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# Appendix three – About the audit

## Audit objective

This audit assessed the effectiveness of NSW Health in managing the health, safety and wellbeing of nurses and junior doctors in high demand hospital environments.

## Audit criteria

We addressed the audit objective by assessing whether NSW Health has:

1. established effective systems, forums and workplace cultures to
  - support the reporting of work health and safety concerns, and
  - generate data and information that reflects the full nature and extent of risk
2. taken all reasonable steps to create safe workplaces and respond to health and safety risks as they emerged
3. taken effective action to continuously improve work health, safety and staff wellbeing in hospital environments.

## Audit scope and focus

In assessing the criteria, we examined NSW Health's actions to support the health, safety and wellbeing of nurses and junior doctors during business as usual periods and during the period of preparations and responses to the COVID-19 health emergency - from January to August 2020.

## Audit exclusions

The audit did not examine:

- SafeWork NSW
- State Insurance Regulatory Authority and iCare (the NSW Government agency managing insurance for injured health staff)
- The St Vincent's Health Network
- Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network
- Public Mental Health Hospitals and Private Hospitals
- Non-clinical health staff
- Fully qualified doctors and medical specialists.

## Audit approach

Our procedures included:

1. Interviewing:
  - executives from the Ministry of Health, the Clinical Excellence Commission, the SHEOC, HETI, HealthShare NSW
  - executive teams from all Local Health Districts and the Sydney Children's Hospital Specialty Health Network
  - nurses and junior doctors from a selected range of Local Health District hospitals and from the Sydney Children's Hospital Specialty Health Network
  - PPE stock managers in all Local Health Districts

2. Examining:
  - a) a range of NSW Health's work, health and safety documents - including policies, protocols and procedures
  - b) NSW Health web-based materials
  - c) regulations and laws governing the health and safety of nurses and junior doctors
  - d) COVID-19 circulars and email communication with the workforce
  
3. Analysing data:
  - a) health and safety data from NSW Health's Incident Information Management System
  - b) staff compensation data for injuries sustained in hospital workplaces
  - c) Root Cause Analysis data about the factors leading up to clinical incidents in hospitals.

The audit approach was complemented by quality assurance processes within the Audit Office to ensure compliance with professional standards.

## **Audit methodology**

Our performance audit methodology is designed to satisfy Australian Audit Standard ASAE 3500 Performance Engagements and other professional standards. The standards require the audit team to comply with relevant ethical requirements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance and draw a conclusion on the audit objective. Our processes have also been designed to comply with requirements specified in the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983* and the *Local Government Act 1993*.

## **Acknowledgements**

We gratefully acknowledge the co-operation and assistance provided by the Ministry of Health and its Pillar Agencies, all Local Health Districts and the Sydney Children's Hospital Specialty Health Network and SHEOC executives. We gratefully acknowledge the co-operation and assistance of the nurses and junior doctors who participated in our audit interviews

## **Audit cost**

The estimated cost of this audit including overheads is \$557,300.