

Ms Tanya Bosch
Director, Budget Estimates
Room 812
Parliament of New South Wales
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Ms Bosch

I refer to your letter of 21 December 2004 regarding questions taken on notice during the Budget Estimates Hearing on 20 December 2004.

The Hon Dr Arthur Chesterfield-Evans MLC asked a question, which was taken on notice, concerning clinical psychologists, which appeared on page 9 of the Hansard transcript provided. In response to Dr Chesterfield-Evans' question, I can advise that:

According to the Health and Community Employees Psychologists State Award a clinical psychologist is defined as a psychologist with a post-graduate degree at the masters level or higher in a specialist clinical area in psychology of not less than 2 years duration or equivalent.

Based on the most recently available data (August 2003), of the total psychologists employed in NSW Health Services, approximately 47% were full time equivalent clinical psychologists. This data excludes some Third Schedule Hospitals (affiliated organisations), employees on unpaid leave, and agency staff not on the payroll.

NSW Health acknowledges that clinical psychology contributes important knowledge and skills that complement mental health service development and is examining approaches to increasing the number of psychologists working in mental health.

More specifically, a discussion paper has been prepared by the Australian Psychological Society under the auspice of NSW Health, Centre for Mental Health. This paper outlines the current status and future directions of clinical psychology services, provides directions for psychology workforce planning, and strategies for better managing the increasing burden of mental illness.

Yours sincerely

Robyn Kruk
Director General