

Western NSW Local Health District



Cadia House
89 March Street, Orange NSW 2800
Tel (02) 6369 3827

13th March 2026

Trim: WD26/2808

Mr Gerard Hayes
National Secretary
Health Services Union

Dear Mr Hayes,

**Re: Proposed staffing change for the Lachlan Community
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)**

I am writing to seek your consultation regarding a planned change to a position in the Lachlan Community Child and Adolescent Mental Health Team. The proposed change is to regrade a Psychologist Position to a Senior Mental Health Clinician position.

The Lachlan Community Mental Health team currently has three designated CAMHS positions, Two Mental Health Clinicians (level 1-2) and one CAMHS psychologist. All Lachlan CAMHS roles have been historically hard to fill. There have been long periods in the past 2 years where there have been no clinicians or a sole clinician covering the Lachlan CAMHS service. This has required intensive support from the Orange CAMHS team.

The CAMHS Psychologist role in the Lachlan Community Mental Health team has been vacant since September 2023, with all rounds of recruitment being unsuccessful, including with incentives. The change to a multigrade role is likely to increase chances of recruitment as all disciplines are eligible to apply. Making it a senior role is likely to attract skilled, experienced clinicians and meet the skill level required for this role.

The current staffing profile does not support career progression opportunities for clinicians as there are no identified senior CAMHS roles. Changing the psychologist role to a senior multigrade position (level 3) would create a step between level 1-2 roles and the CAMHS clinical leader role (level 4). Creating such a pathway increases the services ability to grow our own clinicians into these senior roles, and to retain staff in the roles as they develop skills and experience. Advanced competencies, met by senior clinicians, are regularly required within the CAMHS service both to provide supervision and support to the team, and to meet the needs of increasingly complex consumers.

The proposed change would support recruitment, enable staff career progression pathways, and ensure a skill mix that allows for best-quality care for the children, young people and families that we serve.



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Changes proposed:

- Regrade the Psychology Position to a level 3 Multigrade position. By changing the position to a multigrade position, it does not preclude Psychologists from applying for this role and increases the opportunity for all disciplines to apply.

Current staffing profile		
Role title	Grade	FTE
Mental Health Clinician	Mental Health Clinician L1-2	2
Psychologist (vacant)	Psychologist	1
	Total FTE	3

Proposed staffing profile		
Role title	Grade	FTE
Mental Health Clinician	Mental Health Clinician L1-2	2
Snr Mental Health Clinician	Snr Mental Health Clinician L3	1
	Total FTE	3

Risk consideration and mitigation

- No current staff will be displaced by the proposed change as the role is currently vacant.
- There is a high risk of burn out and stress in current staff, who continue to work with highly complex and risky children and young people with limited support or supervision from senior staff. There is a risk of unplanned leave and impacts on staff retention if changes are not made to increase senior staff support in the team to support junior team members.

If you have any questions regarding the above, I can be contacted on (02) 6369 3827 or by email at Kristen.Szulik@health.nsw.gov.au

Kind Regards,

Kristen Szulik

Hub Manager

Orange & Region Community Mental Health Drug & Alcohol Services