

Modern Slavery Statement 2025





Chairman Statement

At the Murdoch Children's Research Institute and Victorian Clinical Genetics Services ('VCGS') (collectively 'MCRI'), we recognise the importance of identifying and addressing Modern Slavery risks as we pursue our purpose to give all children the opportunity to live a healthy and fulfilled life.

Modern Slavery covers a range of exploitative practices that impact upon people's freedoms including human trafficking, forced or compulsory labour including any form of child exploitation and abuse.

This statement outlines our approach to identifying and minimising risks of Modern Slavery in our operations now and in the future.

This statement upholds our commitment to combat Modern Slavery and protect the human rights and freedoms of any individuals, including of our personnel and those involved in MCRI's operations and supply chains.

Murdoch Children's Research Institute makes this statement in accordance with section 13 of the Modern Slavery Act 2018 (Cth) and following consultation with its subsidiary,

Victorian Clinical Genetics Services Limited. This statement was approved by our Board of Directors on 30 May 2025.

Signed by:

Patrick Houlihan
2025 Chairman and Non-Executive Board Director



Our Purpose

To give all children the opportunity to live a healthy and fulfilled life



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An overview of Modern Slavery

Modern Slavery is used to describe exploitative practices. It includes any exploitation of a worker, human trafficking, slavery, servitude, forced labour, debt bondage or deceptive recruiting for labour or services or similar types of conduct. It also includes forced marriage, and the worst forms of child labour as defined in Article 3 of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) convention.

Modern Slavery occurs when coercion, threats or deception are used to exploit individuals and undermine or deprive them of their freedom. Cases do not always involve physical violence. Perpetrators often use subtle threats and psychological pressure to control individuals.

According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) of the United Nations¹, the number of people in Modern Slavery has continued to rise with Global Estimates indicating that 50 million people worldwide are victims of Modern Slavery, including 28 million in forced labour and 22 million in forced marriages. Since 2016 the number of men, women, girls and boys in Modern Slavery has risen by nearly 10 million.

More than 12 million of the total number of people in Modern Slavery are children. Children also account for about 12 per cent of all those in forced labour. More than half of these children are in commercial sexual exploitation.

In addition, more than 160 million children are subject to child labour, accounting for almost one in ten children around the world. Nearly half of these children (79 million) are in hazardous work.

A deterioration of civil and political rights in the face of global crises, has increased the risk for women and children, who are already vulnerable to Modern Slavery.

Women and girls are disproportionately affected by forced labour. Nearly four out of every five of those trapped in forced commercial exploitation are girls or women. Women and girls also remain disproportionately at risk of forced marriage, accounting for more than two-thirds of all people forced to marry.

Nearly two-thirds of all forced labour cases are connected to global supply chains.



Source 1: International Labour Organisation (ILO) of the United Nations, Walk Free, and International Organization for Migration (IOM) 2023 available from: <https://www.ilo.org/>.



An introduction to MCRI and VCGS - Our structure

Murdoch Children's Research Institute ('MCRI') is a registered charity that marked its 38th year of operations in 2024. With 1715 paid employees (1387 MCRI paid staff and 328 VCGS paid staff) and 1599 unpaid staff (1544 MCRI unpaid staff and 55 VCGS unpaid staff) including honorary appointments who hold other employment roles while providing voluntary expertise and students.

We are Australia's largest child health research institute. We are dedicated to making discoveries to prevent and treat childhood conditions. Many of our researchers are also clinicians at The Royal Children's Hospital (RCH) and often hold joint appointments at the University of Melbourne.

MCRI specialises in discoveries transforming child health and our research improves the lives of millions of children each year. We also study the health of communities to understand what factors influence child health at the population level and research common infections and immune conditions both locally and globally. Our research encompasses five major themes: Stem Cell Medicine, Genomic Medicine, Population Health, Clinical Sciences, Infection, Immunity and Global Health.

MCRI's work goes beyond research to impact clinical practice and community health. We are one of the only research institutes in Australia to offer genetic testing to find answers for families of children with previously undiagnosed conditions, using the latest genetic sequencing technology.

Victorian Clinical Genetics Services Limited ('VCGS') is an Australian Not-For-Profit wholly owned subsidiary of MCRI. VCGS is a specialist prenatal, childhood and adult genetics service, one of the largest contributors driving genetic healthcare, research and policy in the country and the pioneering clinical genetic services arm of MCRI.

At our core, we aim to provide a human-centered genetic service that puts people at the heart of everything we do. We provide the following experts in clinical and laboratory genetics:

Clinical Geneticists

Medical specialists who focus on the diagnosis and management of genetic conditions. We play an important role in the provision of genetic testing, interpretation of test results and explanation of results to families and doctors..

Genetic Counsellors

Health professionals who have training in both clinical genetics and counselling, and who have expertise in interpreting and communicating complex genetic information.

Laboratory Scientists

Medical laboratory scientists who specialise in research and diagnostics for clinical biochemistry and clinical genetics. Our scientists have a long history of successfully translating research and development into clinical tests and services.



This is the Modern Slavery Statement ('Statement') for MCRI and VCGS for the financial year ended 31 December 2024 ('Statement Period') under the *Australian Modern Slavery Act 2018* (Cth) ('Act'). MCRI is the reporting entity under the Act. For this Statement, reference to MCRI or 'we' refers jointly to MCRI and VCGS unless otherwise stated.



Our operations

MCRI has five main themes that our research is grouped into: Genomic Medicine, Stem Cell Medicine, Infection, Immunity & Global Health, Clinical Sciences and Population Health. The Research Support and Operations team provide support to the research projects across MCRI and VCGS.

Our main operations are based in The Royal Children's Hospital (RCH) in Victoria, Australia. We also collaborate with organisations and conduct research activities around the world including in: Austria, Brazil, Denmark, Ethiopia, Fiji, France, India, Indonesia, Italy, Laos, Malawi, Mongolia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, South Africa, United Kingdom, United States of America, and Vietnam.



Clinical Sciences

Our researchers are working to improve the diagnosis and treatment practices for sick babies, children, and adolescents with acute and chronic illnesses.



Genomic Medicine

Our scientists study DNA to understand the genetic basis of diseases including ataxia, thalassemia, mitochondrial and chromosome disorders.



Stem Cell Medicine

Stem Cell Medicine researchers work with stem cells and cutting-edge technology to understand how disease alters healthy cells. They're developing new treatments for children with cancer, congenital diseases, and developmental disorders.

Infection, Immunity & Global Health

Allergies, infections, and immune conditions are under the microscope at MCRI with a major focus on developing new vaccines and testing these to ensure they are safe to give to children.

Population Health

Our diverse team of researchers study the health of communities and translate this knowledge into prevention, intervention, and treatment.

Research Support and Operations

Provides the support services to sustain our research.



Our Flagship activities



Allergy

Eradicate food allergy



High-risk infant

Improve long-term outcomes for high-risk infants



Mental Health

Prevent and treat mental illness through a whole-of-system approach



Rare Disease

Improve detection, diagnosis and treatment of rare diseases



Pre and early pregnancy screening

Reproductive screening using genetic testing prior to and during early pregnancy.



Neurodevelopment

Transform our treatment of autism, social impairment and intellectual disability



Kidney

Develop new therapies for kidney disease



Infection

Reduce misuse of antibiotics and minimise drug resistance and side effects



Adolescent Health

Improve the health of future generations



Newborn and metabolic screening

Identifies rare metabolic disorders.



Heart

User regenerative medicine to repair damaged heart tissue



Complex Disease

Use life-long data to predict and prevent complex disease



Cancer

Develop new models of care for paediatric cancer



Aboriginal Health

Work with Aboriginal communities to improve the lives of their children



Mitochondrial Disease

Early diagnosis of chronic diseases that often result in poor growth, developmental delay, and muscle weakness.





Modern Slavery risk assessment

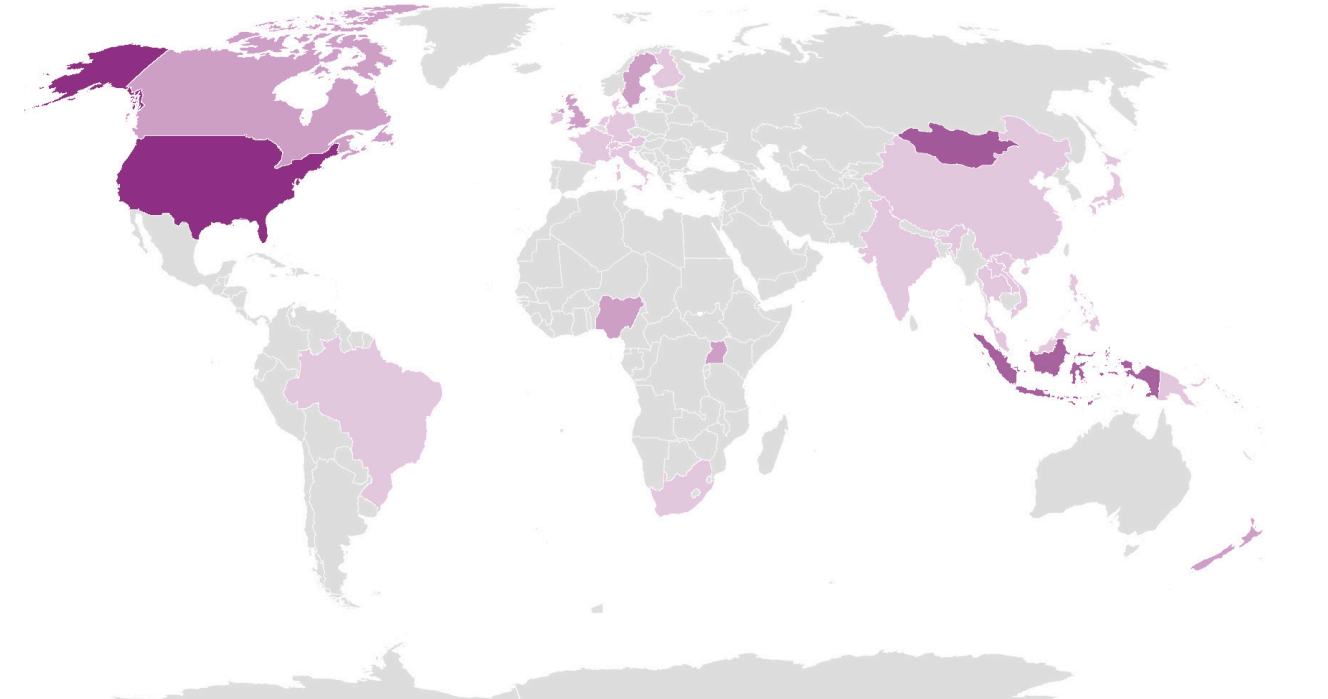
Our supply chain review

	Category	Examples
Service providers	Utilities and Waste Disposal	water, gas, electricity and waste disposal (including dangerous chemicals and waste)
	Administrative	temporary contract labour supply for administrative roles, legal, communications, hospital repairs and maintenance, advertising, consultants, continuity services, staff training, subscriptions and memberships
	Financial	general banking including credit cards, investment management, insurances, audit, staff default superannuation, external payroll bureau
	Couriers	domestic and specialised international couriers and dry shippers
	Travel and Accommodation	domestic and international transport, accommodation providers
Product suppliers	Laboratory and Pathology	chemicals, diagnostic kits and reagents, gases, glass/plastic ware, lab equipment
	IT, Telecommunications and Electronics	computer equipment, telephone and mobile phones, equipment with electronic components, software supply and maintenance
	Furniture and Non-Electronic Equipment	office equipment, furniture and fittings, office refurbishments
	Medical and Surgical	instruments, medical consumables, Personal Protective Equipment ('PPE')
	Office Supplies	printing, stationery, postage
	Catering and Food	food, beverage, crockery
Partners	Research Collaborators	universities, medical research institutes, hospitals, health care, government
	Global Health international services	Global Health and international field collaborators and suppliers
	Key Partner: RCH services	The Royal Children's Hospital (main landlord) providing purchasing, parking, childcare, pathology services
	Key Partner: RCH outsourced service provider	RCH's key service provider who provides key services including cleaning, maintenance, security, facility management



Our supply locations outside Australia

Percentage of Spend by Country Outside Australia



Country	Percent of spend %	Walk free score ¹	Country	Percent of spend %	Walk free score ¹
Argentina	2.83%	36	Mongolia	2.44%	50
Austria	0.08%	8	Netherlands	1.18%	6
Bangladesh	0.28%	58	New Zealand	3.79%	8
Canada	1.67%	11	Nigeria	0.44%	76
China	0.63%	46	Norway	0.00%	1
Denmark	0.20%	6	Papua New Guinea	0.17%	79
Fiji	3.70%	N/A	Philippines	0.06%	66
Finland	1.10%	5	Poland	0.02%	19
France	0.11%	13	Singapore	3.88%	24
French Polynesia	0.24%	N/A	Solomon Islands	13.86%	N/A
Germany	2.13%	11	South Africa	0.02%	52
Hong Kong	0.01%	28	South Korea	0.00%	29
India	0.00%	56	Spain	0.00%	10
Indonesia	6.52%	49	Sweden	1.48%	7
Ireland	0.05%	9	Switzerland	1.67%	14
Italy	0.41%	22	Thailand	0.09%	46
Japan	0.06%	11	Uganda	1.34%	62
Kiribati	0.12%	N/A	United Arab Emirates	0.01%	40
Laos	0.14%	52	United Kingdom	11.59%	14
Lithuania	0.24%	21	USA	37.15%	25
Malaysia	0.27%	37	Vietnam	0.73%	44

¹Global Slavery Index 2023 Dataset, Walk Free Foundation, available from: www.globalslaveryindex.org

Indicating the vulnerability of a country in relation to Governance, Nourishment, Inequality, Disenfranchised Groups and Effects of Conflict (scale from 1-100, low is desirable).



Modern Slavery risk assessment

We continued our risk assessment of suppliers during the Statement period. This was again supported by review of the following:

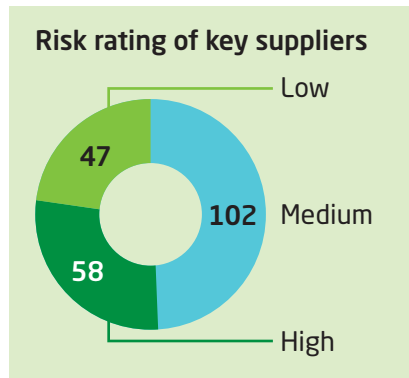
- Hiring practices and controls
- Types of goods and services
- Supplier frequency
- Supplier spend
- Supplier location

The risk of Modern Slavery associated with the types of goods and services supplied, geographical risks, sector and industry risks continues to be relatively low. However, we acknowledge that there are areas of our supply chain that may pose higher risks of Modern Slavery.

The following categories of our supply chain continue to pose higher risks of Modern Slavery when selecting suppliers for further assessment through the supplier questionnaire:

- Medical consumables
- PPE
- Shipping
- Electronics
- Cleaning services (engaged through The Royal Children's Hospital)
- Security services (engaged through The Royal Children's Hospital)

Based on our surveys to key suppliers and considering the high-risk products, we continued risk assessing and assigning a risk rating to these suppliers. This was conducted while also referencing the Walk Free Global Slavery Index, a comprehensive data set that provides estimates of Modern Slavery in 160 countries around the world. A risk score is assigned to each country based on



an analysis of data covering 23 risk variables across five major areas:

1. Governance issues
2. Lack of basic needs
3. Inequality
4. Disenfranchised groups
5. Effects of conflict.

From this, we identified that 27% of our suppliers during the statement period were rated as high risk, of which 41% have Modern Slavery statements. Approximately 15% of those identified as not having a Modern Slavery statement, were found to have a supplier code of conduct outlining a commitment to transparency in their supply chains, and/or a policy statement outlining their commitment to combatting Modern Slavery and child labour, and/or eliminating human trafficking and forced labour (including child labour). This amounts to a total of

56% of high risk suppliers who were identified as having a commitment to addressing Modern Slavery in their supply chains. This knowledge will enable further assessment of suppliers who do not have Modern Slavery statements to determine their suitability for future collaborations.

As outlined in our supply locations above, we again identified the following supply locations during the Statement period as posing higher risks of Modern Slavery:

- Nigeria
- Papua New Guinea
- Philippines
- Uganda

Our spend in these locations significantly decreased during the current reporting period and when combined, amount to approximately 1.5% of MCRI's overseas supply spend. Furthermore, our work in these destinations is restricted to working with collaborators in international studies based within certified laboratory universities..



Our actions and effectiveness

Our actions

MCRI has taken the following actions during the 2024 Statement period to identify and manage Modern Slavery risks in our supply chain:

Supply chain review

MCRI continued its review of supplier data in 2024. By considering supplier frequency and spend, we gained further insights into our supply chain (including the ease of changing suppliers and our ability to influence the supplier relationship) in the context of assessing and managing Modern Slavery risks.

The review continued to show a wide range of suppliers, some common to both MCRI and VCGS, but many unique to only one. These suppliers included large enterprises, government departments, hospitals and universities through to small and medium sized businesses, sole traders and consultants. During 2024 MCRI transacted regularly with approximately 300 key suppliers. Most suppliers continued to be in countries considered low risk for Modern Slavery.

Procurement review

The review of our key supplier list during the current statement period led to the identification and inclusion of suppliers that were not included previously. This allowed us to categorise the risk ratings for these additional suppliers and record these in our system. We were then able to undertake a process to confirm whether these suppliers have Modern Slavery statements of their own to support a reduction of their risk rating.

Policy development

Our policies support our vision and values and form part of our key compliance controls in our operations and supply chains. A policy working group, formed in 2023, was aimed at reviewing our policies and ensuring that we meet our legal and ethical obligations, and to fulfill the mission, goals and objectives of MCRI. In 2024 we continued this review and updated multiple existing policies and created some new ones which form part of our compliance controls. They include:

- Code of Conduct
- Child Safety Policy and Procedure in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
- Procurement Policy
- Supplier Code of Conduct
- Supplier Terms and Conditions
- Counter-Terrorism Procedure
- Local Jobs First Policy

Template clauses

Template clauses for supplier contracts addressing Modern Slavery remain in place. New supplier agreements include the template clauses and MCRI continued to conduct ongoing supplier contract reviews for existing suppliers in 2024.

Hiring practices

MCRI maintains a standardised hiring process and practices (including screening employees) for domestic and international research. Where

staff have joint appointments, we work with international collaborators such as hospitals, universities and international research bodies and these are skilled staff. Our experience in partner selection with reputable organisations that maintain robust hiring practices is built into our sourcing and helps manage Modern Slavery risks. We take all reasonable steps to ensure that local staff working on research projects and trials are paid and treated appropriately. We conduct due diligence on collaborators in low to middle-income countries that employ personnel engaged in projects we manage, including reviewing recruitment and human resources policies in high-risk settings. When assessing the suitability of a prospective collaborator, MCRI's Global Health team will complete the Collaboration Assessment template. Our Global Health research assists many people around the world with healthcare that reduces vulnerability.

Whistleblowing Program

MCRI's Whistleblowing Program enables reporting of Modern Slavery and is internationally available in multiple languages. Our partnership with an independent whistleblowing service strengthens compliance by our employees and external suppliers with our ethical requirements. The program includes a process for anonymous reporting of concerns and employee awareness measures.

Compliance Portal

To ensure that staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities in the different stages of our operations and supply chain, we have implemented an electronic compliance portal to monitor compliance of our core obligations. This portal includes a Modern Slavery module. This module in turn includes core obligations for ensuring compliance in our supply chains. These obligations are broken into recruitment and employment practices; risk assessment in our operations; procurement and supply chains; and Modern Slavery reporting.

Bribery and Corruption

MCRI has a zero tolerance towards bribery and corruption. We are committed to preventing bribery and corruption, both within the organisation and in our dealings with other organisations. Our Anti-Bribery & Corruption Policy in line with our reviewed Code of Conduct, sets out the key principles on which we manage our bribery and corruption risks, and strengthens our commitment to the highest standards of legal, moral and ethical behaviour. MCRI's partnership with Transparency International helps us to understand the global challenges and the impact of corruption in health care settings..

Due diligence checks

In high risk settings it is a contractual requirement for our collaborators to agree to carry out screening and due diligence checks on downstream suppliers and contractors that MCRI engage with. Suppliers and contractors are to be screened at least once per year, or more frequently, depending on the level of terrorism risk as per the Global Terrorism Index.





Actions taken in our Global Health projects

Most of the research and clinical trial activity undertaken by MCRI outside of Australia, primarily in Africa, Asia and the Pacific region, is run by research groups who work in MCRI's Global Health research initiative. As such, we recognise the importance of identifying and addressing Modern Slavery risks as we undertake these activities.

Since 2017 MCRI has been a full member¹ of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID). ACFID is the peak body for Australian non-government organisations involved in the areas of international development and humanitarian action.

ACFID members work to alleviate poverty, reduce inequality, support environmentally sustainable and inclusive development and on the front lines of humanitarian emergency and disaster relief. ACFID membership comprises over 250 organisations actively working in the international aid and development sector.

As a signatory to ACFID, our work is conducted with transparency, accountability and integrity in line with the guidelines and principles of the ACFID Code of Conduct. We are committed to meeting ACFID's compliance verifiers and good practice indicators, as we combat the risks of Modern Slavery and protect the human rights and freedoms of our staff, partners and individuals in our supply chains. This included completing the ACFID self-assessment in 2024. As an ACFID member, MCRI is required to maintain the highest standards in its overseas operations that specifically address risks in relation to Modern Slavery; protection of children, the vulnerable and marginalised; human rights; gender equality; disability inclusion; fraud and corruption control (including anti-terrorism).



MCRI is also a signatory to the UNCRC, which forms the basis of children's rights, and the foundation of child safety and child protection legislation around the world.

MCRI is an Australian Government of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) partner and applies the 9 Minimum Standards for Child Protection across all projects that engage with or have contact with children.

In 2024 MCRI introduced a real-time risk management screening service provider. This platform screens individuals and companies (collaborators, suppliers and contractors). It conducts ongoing daily monitoring checks of activities enabling real-time detection of any changes in activities alongside the initial due diligence checks. For international activities, screening is conducted by MCRI's Global Health team before the execution of a collaboration agreement.

To manage the risks in our global health partnerships, including risks of Modern Slavery, our global health team continued to conduct risk assessments for new overseas collaborators during the current reporting period.

Collaborator assessments for our global health work include child safety risks, Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment ('PSEAH') risk assessments. An assessment of child protection minimum standards has been introduced including child labour and sexual exploitation as part of a child protection risk assessment. We also consider the location of the overseas country, collaborators and the overseas project when conducting risk assessments for child safety.

Source 1: Australian Council for International Development, available: <https://acfid.asn.au/content/membership-types>



Our international trials and research

Our international medical research and clinical trials support the improvement of healthcare around the world, which strengthens communities against vulnerabilities that exacerbate slavery risks.

Some of our major strategic initiatives support and implement research addressing health issues affecting the world's poorest children. This includes observational healthcare studies; clinical trials; education and training and administering treatment and vaccines in association with local healthcare organisations. Examples of these international collaborations are:

International Trials

Trial name/description	Country (s)
The Polar Trial Positive End-Expiratory Pressure (PEEP) Levels During Resuscitation of Preterm Infants at Birth.	Netherlands, Italy, France, Austria, UK, USA, Poland, Brazil

International Studies

Study name/description	Country (s)
Mate-Asia A prospective observational study for improving diagnosis of pneumonia and determining the burden of vaccine-preventable pneumococcal empyema.	Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, Cambodia, Hong Kong, Bangladesh
Oxygen Access (including Real Moxy) Developing and testing better ways to get life-saving oxygen to patients when they need it. Our AutoOx trial for pre-term infants in Nigeria was completed in 2023, with the international study continuing.	Uganda, Nigeria, Laos, and Cambodia
Sentinel Study To obtain baseline international multi-centre multi-country retrospective observational data required to answer fundamental aspects of sepsis care for children and to plan future interventional studies..	Thailand, Vietnam, Philippines, Costa Rica, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, India
AQUA Study Study looking at the possible effects on child development of drinking low or moderate levels of alcohol in pregnancy.	Belgium



Effectiveness of our actions

It is important to MCRI that the actions we are taking to identify and mitigate risks of Modern Slavery are effective.

Ongoing reviews of our procurement and purchasing functions continue to give us greater visibility over our supply chain, including the ability to identify risks of Modern Slavery. The improved risk assessment of our supplier list in our internal system enhances our assurance of a robust process and enables tracking of these suppliers. From this we have been able to focus on those suppliers who are higher risk and do not have Modern Slavery statements of their own. This visibility allows us to track our assessment of suppliers on Modern Slavery and continuously improve our supply choices.

The supplier questionnaire responses continue to be a means to inform our decision making on suppliers and our assessment of risk. These continue to help us identify key suppliers for follow up discussions. The questionnaire response rate is being tracked as a key indicator of the effectiveness of our interactions.

All Whistleblower notifications, including those in relation to Modern Slavery, are tracked and the number of reports is used as a key indicator.

The implementation of the legislative compliance portal increased our understanding of Modern Slavery risks and obligations to help ensure

we have a comprehensive view of Modern Slavery. By having a portal to track that these are assigned ownership and actively being managed supports the effectiveness of our program.

The implementation of a real-time risk management screening service provider has enabled us to check individuals and businesses against global sanctions, financial regulatory, law enforcement and politically exposed persons lists, receiving immediate and up-to-date feedback on the potential exposure of individuals and companies in multiple regions worldwide.





Continuous improvement

We recognise the need for continuous improvement in managing Modern Slavery risks and the importance of reassessment as our institute grows and changes over time. In 2024, we continued our progress to combat the risks of Modern Slavery, as reflected in our actions.

Key Initiatives for 2025

- Continuing to screen individuals and companies with whom we collaborate via the newly introduced risk management screening service to identify individuals and companies who may pose unacceptable risks in our supply chains. This will enable us to assess our contractual obligations to determine the feasibility of continuing our supply contract.
- Ongoing reviews and updating of supplier contracts and collaboration agreements with the Modern Slavery clauses that were introduced prior to the previous Statement year.
- The criterion developed for risk assessing suppliers which has been built into our procurement software, enables ongoing risk assessments of suppliers.

MCRI remains committed to vigilance in our organisation to identify Modern Slavery risks and manage them effectively. Through our research and operations, we will continue to support vulnerable children and families in many parts of the world.





murdoch
children's
research
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