



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Health**

Independent Review – Career Pathways for Health Professionals Summary of Recommendations

The Department of Health (the Department) committed to an independent review of career pathways for health professionals as part of the WA Health System – HSUWA – PACTS Industrial Agreement 2022, in response to a key claim from the Health Services Union of Western Australia (HSUWA).

On 5 July 2023, AHP Workforce was engaged to undertake the review, aimed at supporting workforce retention, professional development, and the advancement of contemporary clinical practice and new models of care. An Interim Report was delivered in March 2024 following extensive consultation with HSUWA and WA Health employees.

The fifth offer for a replacement Agreement, presented in January 2025, included the *WA Health Plan towards Modernising Career Pathways for Allied Health Professionals* (Modernising Plan), developed in response to the Interim Report.

The Final Report from AHP Workforce outlines 5 key recommendations. Below is a summary of each recommendation and how the Department is addressing them.

Recommendation	Department's Response
<p>1: <i>WA Health's allied health career framework should be comprised of 4 career pathways including: clinical practice, education, research and leadership.</i></p>	<p>The Department is supportive of building and supporting the allied health workforce through 4 career pathways. This approach is consistent with other state allied health frameworks such as the <i>Victorian Allied Health Career Pathways Blueprint</i>, and the draft <i>National Allied Health Workforce Strategy</i> currently in development.</p> <p>The Department is committed to strengthening these pathways through actions in the Modernising Plan and the <i>WA Health Allied Health Workforce Implementation Plan: Horizon 1 2024-2027</i>, ensuring continued professional growth of the allied health workforce.</p>
<p>2: <i>WA Health's Allied Health Career Framework should be comprised of five career levels including: health professional, senior, advanced, expert and executive.</i></p>	<p>The Department supports strengthening guidance on career levels for the allied health workforce and achieving consistency across WA Health, where practicable. Currently, the career pathway structure offers health professionals limited advanced and expert positions. Additionally, acknowledged leader roles require employees to move away from the clinical workforce and into the administrative positions on the G-scale.</p> <p>Priority 3 and 4 of the Modernising Plan support the concept of these 5 career levels (with modified nomenclature) and will deliver targeted reform to address early skill ceilings and standardise career structures for specified professions. These actions will also establish acknowledged leader positions on the P-scale and introduce a new classification descriptor to recognise 300 advanced practice allied health professionals.</p>

	<p>To support these actions, the WA Health Allied Health Advanced Practice Committee has been established and the <i>WA Health Allied Health Advanced Practice Clinical Governance Framework</i> is currently in development.</p>
<p>3: <i>Consider potential links between career and classification levels.</i></p>	<p>The Department does not support the third recommendation, which suggests broadbanding classification levels P1-P2, P3-P4, and P5-P6 and assigning distinct career levels to these, as it fails to recognise the complexity, differentiations and work value considerations for the WA Health workforce.</p> <p>Some of the underpinning issues which informed this recommendation, such as lack of career flexibility and limited access to training and development, are actively being addressed in different ways. For example, in alignment with the Department's focus on retaining, supporting and empowering employees as outlined in the professional development, leave has been increased and a new professional development allowance introduced under the 2024 Agreement. This provides employees with more opportunities to develop and improve their skills, whilst removing barriers to achieving career progression. Additionally, works completed in accordance with the remaining recommendations, such as the inclusion of 4 career pathways, will increase career flexibility and allow employees to pursue diverse career avenues without needing to change careers.</p>
<p>4: <i>Consistently apply a set of agreed-upon, objectively defined job attributes to support decision-making on job classification.</i></p>	<p>The Department continues to use the classification descriptors as the primary reference for decision making regarding the levels of all current and proposed positions listed in subclause 21.5 of the 2024 Agreement. In support of Recommendation 4, the Department will review and modernise classification descriptors and review employees for reclassification against the new descriptors, as detailed in the modernising plan.</p> <p>The recommendation to utilise knowledge, leadership, judgment and risk, communication, and independence/autonomy were identified as key attributes. As such, the review of the classification descriptors will take these attributes into account. However, the Department will not restrict the modernised classification descriptors to only or all of these attributes. This review will seek to contemporise the descriptors whilst also identifying any inconsistencies and remedying them.</p>

<p>5: Establish critical infrastructure, including an implementation plan, governance arrangements, and the formation of a group to oversee and undertake much of the workload.</p>	<p>The Chief Allied Health Office's (CAHO) Allied Health Careers Unit has been established to lead the implementation of the modernising plan, with the System-wide Industrial Relations and System-wide Classifications working closely with CAHO to progress commitments.</p> <p>Furthermore, governance groups which directly oversee the modernising plan and undertake the actions within it have been created, such as the Blueprint Project Governance Group and the Department and HSUWA Stakeholder Committee. Additionally, pre-existing governance structures are also being utilised throughout the project, such as the Health Executive Committee, Allied Health Executive Forum and other allied health leadership and advisory groups.</p>
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