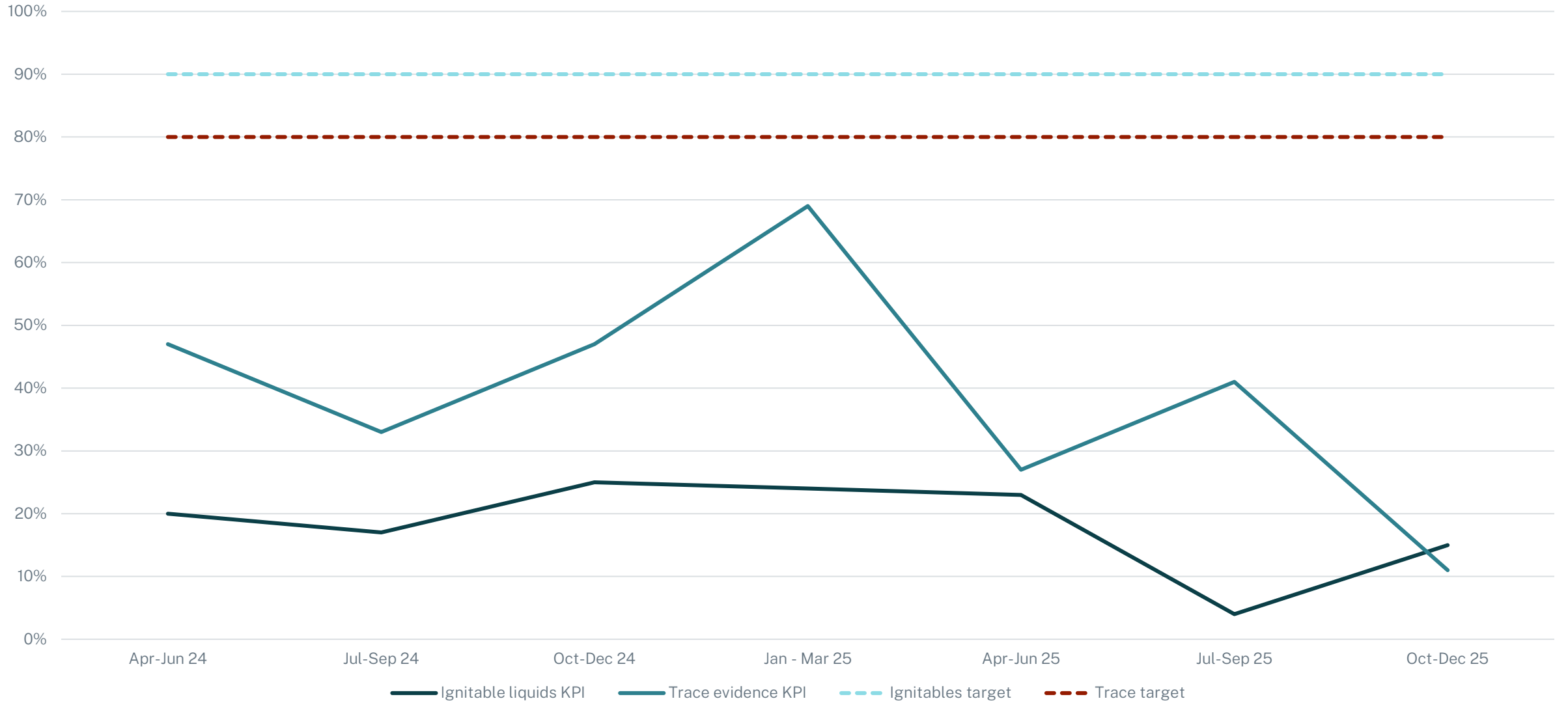
Risks raised:

- FASS/ Police forums
- NSWHP

Service delivery against agreed KPIs



CCU KPIs



Training challenges

- Breadth of disciplines
- Complexity of tasks
- Caseload
- Limited trainers
- Workforce experience profile
- Sample throughput

National picture

- Challenges are nationwide
- Currently use other jurisdiction's experts to peer review
- Workforce review underway



Desired Outcome: A sustainable criminalistics service that continuously delivers high quality, accurate results in a timely manner, meeting service obligations, evolves to meet stakeholder needs and crime patterns, sustainable workforce and career development, and is efficient and cost effective.

The current CCU service model does not support staff for sustainable service provision to current and evolving stakeholder needs.

CCU challenges:

- Persistent and structural in nature
- Concerns about the sustainability of the service
- Remedial actions have had limited effectiveness
- Similar challenges have been identified nationally

Potential solutions considered



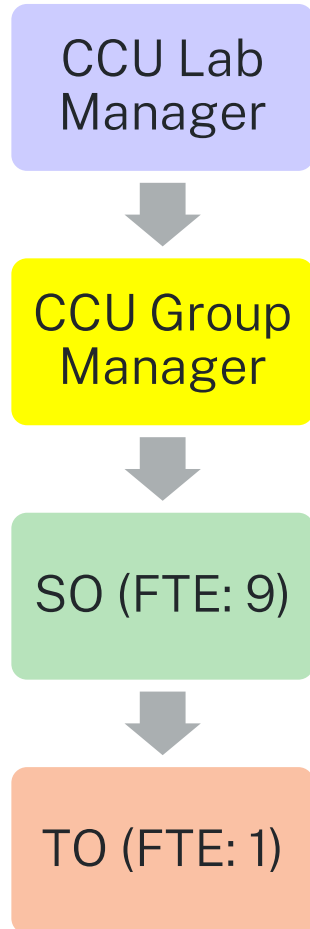
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Potential solutions considered

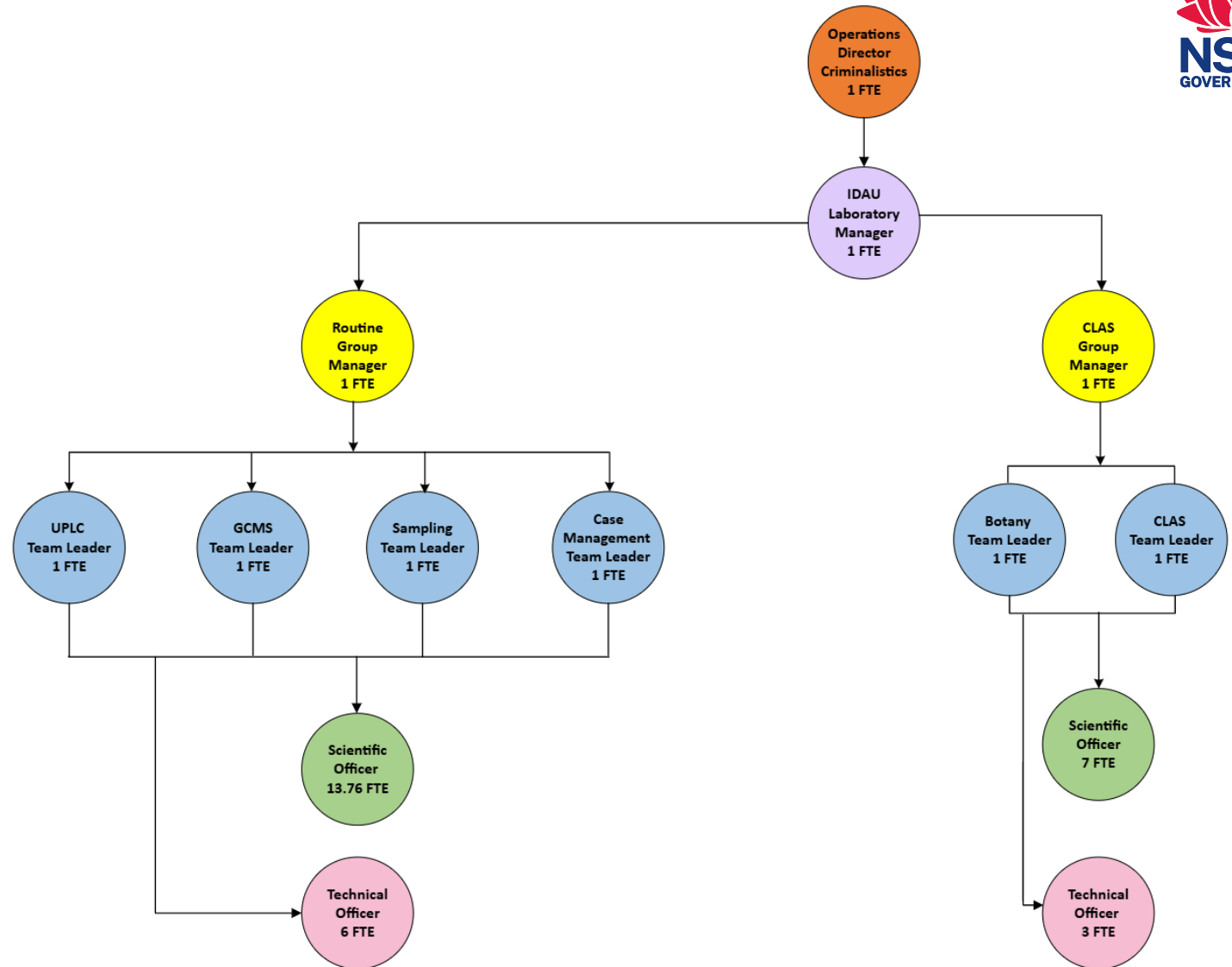
1. No change
2. Increase CCU staff numbers
3. Refer most CCU Trace Chemistry services to other accredited laboratories
4. **Realign CCU within IDAU, renamed Forensic Chemistry (preferred solution)**

Organisational structure for preferred solution

Current structure

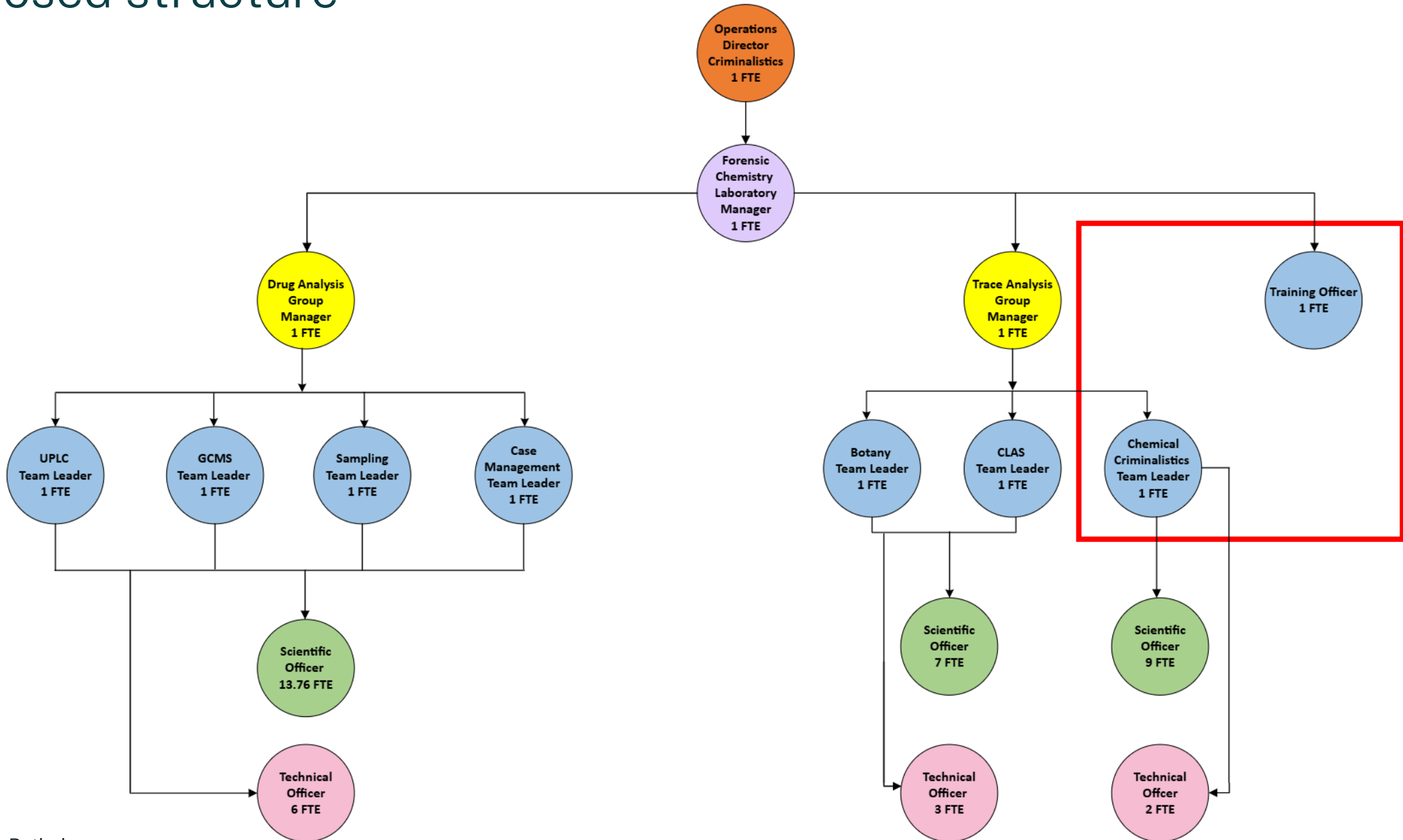


Illicit Drug Analysis Unit

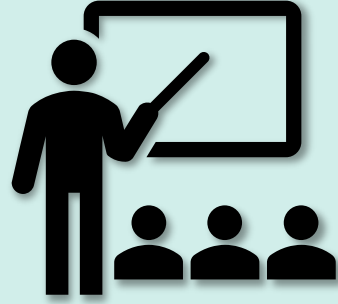


Proposed structure

Forensic Chemistry



Key points



Key points

Staffing

- No overall loss of FTE
- No loss of SO/TOs; some managerial realignment
- New opportunities (e.g. Training Officer)

Laboratory

- Better coverage
- Balanced management structure
- Better use of resources (e.g instruments, staffing and footprint)

Organisation

- Cost neutral
- Sustainable service model
- No loss of services/ potential growth opportunities

Unrealised opportunities

Skills

- Larger pool of chemists
- Quicker training
- Broadening skillsets

Staff

- Career progression
- Training officer position
- Transfer of ideas

Lab

- Potential to bring in additional work
- Better utilisation of instruments

What to expect

Consultation process and providing feedback

The consultation process

What is it?

- Open for a period of 2 weeks until 28 May 2026
- An important industrial process intended to enable two-way communication between the employer and employees on changes in the workplace
- Includes a range of stakeholders, including the Health Services Union (HSU)
- Your opportunity to have a say

For the next two weeks, expect:

- Your feedback to be sought, acknowledged, collated and genuinely considered
- Healthy discussion is encouraged between staff and management
- Questions to be welcomed – ask us “have you thought of...”, we’d love to hear your ideas
- Your unique perspective, experience and knowledge to be valued: you know your work, stakeholders and customers best
- Respect, understanding and honesty

How to find information and provide feedback

How to provide feedback and suggestions during consultation period:

- Live during our staff briefings
- In writing to Clint Cochrane via email or the FASS HR team at nswpath-fasshr@health.nsw.gov.au
- Request an individual meeting with Clint and/or HR
- Direct to your line manager to submit on your behalf
- Direct to your Union Representative

How to find information about this proposed change:

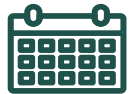
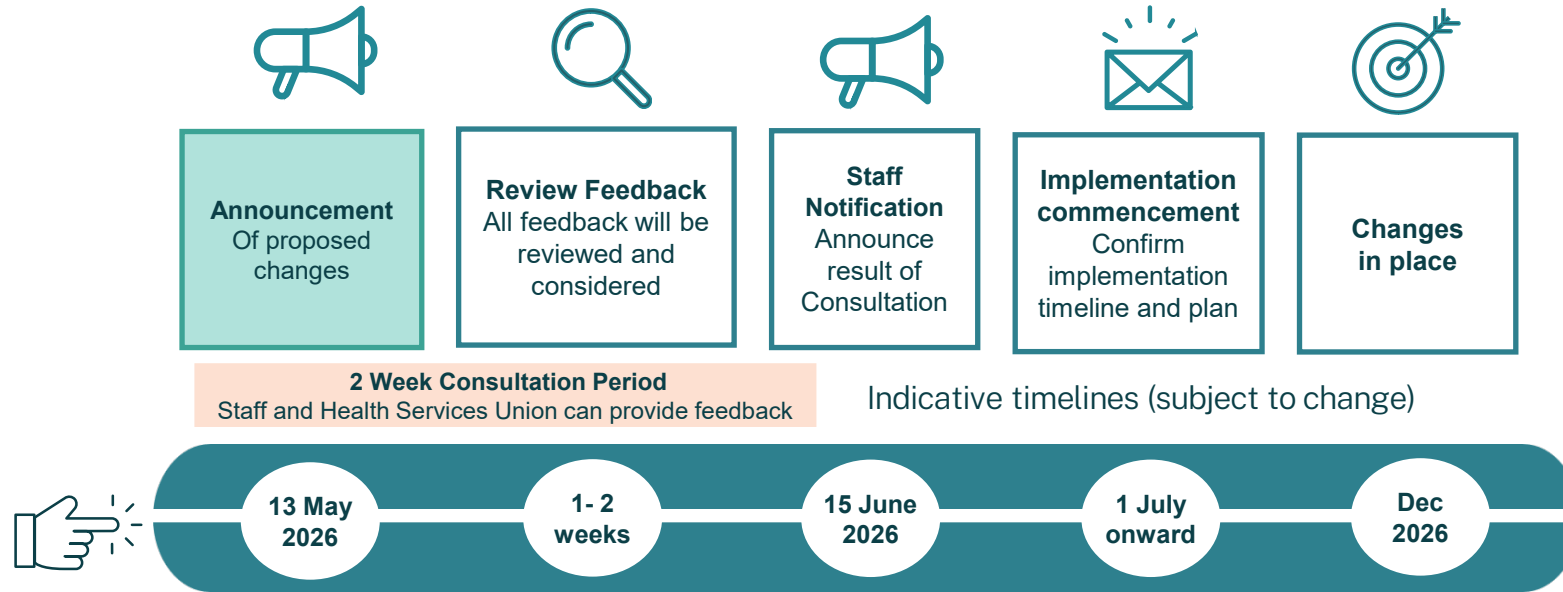
- Resources, such as this presentation, will be made available to staff via email after the meeting today
- Staff on leave will have resources emailed to their work email address



Next steps

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Consultation timeline & next steps



The consultation period runs from **Wednesday, 13 May 2026** and ends on **Thursday, 28 May 2026**.



Further information including today's presentation will be provided to staff via email.



Reach out to Clint Cochrane or Human Resources if you have any questions.



All feedback will be considered and assessed, and the final changes will be communicated to the team.

Support and resources

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Support

We recognise the disruption and uncertainty this may cause. We are committed to:

- Providing clear and timely information and responding to questions or feedback
- Ensuring we are available to support you.
- Implementing changes using a fair and consistent process.
- Minimising disruption to services and maintaining service continuity to the organisation



Management & Leadership Team

Clint Cochrane
Catherine McDonald
Christopher Ewers



FASS Human Resources

Yasmin Fashik
Associate Director, Human
Resources
&
Michaela Corboski
Senior HR Consultant



Employee Assistance Program

Call 1300 687 327 or book
via [EAP Provider Australia |
Converge](#)

There are *Employee Assist* and
Career Assist options



Health Services Union

You may wish to contact your
local representative:

- www.hsu.asn.au

Questions?