



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

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Ms Naomi McCrae
Secretary
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Via email: NMccrae@hsuwa.com.au

Dear Ms McCrae

INDEPENDENT REVIEW – CAREER PATHWAYS FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS – FINAL REPORT

I refer to the Department of Health's (Department) commitment to facilitate an independent review of the career pathways for health professionals (Review) provided in response to a key Health Services Union of Western Australia (HSUWA) claim during negotiations for the WA Health System – HSUWA – PACTS Industrial Agreement 2022 (Agreement).

On 5 July 2023, the independent consultant, AHP Workforce, was engaged to conduct the Review, which sought to support the retention of a skilled health professional workforce and assist in developing contemporary clinical practices and new models of care. In March 2024, following extensive consultation with the HSUWA and WA Health employees, AHP Workforce delivered an Interim Report.

On 30 January 2025, the HSUWA was presented with a fifth offer for a replacement Agreement, which included the WA Health Plan towards Modernising Career Pathways for Allied Health Professionals (Plan), informed by the outcomes of the Interim Report.

I have reviewed AHP Workforce's Final Report which notes five main recommendations for inclusion in the Allied Health career framework. The following indicates how the Department is addressing and acting on these recommendations.

Recommendation 1: WA Health's allied health career framework should be comprised of four career pathways including: clinical practice, education, research, and leadership.

The Department is supportive of building and supporting the allied health workforce through four career pathways. This will ensure WA Health is consistent with other State allied health frameworks such as the Victorian Allied Health Career Pathways

Blueprint, as well as the draft National Allied Health Workforce Strategy, which is currently in development.

The Department is committed to strengthening the four pathways through actions in the Plan, as well as the WA Health Allied Health Workforce Implementation Plan: Horizon 1 2024-2027, to ensure WA Health supports the continued professional growth of the allied health workforce.

As you are aware, the Department has established the Blueprint Project Governance Group (BPGG) to oversee the development of the WA Allied Health Career Pathways Blueprint (Blueprint) which will support the implementation of the modernised career pathways of clinical practice, education, research and leadership.

Recommendation 2: WA Health's Allied Health Career Framework should be comprised of five career levels including: health professional, senior, advanced, expert and executive.

The Department supports strengthening guidance on career levels for the allied health workforce and achieving consistency across WA Health, where practicable. The current career pathway structure for health professionals offers 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.

However, Priority 3 and Priority 4 of the Plan support the concept of these five career levels (with modified nomenclature) and will deliver targeted reform to address early skill ceilings and standardise career structures for specified professions. Actions arising from these priorities will also establish acknowledged leader positions on the P-scale and introduce a new classification descriptor to recognise 300 advanced practice allied health professionals. To support these actions within the Plan, the WA Health Allied Health Advanced Practice Committee has been established. Further, the WA Health Allied Health Advanced Practice Clinical Governance Framework is currently in development.

Recommendation 3: Consider potential links between career and classification levels.

The Department does not support the third recommendation, which suggests broadbanding P1-P2, P3-P4, and P5-P6 and assigning distinct career levels to these classification levels, as it fails to recognise the complexity, differentiations and work value considerations for the WA Health workforce.

Whilst the Department does not support this recommendation, 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 WA Health Workforce Strategy 2034, 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 four career pathways, will increase career flexibility and provide employees with a variety of avenues to pursue within their career without them having to change careers altogether.

Recommendation 4: Consistently apply a set of agreed-upon, objectively defined job attributes to support decision-making on job classification.

The Department has maintained the classification descriptors which are the primary reference for decision making regarding the levels of all current and proposed positions listed in subclause 21.5 of the 2024 Agreement. However, 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 Plan. 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. To be completed in collaboration with the HSUWA, this review will seek to contemporise the descriptors whilst also identifying any inconsistencies and remedying them.

Recommendation 5: Establish critical infrastructure, including an implementation plan, governance arrangements, and the formation of a group to oversee and undertake much of the workload.

The Chief Allied Health Office's (CAHO) Allied Health Careers Unit has been established to lead the implementation of the Plan, with the System-wide Industrial Relations and System-wide Classifications working closely with CAHO to progress commitments. Furthermore, as you would be aware, governance groups which directly oversee the Plan and undertake the actions within it have been created, such as the BPGG 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.

I am satisfied that the Department's Plan is consistent with, and directly addresses, the recommendations of the Review. I would like to recognise the professionalism and invaluable contributions from our dedicated WA Health employees - many of whom are union members - throughout the course of the Review. I also thank the HSUWA for their continued advocacy for improved career pathways and professional development opportunities for the Allied Health workforce.

Should you require any further information, please contact Mr Joshua Chapman, A/Director System-wide Industrial Relations, on 9222 6442 or at Joshua.Chapman@health.wa.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



Dr Shirley Bowen
DIRECTOR GENERAL

8 October 2025

Att: AHP Career Pathways Final Report

cc: Joshua Chapman, A/Director System-wide Industrial Relations, Joshua.Chapman@health.wa.gov.au