



Modern Slavery Act Statement 2023

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 for all children to have 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 26 / 5 / 2023.

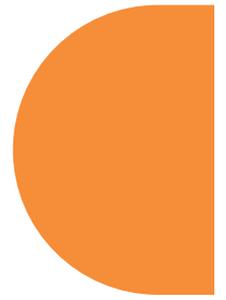
Signed by:



Patrick Houlihan
2023 Chairman and Non-Executive
Board Member

Our Purpose

**We want all
children to have
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 Organization (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 risen significantly with Global Estimates indicating that 49.6 million people worldwide are victims of modern slavery, including 27.6 million in forced labour and 22 million in forced marriage.

More than 12 million of the total in Modern Slavery are children. Children also account for about 12 per cent of all those in forced labour.

Women and girls comprise over half (54%) of those in Modern Slavery.

In addition, more than 150 million children are subject to child labour, accounting for almost one in ten children around the world.

Women and girls are disproportionately affected by forced labour, accounting for 99% of victims in the commercial sex industry, and 58% in other sectors.

Source 1: International Labour Organisation (ILO) of the United Nations, Walk Free, and International Organization for Migration (IOM) 2022 available from: <https://www.ilo.org/>



MCRI and VCGS - our structure

Murdoch Children's Research Institute ('MCRI') is a registered charity in its 37th year of operations and, with currently 1799 paid employees (1512 MCRI paid staff and 287 VCGS paid staff) and 1390 unpaid staff including honorary appointments and students, is 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 kids 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 biology, genomics, population health, clinical sciences, infection and immunity.

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

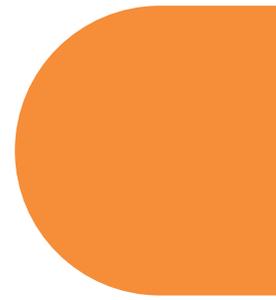
Medical specialists who focus on the diagnosis and management of genetic conditions. We play an important role in the provision of genetic testing, interpretation of test results and explanation of results to families and doctors.

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 2022 ('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: Genetics, Stem Cell Biology, Infection and Immunity, 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, The Gambia, India, Indonesia, Italy, Laos, Malawi, Mongolia, Mozambique, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Tanzania, United Kingdom, United States of America and Vietnam.

Personnel from these locations were repatriated to Australia during the statement period due to the COVID pandemic (except for in The Gambia and Denmark).



Clinical sciences

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



Genetics

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

Stem Cell Biology

Stem Cell biology 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.

Population health

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



Infection and immunity

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.

Research support and operations

Provides the support services to sustain our research.

Our 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.



COVID



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



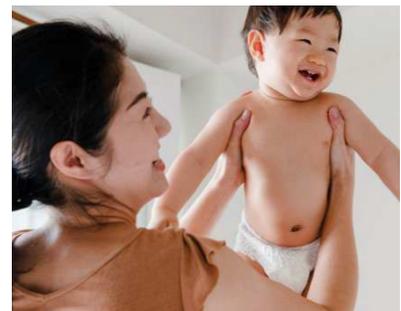
Aboriginal Health

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.



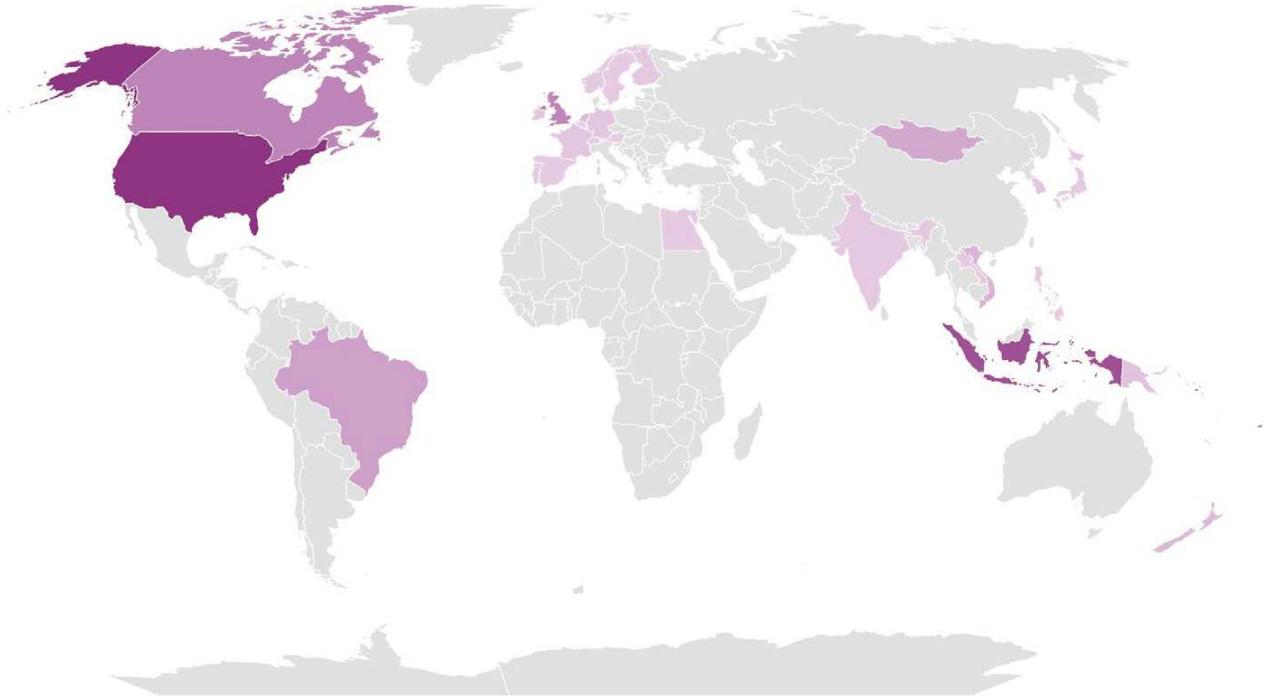
Our supply chain review



	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, and 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	Royal Children's Hospital (main landlord) providing purchasing, parking, child care, 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



Country	Percent of spend %	Walk free score ¹
Austria	0.03%	3.4
Belgium	0.01%	13
Brazil	5.52%	36
Canada	8.94%	10
Egypt	0.07%	60.4
Fiji	7.08%	N/A
Finland	0.21%	8
France	0.55%	15
Germany	0.67%	10
Hong Kong	0.06%	25
India	0.26%	55.5
Indonesia	15.74%	50
Ireland	0.60%	10
Israel	0.01%	36.4
Japan	0.09%	13.8
Laos	0.27%	58

Country	Percent of spend %	Walk free score ¹
Mongolia	4.48%	44
Netherlands	2.19%	6
New Zealand	2.13%	2
Norway	0.03%	4.5
Papua New Guinea	0.93%	62
Philippines	0.01%	60.2
Portugal	0.05%	8.5
Singapore	1.53%	13
Solomon Islands	16.87%	N/A
South Korea	0.37%	29.8
Spain	0.01%	13
Sweden	0.03%	4.3
Switzerland	0.32%	2
United Kingdom	8.85%	11
USA	19.42%	16
Vietnam	2.68%	41

¹Global Slavery Index 2018 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

The risk assessment conducted by our Modern Slavery working group for the Statement period was supported by review of the following (including VCGS data and consultation):

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

The MCRI Modern Slavery working group considered the risks of Modern Slavery associated with the types of goods and services supplied, geographic risks, and sector and industry risks.

In the first tier of our supply chain, MCRI considers that the risk of modern slavery is relatively low. However, we acknowledge that there are areas of our supply chain that may pose higher risks of modern slavery.

We have identified the following categories of our supply chain as posing 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)

We have also identified the following supply locations as posing higher risks of modern slavery:

- Egypt
- India
- Laos
- Papua New Guinea
- Philippines
- Indonesia

When combined, the supply locations in Egypt, India, Laos, Papua New Guinea, and Philippines amount to approximately 1.5% of MCRI’s overseas supply spend.

Our work in Indonesia (15% of our overseas spend) predominantly relates to one clinical trial and our review of this has confirmed that it is limited to a World Health Organisation certified laboratory, universities and an English translation service utilised in connection with conducting the trial.

The majority of our spend (92.5% of our total institute expenses) remains in Australia, which is a low risk country.





Our actions

MCRI has taken the following actions during the 2022 Statement period to identify and manage Modern Slavery risks in our supply chain:

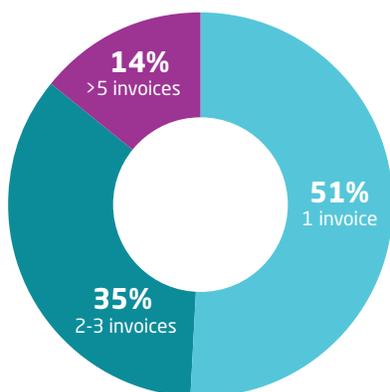
Supply chain review

MCRI continued its review of supplier data over the course of 2022. 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 or VCGS, but many unique to only one. These suppliers included large enterprises, government departments and universities through to small and medium sized businesses, sole traders and consultants. The frequency of engaging these suppliers was analysed. During 2022 (excluding activity through RCH), MCRI transacted with 257 suppliers. Of these, 35% had five or less invoices processed during the period, with those having only one invoice processed representing 51% of the total. Spend with suppliers was also analysed, with the top 17 suppliers accounting for over two thirds of combined expenditure, while 93% of suppliers represented 28% of expenditure and 0.4% only 1% of expenditure. The vast majority of suppliers continue to be located in countries considered low risk for Modern Slavery.

Analysis of frequency of purchase and spend by MCRI with each supplier provided insight into the risks of modern slavery in our supply chain. It also prompted us to consider the ease with which We can change suppliers if necessary and our ability to influence each supplier relationship.

Frequency of invoicing per supplier during 2022



Procurement review

A procurement review indicated an opportunity to improve our existing purchasing system. As a result, We engaged in an overhaul of our procurement function, which involved insourcing of the purchasing functions from RCH to MCRI and implementation of a new purchasing system in 2021.

Supplier questionnaire

Following our initial supply chain review through which We identified suppliers that were high risk or high spend, the Modern Slavery working group prepared a supplier questionnaire based on Modern Slavery risks and controls. The supplier questionnaire was sent to 175 high risk or high spend suppliers identified by the initial supply chain review.

The responses received have allowed us to understand the risks in our suppliers' operations and the controls they have put in place to address those risks. This program of work continued in 2022 to follow up with suppliers who have not yet submitted

questionnaires and explore responses in more detail where required. There was an uplift in the response rate from suppliers.

Policy development

A Modern Slavery policy has been developed and has been published in 2023.

The Whistleblower policy has been updated to better reflect issues around modern slavery concerns and has been published in 2023.

Template clauses for supplier contracts to address modern slavery have been introduced. New supplier agreements include the template clauses and MCRI will continue to conduct ongoing supplier contract reviews for existing suppliers in 2023.

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. We have developed an Anti-Bribery & Corruption Policy in line with our existing Code of Conduct, that sets out the key principles on which We manage our bribery and corruption risks, and to strengthen our commitment to the highest standards of legal, moral and ethical behaviour.

Actions taken in respect of 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.

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.

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 130 Australian organisations actively working in the international aid and development sector.

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).

To reduce the risks outlined above, including risks of modern slavery, our Global Health team have developed questionnaires and checklists that include questions related to Modern Slavery risks and controls. These assessments are undertaken for new overseas collaborators and our Global Health staff have begun completing them with representatives of existing overseas collaborators.

Collaborator assessments include child safety risks, Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment ('PSEAH') risk assessments.

We are assessed against and meet the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade ('DFAT') child protection minimum standards. These include a risk management system for project activities and guidance on child labour risk assessment and control. Assessment of collaborators has also commenced as part of an ongoing program. An assessment of child protection minimum standards has been introduced including child labour and sexual exploitation as part of a child protection risk assessment.

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.

Our Global Health research assists many people around the world with healthcare that reduces vulnerability.

MCRI has taken significant steps to develop a Whistleblowing Program to enable reporting of Modern Slavery and is internationally available in multiple languages. We have partnered with an independent Whistleblowing Service to develop this Program that will strengthen 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. It includes core training to educate staff on identification of signs and risks that could indicate Modern Slavery, due diligence for engaging suppliers, auditing existing suppliers and, what actions staff can take if they are concerned about Modern Slavery practices in our supply chains. Training will be introduced to all staff and external suppliers in 2023.

MCRI has also partnered with Transparency International to understand the global challenges and the impact of corruption in health care settings.

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



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.

- ✔ Our insourced purchasing functions have given us greater visibility over our supply chain, including ability to identify risks of Modern Slavery.
- ✔ The supplier questionnaire responses We received are being used to inform our decision making on suppliers, and our assessment of risk. They have helped us identify key suppliers for follow up discussions. The questionnaire response rate is being tracked as a key indicator.
- ✔ All Whistleblower notifications, including those in relation to Modern Slavery, are tracked and the number of reports is used as a key indicator.



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.

Some of the key initiatives planned include:

- Rolling out standard training to educate and support staff and suppliers to identify, report and manage Modern Slavery risks.
- Continuing to follow up suppliers who have not yet submitted their supplier questionnaires, a process that resulted in an increase in responses from suppliers in the previous Statement year.
- Ongoing reviews and updating of supplier contracts and collaboration agreements with the Modern Slavery clauses that have been introduced since the previous Statement year.
- A criterion has been developed for risk assessing suppliers and the capability has been built into our procurement software. This capability will enable ongoing risk assessments of suppliers.
- Developing a standardised preparation pack for research projects involving new countries without established operations and partnerships that have been assessed. The pack will be rolled out in 2023.

MCRI remains committed to vigilance in our institute 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
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