

Entry Permit Holder Report

SafeWork SA

Application ID 19993683

Entry Permit Holder	
Full Name:	Rachael Williams
Permit Number:	ET-24-00842
Union Represented:	South Australian Salaried Medical Officers Association
Worksite Entered	
Business Name:	Northern Adelaide Local Health Network - Division of Mental Health
Industry:	Other Health
Address:	Haydown Road, Elizabeth Vale SA 5112
Date workplace entered:	15 July 2024

I Rachael Williams am of the opinion that the PCBU has contravened the WHS legislation relating to:			
	Alleged Contravention	More information	Was the contravention rectified?
PCBU Alleged Contravention 1	Not maintaining safe systems of work	Staff across the Division raised concerns regarding inadequate staffing including a complete absence of leave cover in some services. This is resulting in an incapability to apply for leave and feelings of guilt when eventually taking leave, knowing that colleagues would be required to increase workload to cover for such arrangements, planned or unplanned. It was reported to the EPH that there had been communications from the PCBU to services within the Division that they must find their own leave	No

		cover, with staff covering leave outside their primary service which is adding immense pressure and compromising patient safety, continuity of care and training/supervision of junior staff. The lack of leave cover does not only apply to short term/unplanned absences, but has extended to long term planned absences with examples of 7/8 months without replacement staff. Staff further reported having to return early from leave to cover other staff leave arrangements.	
PCBU Alleged Contravention 2	Not maintaining a safe work environment	It was reported to the EPH that some of the services within the Division described having an unpredictable workload with no cap on patients and with caseloads ranging in excess of 100. This is causing immense pressure within the teams and resulting in a lack of retention of existing staff combined with issues in attracting new staff. Multiple staff expressed a feeling that working in the Division was not sustainable long term, with impacts to their mental and physical health as a result of the situation. It was reported that other LHNs had far lower caseloads and that there was currently no benchmarking or system in place to manage workloads and ensure safe caseloads. It is expected that the services will continue to experience growth, including as a result of additional inpatient beds allocated to the PCBU.	No
PCBU Alleged Contravention 3	Not maintaining a safe work environment	It was reported to the EPH that the inadequate staffing levels and significant workload are cumulatively resulting in compromised supervision and training for junior staff, compromised non-clinical time for senior staff and reduced ability to engage in professional development activities for all staff. Staff across the services expressed deep concern regarding the sustainability of the current practices as well as concern for attracting and retaining senior staff. Many staff have already left while others have reduced their FTE. Staff	No

		expressed feeling burnout and dreading work while also compromising their own health needs. Some reported delaying medical treatment to avoid taking leave while others expressed loss of sleep, low staff morale and experiencing anxiety. Many explained that even when unwell they avoid taking personal leave because of the workload demands and lack of coverage, feeling responsible for their colleagues who would have to absorb the load.	
PCBU Alleged Contravention 4	Inadequate facilities or access to facilities	It was reported to the EPH that the office accommodation is not adequate for many of the services within the Division. Further staff detailed needing additional supports around administration staff and care coordinators.	No
PCBU Alleged Contravention 5	Not maintaining safe systems of work	It was reported to the EPH that staff have raised their concerns to the PCBU on numerous occasions and directed to manage their own leave despite the inadequate staffing levels. It was expressed that the PCBU demonstrated an unwillingness to hire locums to temporarily assist with staffing and caseloads and it is unclear what plans, if any, there are to address needs of the services and anticipated growth in demand into the future .	No