NSW Health Pathology

NSW GOVERNMENT

OFFICIAL: Sensitive – NSW Government

Date: 19 February 2026

Mr Gerard Hayes

Secretary

Health Services Union

Locked Bag 3

Australia Square NSW 1215

By email: secretary@hsu.asn.au

Response to HSU Notification of Dispute – Proposed Courier Route Changes NSWHP Orange

Dear Mr Hayes

Thank you for your correspondence dated 3 February 2026 notifying NSW Health Pathology (NSWHP) of a dispute under Clause 26 of the Health Employees' Conditions of Employment (State) Award 2025 in relation to proposed changes to courier routes at Orange Pathology. NSWHP acknowledges receipt of this notification and confirms that the status quo will be maintained while the dispute resolution procedure is followed.

Bathurst Private Hospital has requested an ongoing weekday courier service with same-day processing at Bathurst Laboratory to ensure results are available by 1200. Oberon Hospital has also requested an earlier courier pickup to support earlier clinical review and timely patient discharge. A review of current courier schedules indicates that meeting these requirements requires adjustments to several routes, including an earlier start for Route B, an additional Bathurst leg (also incorporating Bathurst Private Hospital) for Route C to capture later work, and a minor timing adjustment to Route F to maintain the Kite Street pickup at close. Bathurst Laboratory is also exploring a potential private provider pickup at approximately 1600 to reduce the late-evening workload.

Additionally, extended operating hours at Forbes Laboratory, which the HSU has been consulted on separately, now allows more Parkes and Forbes samples to be processed locally. To support this, sequencing changes on Routes C and I are required to ensure timely delivery of Parkes samples to Forbes before laboratory closure.

Description of Proposed Changes

- Route B: Start time adjusted from 1000 to 0730, finishing at 1400; includes Bathurst Private Hospital; one fewer service to Bathurst Laboratory; shift length reduced from 8 hours to 6 hours.
- Route C: Start time adjusted from 1600 to 1530, finishing at 2300; includes later Bathurst pickup; shift length increased from 5 hours to 7 hours; route order changed to Orange → Parkes → Forbes → Cowra → Orange → Bathurst → Orange.
- Route F: Start time adjusted from 0930 to 0945, finishing at 1815; shift length unchanged; maintains Kite Street pickup at close.
- Route I: Start time adjusted from 1630 to 1430, finishing at 2030: shift length unchanged; route order changed to Orange → Parkes → Forbes → Orange → Bathurst → Orange

A detailed summary of operational impacts is provided in the attached assessment documents.

Operational impacts include adjustments to start and finish times, coverage patterns, and service sequencing across Routes B, C, F, and I. A draft roster is attached to support the HSU's consultation with members.

Work Health and Safety Assessment

A WHS risk assessment has been completed and is attached. Control measures include: pre-/post-shift fatigue huddles; scheduled rest and meal breaks; fatigue awareness training/resources; consultation and adequate notice for roster changes; and maintaining a supportive environment where staff can raise concerns early. These controls will be implemented prior to any change and monitored in consultation with affected staff.

In line with the HSU's request for a 14-day consultation period, NSWHP proposes meeting with the HSU in the week commencing 9th March 2026 with a preference for March the 9th or 11th. Please advise your preferred date and time and representatives and whether the HSU's preference is for the meeting to be held in person or virtually.

Please provide any feedback by 6 March 2026 and contact me for discussion or clarification.

Kind regards,

Benjamin Alchin

Senior Operations Manager

NSW Health Pathology