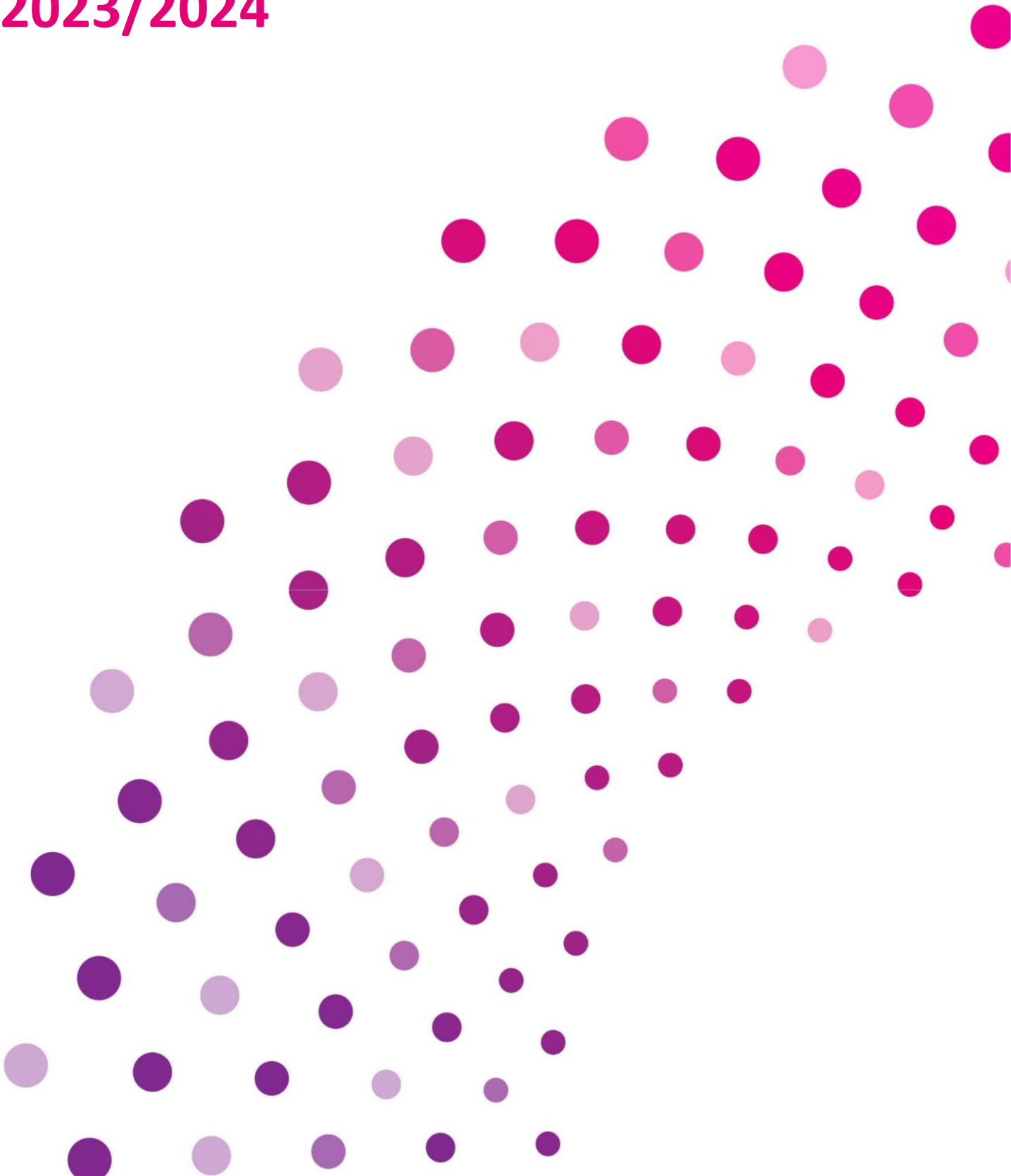




the women's  
the royal women's hospital

# The Women's Modern Slavery Statement 2023/2024



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## Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

The Royal Women's Hospital acknowledges and pays respect to the peoples of the Kulin Nations, the traditional owners of the country on which our sites at Parkville and Sandringham stand and we pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

The Women's is committed to improving health equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, children and families and we recognise the fundamental significance of cultural traditions, beliefs and connection to country for the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We acknowledge the importance of kinship and family structures as a cohesive force that binds Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and we recognise their cultures, community connection, and self-determination as critical protective factors for wellbeing.

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## Introduction

This Modern Slavery Statement is made pursuant to the *Commonwealth Modern Slavery Act 2018* (the Act) by the Royal Women's Hospital and relates to the financial year 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024.

In making this statement, the Royal Women's Hospital (the Women's) recognises that modern slavery practices are major violations of human rights and serious crimes, where coercion, threats, or deception are used to exploit victims and undermine or deprive them of their freedom and must be stamped out in all its various forms. The Women's commits to its ongoing responsibility to use its best endeavours to identify and take action against modern slavery risks to maintain a responsible and transparent supply chain.

## About the Women's

Established over 165 years ago, the Women's is Australia's first and most respected specialist hospital dedicated to improving and advocating for the health and wellbeing of women and newborns.

The Women's cares for women through all stages of life, with services ranging from maternity, gynaecology, women's cancer services, and women's mental health, as well as specialist care of newborns.

As a tertiary-level hospital and one of Australia's major teaching hospitals, the Women's is committed to excellence and innovation to improve the health and wellbeing of women and newborns. The hospital's work goes beyond acute care with the Women's playing a unique role in Victoria's healthcare system advancing research and practice and providing state-wide leadership and advocacy.

The Women's is at the forefront of advancing women's health and wellbeing and the care of newborns. It has academic affiliations with several universities and tertiary educational institutions, notably the University of Melbourne and La Trobe University, and is internationally recognised for research in the areas of neonatal care, pregnancy and maternity care, gynaecological disorders and infertility. Each year, we provide in excess of 250,000 episodes of care for women from 189 countries, who speak 90 different languages, and follow 69 separate religious faiths.

The Women's clinical services are grouped broadly into five streams of care:

- **Maternity** including pregnancy, birthing and postnatal care and specialist maternity services for high-risk women;
- **Cancer and pre-cancer** including breast, cervical dysplasia and gynae-oncology services in partnership with the Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre;
- **Gynaecology** including specialist gynaecology, reproductive services, contraception and abortion
- **Neonatal** including newborn intensive and special care nurseries; and
- **Social model of health services** including clinical, psychosocial and supportive care, Aboriginal health, sexual assault and domestic violence support, alcohol and drug dependence, and care for women from diverse and disadvantaged groups.

These streams are supported by perioperative services, the Pauline Gandel Women's Imaging Centre, allied health and Women's Emergency Care.

## Reporting Criterion 1 and 2:

### Structure, operations, and supply chains

The Royal Women's Hospital (ABN: 62 787 822 077) is a health service established under section 181 of the *Health Services Act 1988 (Vic)* and is located at 20 Flemington Road, Parkville, Victoria, Australia.

To provide high quality care and exceptional patient experience, the Women's procures its goods and services directly from suppliers or through collective purchasing agreements established by Health Share Victoria (HSV).

HSV is a state-wide procurement organisation that partners with Victorian public health services to procure best-value goods and services. HSV works in partnership with public health services to understand their requirements, facilitate large-scale collective tenders, and manage common-use contracts on behalf of the State. The Women's and other public health services in Victoria are heavily dependent on the processes and policies HSV has established to identify and manage modern slavery risks in its supply chains. See the [Health Share Victoria website](#) for further information on its role in identifying and managing modern slavery risks across its collective agreements.

As part of the supply chain agreement with HSV, the Women's purchases the majority of the goods and services that it needs from suppliers who are party to HSV collective agreements. As such, it is recognised and accepted that HSV has a significant role in the Women's supply chain.

Throughout 2023/2024, approximately 80% of the Women's non-salary expenditure on consumables was procured through HSV collective agreements. In recognising the significant role that HSV has in the Women's supply chain, and the benefit of its actions for the broader sector, HSV has continued its commitment to the Women's to assist it in addressing supply chain modern slavery risk, by:

- Assisting the Women's to meet its reporting requirement under the Act;
- Implementing and enforcing effective systems and controls to reduce the risk of modern slavery;
- Ensuring there is transparency in its operations and approach to addressing modern slavery risk;
- Fostering open and transparent supplier relationships which encourage modern slavery reporting and meaningful change through remediation;
- Providing the tools for the Women's to assess modern slavery risk within those organisations outside of the HSV collective contracts; and
- Applying a continuous improvement approach to how it supports health services to report on the risk of modern slavery practices within their operations and supply chains.

The Women's continues to order through the HSV centralised ordering system for the delivery of personal protective equipment via the state supply chain, and is reliant on HSV and Monash Health as the operator of the state supply service to ensure that modern slavery risk is addressed through its supply chain practices.

The Women's does undertake some direct procurement activity, with the major categories of goods and services procured including:

- Outsourced non-clinical support services (patient meals, linen);
- Telecommunications;
- Information technology hardware, software and services;
- Professional services;
- Furniture, fittings and equipment;
- Facilities maintenance;
- Financial investments through the Victorian Funds Management Corp. (VFMC); and

- Specialised clinical products.

The Women's upholds the Australian Government's position on modern slavery, in that there is no place for modern slavery in the Australian community or in the global supply chains of Australian goods and services.

### Reporting Criterion 3:

## Risks of modern slavery practices in the operations and supply chains of the Women's

The Women's uses a range of goods and services to ensure it delivers high quality care to women and newborns. Unfortunately, Australia is reliant on imports from global supply chains for many essential products, and there is evidence that indicates the occurrences of modern slavery practices in the sourcing of raw materials used in the production of health care goods, including gloves, surgical instruments, patient clothing, uniforms and footwear, sheets, towels and other textiles, and electronic health care equipment.

It is understood that the sourcing of raw materials and the production of these health care goods often involves hazardous working conditions, labour exploitation, child labour and other abuses, resulting in a high-risk that Australian health services are indirectly exposed to modern slavery practices.

However, to the best of our knowledge and abilities, the Women's has not directly caused or contributed to modern slavery practices, but acknowledges there is a risk that modern slavery practices exist in supply chains from offshore and high-risk geographies.

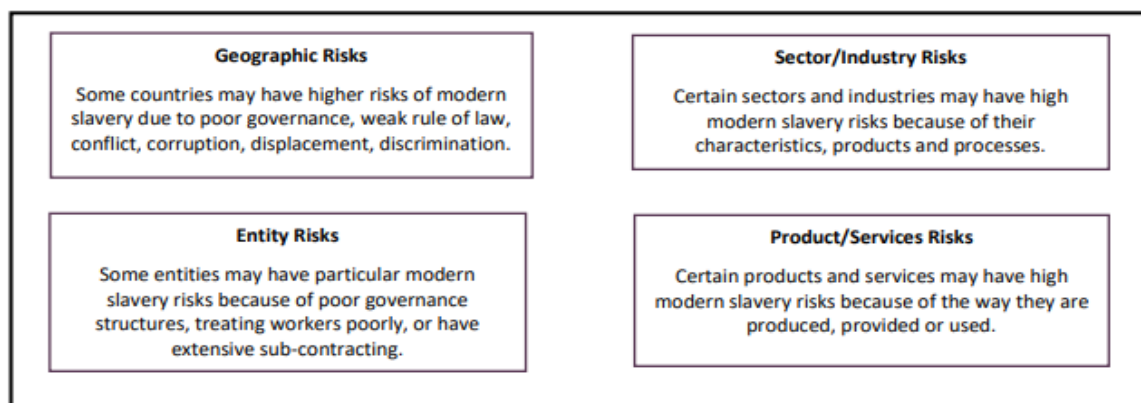
It's with this lens that the Women's has focused its 2023/2024 efforts, undertaking an assessment of procurement activity with those organisations that the Women's directly procures from. While greater detail of this is outlined in later sections of this statement, (i.e. suppliers from who the Women's procures from directly), the outcome of this assessment is that there is a low to very low risk of modern slavery within those organisations assessed.

The Women's holds a number of investments with the VFMC. The VFMC has a global investment portfolio spanning most major industries, countries and sectors such as energy, food and beverage, and materials. The VFMC is committed to responsible labour practices and is against all forms of slavery. In this regard the VFMC has a number of key focus areas that it applies to assist in addressing modern slavery risk.

### Assessment methodology

In assessing suppliers, a modern slavery risk assessment tool comprising of macro and micro assessment components was utilised. The micro assessment identified modern slavery risks across four categories.

**Figure 1. Modern Slavery Micro Assessment Tool**

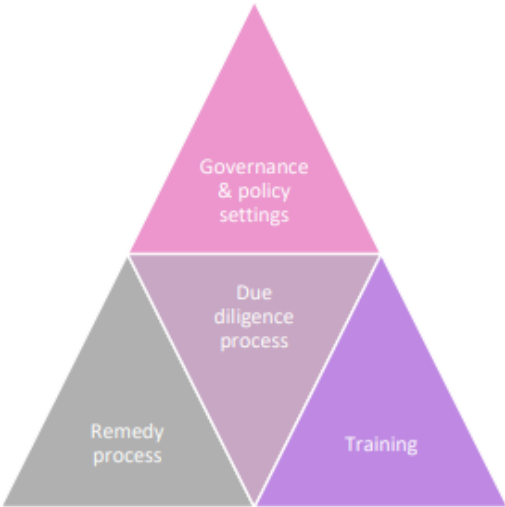


The assessment involved consideration of whether there is a high prevalence of modern slavery in a particular sector or industry, or associated with particular goods or services, or in the geographic location that the product or service is sourced or produced from. The micro assessment also considered whether the nature of the supply chain model carried a greater risk of modern slavery. This type of assessment provided a general understanding of the scope of modern slavery risks that suppliers may carry.

The macro assessment facilitated a detailed analysis by identifying and assessing possible modern slavery risk and in determining what risk mitigation strategies suppliers already had in place and what risks would need to be managed.

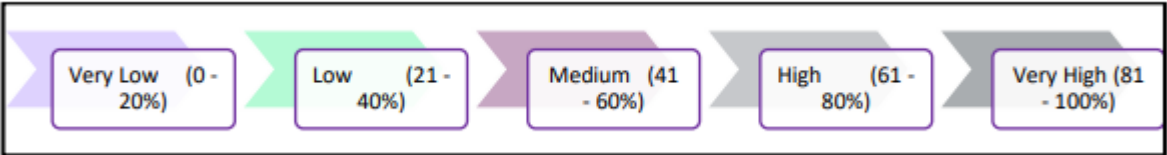
Macro assessment involved risk identification across four categories: policy, due diligence, remedy and training.

**Figure 2. Modern Slavery Macro Assessment Tool**



Both the macro and micro components included assigned weighting, rating, and risk scales, designed to allocate a modern slavery risk rating to suppliers. Suppliers were allocated one of the following risk ratings: very low, low, medium, high, or very high.

**Figure 3. Risk Ratings**



For those suppliers with HSV agreements, the tool was operationalised in the form of a Modern Slavery Supplier Questionnaire on the Informed 365 platform, being HSV’s supply chain management platform.

## Modern slavery supplier risk assessment

### HSV Collective Agreements

The Women's procures approximately 80% of goods and services (i.e. non-salary expenditure) through HSV collective agreements. Given this quantum, in 2023/2024 the Women's collaborated with HSV, placing additional effort within this supplier cohort to undertake supplier risk assessments.

In total, supplier risk assessments for 140 suppliers were undertaken in 2023/2024. Of the 140 suppliers invited to participate in supplier risk assessments: 106 responded (75%); 6 declined (4%); and 28 did not respond (20%).

Following a critical review of all 106 responses, which included application of macro and micro assessments, HSV and the Women's determined the following risk ratings for 2023/2024.

**Figure 4. 2023/2024 Supplier Risk Assessment Responses**

Risk Category	No. Suppliers
Very High	0
High	9
Medium	60
Low	36
Very Low	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>106</b>

There was an increase in the total number of responses to the supplier risk assessments (FY22/23 – 93 Responses) and an increase in the number of responses in the high risk category (FY22/23 - 5 Suppliers). The Women's commits to further understand and mitigate modern slavery risk through collaboration with HSV and engagement with high risk suppliers in its direct supply chain

Of significance, the macro assessment of responses received in 2023/2024 indicated that:

- 94 respondents have a Modern Slavery Statement / Policy;
- 86 suppliers communicated their policy to their own suppliers;
- 86 suppliers monitor compliance with a policy / reflecting improved governance by suppliers
- 98 respondents identify that their organisation has a role / responsibility to identify and oversee modern slavery risks in relation to the goods and / or services they provide; and
- 94 respondents train their staff to identify, assess and respond to modern slavery risk.

The Women's and HSV are working with all suppliers who have not responded, or declined to respond, to assess what this means for the future supply of goods and services, tender responses and contractual obligations.

### Suppliers from whom the Women's procures directly

Modern slavery risk assessments were completed in 2022/2023 and indicated "low and very low" risk with the current contracted suppliers. Due to the multi-year nature of the majority of the Women's procurement activities, additional risk assessments on existing suppliers were not repeated.

During 2023/2024 the focus was ensuring that new suppliers are compliant with the Act.

#### Reporting criterion 4:

### **Actions taken to assess and address these risks, including due diligence, remediation processes and contracts**

HSV provides a modern slavery community of learning sessions to health services on a monthly basis. As part of our commitment to continually improve, these sessions are attended by procurement staff from the Women's, ensuring that the hospital is in step with current guidelines and best procurement practices.

The Women's continues to incorporate a modern slavery clause into all new non-HSV supplier contracts, committing suppliers to taking all reasonable steps to identify, assess and address risks of modern slavery practices in their operations and supply chains, used in the provision of goods and services.

Modern slavery clauses have been incorporated into all request for tender documents as part of mandatory procurement requirements at the Women's.

Suppliers wishing to conduct business with the Women's, need to commit to the Supplier Code of Conduct; under this requirement suppliers are expected to proactively identify, address and where required by legislation, report on risks of modern slavery practices in their business operations and supply chains.

#### **Actions to be taken by the Women's in 2024/2025**

1. As part of continuous improvement processes, the Women's continues to take part in the modern slavery training provided by HSV, monthly;
2. The Women's will continue to provide guidance to all staff involved in tenders and contract negotiations in assessing modern slavery requirements;
3. Maintain all tender and contract documentation as per modern slavery legislation requirements;
4. Continue evaluating and undertake risk assessments of the Women's specific suppliers;
5. Implement a 3 year rolling review of Supplier's that The Woman's procures directly; and
6. In consultation with HSV, the Women's plans to focus on the following improvement initiatives in order to further meet the requirements of The Act:
  - o Continue to be involved in the HSV modern slavery community of learning sessions;
  - o Expand our staff's knowledge base and awareness through continued learning and education programs; and
  - o Continue to make suppliers aware of the modern slavery requirements, even if they are not required to report on Modern Slavery.

#### **Training**

HSV continues to facilitate learning programs and training for key health service stakeholders on modern slavery practices and the requirements of the Act. These workshops, attended by the Women's procurement staff, provide guidance on how to address the seven mandatory reporting criteria under the *The Act*.

HSV has introduced supplier engagement information sessions, with strong attendances recorded in the sessions. The sessions aim to develop understanding of modern slavery risks and the different stages of the journey of increasing awareness of modern slavery in supply chains and operations.



### Reporting criterion 5:

## How the Women's assesses the effectiveness of actions taken to assess and address modern slavery risks

The Women's relies on HSV's advice and consultation to understand and fulfil its modern slavery obligations. Recognising their significant role in preventing modern slavery in health service supply chains and the benefits of its actions to the broader sector, HSV has developed a comprehensive program to support the sector, including:

- A modern slavery toolkit;
- A modern slavery statement guide;
- Supplier engagement template; and
- Modern slavery community of learning program.

With this, the Women's ensures that all key personnel have undertaken all necessary training, continue to be involved in the ongoing modern slavery health sector community, and immediately actions all HSV updates. In addition, the effectiveness of actions can also be measured through the ratings of the suppliers. This is a continuous process, with both the Women's and HSV working in conjunction to reduce exposure in the supply chain.

### Reporting Criterion 6:

## The Women's consultation process with related entities it owns or controls

The Women's does not own or have any controlling interest in any other entities.

### Reporting Criterion 7:

## Other relevant information

The Women's has no further information to report or disclose.

## Closing statement

The Women's is confident that the steps taken in the 2023/2024 year have continue to build a sound foundation for a robust modern slavery framework. The Women's recognises there is more to do and is committed to continually improving its approach, collaborating with our stakeholders to identify and eradicate modern slavery in our supply chains.

This Statement was approved by the 14<sup>th</sup> December 2024 Board Meeting of the Royal Women's Hospital.



**Ms Cath Bowtell**  
**Board Chair**  
**The Royal Women's Hospital**

