

# MODERN SLAVERY STATEMENT FINANCIAL YEAR 2023-24

## THE ROYAL VICTORIAN EYE AND EAR HOSPITAL

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## Introduction

This Modern Slavery Statement is made in accordance with the Commonwealth Modern Slavery Act 2018 (the Act) by The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital (Eye and Ear) and relates to the financial year 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024.

The Eye and Ear commenced its journey in 2020 with an initial Modern Slavery Statement and has been working closely with HealthShare Victoria (HSV) to ensure the principles of the Modern Slavery Act are understood and addressed in the hospital's supply chain processes and employer relations.

In accordance with the Modern Slavery Act, the Eye & Ear has submitted four previous statements for the financial years of 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22 with this statement being the Eye & Ear's fourth statement.

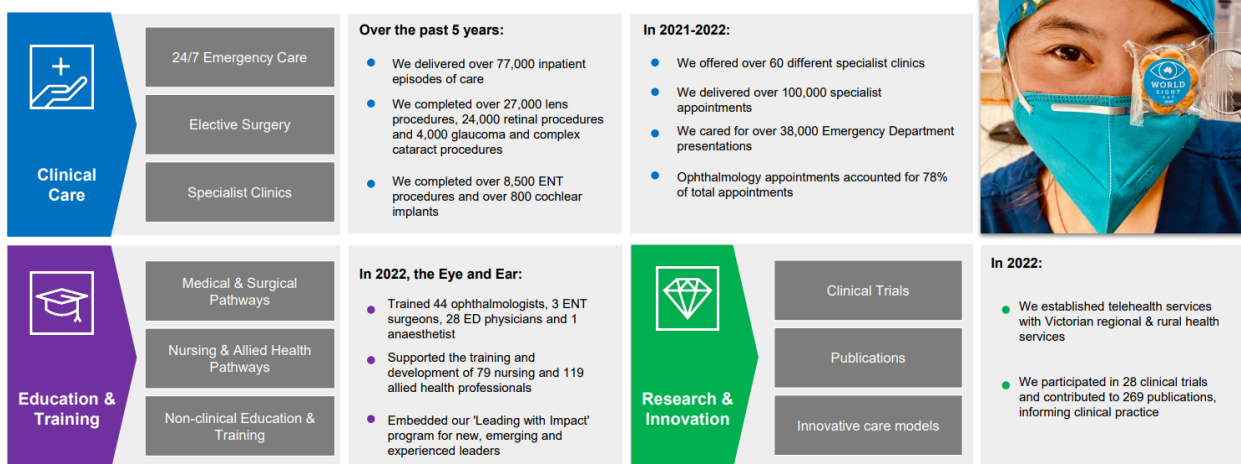
## Overview of the Eye and Ear

The Eye and Ear is a health service established under section 181 of the Health Services Act 1988 (Vic) and is a stand-alone entity that does not own or control any other entities.

The Eye and Ear is Australia's only specialist Eye and ENT hospital and has been providing care for over 160 years.

The hospital operates from a central hub in East Melbourne and is the largest provider of ophthalmology and ENT services in Victoria, including all the state's public cochlear implants.

The Eye and Ear provide a range of surgical, specialist clinic and emergency services, in 2023-2024 it provided the following:



### Emergency:

- 43,185 presentations
- 88% of emergency patients are seen-in-time
- 63% of patients with a length of stay in ED of less than 4 hours

### Surgical Services/ Inpatient admissions

- 15,965 patients admitted from elective surgery waiting list
- 100% of Category 1 elective surgery patients admitted within 30 days

- 82% of Category 1, 2 and 3 elective patients were admitted within clinically recommended time

#### Specialist Clinics/ Outpatient

- 140,514 appointments
- 81% of urgent referred patients attended their first appointment within 30 days
- 56% of routine referred patients attended their first appointment within 365 days

In 2023-24 the Eye and Ear employed 1,082 staff, for a total of 613 FTE, across Nursing, Medical, Allied Health and Administrative labour categories.

## Supply Chain

HealthShare Victoria (HSV) is a state-wide procurement organisation that partners with Victorian public health services to procure best-value goods and services. HSV continues to work 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 Eye and Ear purchase goods and services from suppliers who are party to HSV collective agreements.

In March 2022, HSV opened their new distribution centre in Derrimut, where they stock more than 2000 medical and healthcare-related goods. The Eye & Ear was part of the first tranche of Health Services to receive goods from this distribution centre. As such, it is recognised that HSV has a significant role in our health service supply chain.

In 2023-24, HSV entered into 451 new agreements across 34 procurement categories has \$1.4bln in value under contract.

HSV contracts cover a broad range of services, equipment and supplies across several categories including ventilators, beds, mattresses, patient trolleys, treatment chairs, hypodermic needles and syringes, gloves, pharmaceutical products, IV fluids, agency labour, catering supplies, laundry, linen services and non-emergency patient transport. A full list of HSV's sourcing categories can be found at <https://www.hpv.org.au/contracts-and-documents/contracts>.

In addition to the suppliers that we work with via an HSV agreement, in the last financial year (2022-2023), the Eye and Ear contracted with a further 120 suppliers with a total spend of \$47 million. These suppliers provide a broad range of surgical products, including capital equipment, stationery, ICT related services, support services such as cleaning, patient meals, portering, gardening, courier, biomedical engineering and general maintenance.

The focus during the last financial year under the Modern Slavery Act 2018 has been to continue to work with HSV to undertake supplier risk assessments within HSV Collective Purchasing Agreements, which are reported with findings in this statement.

In this reporting period, the Eye and Ear intends to continue to work collaboratively with HSV to identify mitigation efforts to combat modern slavery risks, and foster collaboration between the Hospital and suppliers to address these risks.

## Risks in our operations and supply chain

(Criterion 3)

There is growing evidence that demonstrates a high occurrence of modern slavery in the sourcing of raw materials and the production of healthcare goods, including gloves, surgical instruments, patient clothing, uniforms and footwear of healthcare professionals, sheets, towels, other textiles and electronic health care equipment. Daily, health services use these goods to ensure the overall health and well-being of Australians. Australia is reliant on these imports from global supply chains for the supply of these essential products to health services.

The sourcing of raw materials and the production of these healthcare goods often involves hazardous working conditions, labour exploitation, child labour and other abuses. There is a high risk that Australian businesses are exposed to modern slavery risks and that Australian goods and services are tainted by modern slavery. This risk may be heightened for large companies and other entities with extensive, complex and/or global supply chains.

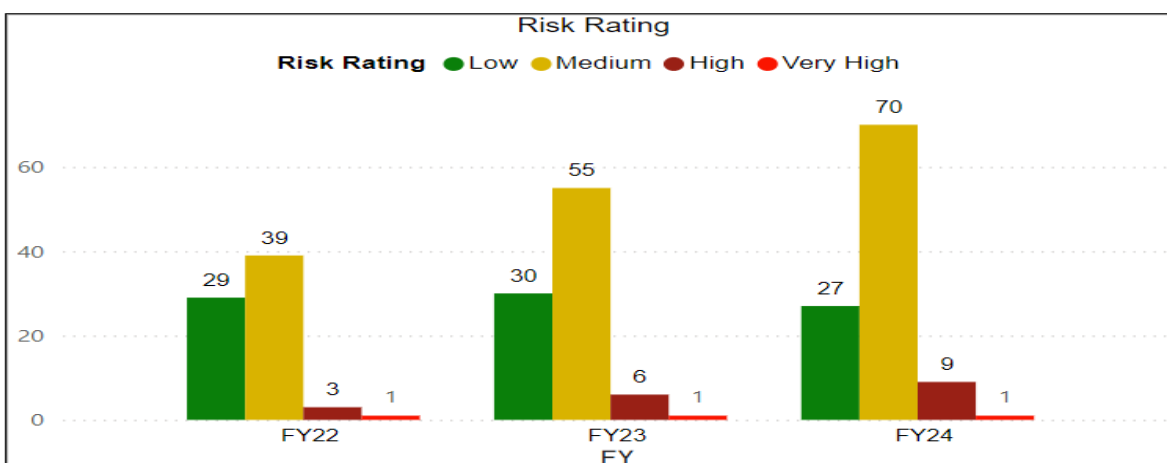
In supporting mandated health services to bring awareness to issues of modern slavery and meet their Reporting Requirement under the Act, HSV has undertaken its fourth annual supplier risk assessment of suppliers under HSV collective purchasing agreements. HSV identified 442 suppliers from Supplier Spend Data for the period FY24-25

The supplier risk assessment was undertaken by way of a questionnaire provided to all identified suppliers. The methodology applied this year is consistent with the previous periods. The questions aim to highlight shifts in the identification, assessment and addressing of modern slavery risk by suppliers. The questionnaire included 20 central questions.

HSV requested 143 suppliers of RVEEH to complete a risk assessment questionnaire, of which 107 responses were received equalling a response rate of 75%.

Comparison of the three years of data shows that there is an overall increase in the total number of suppliers with medium ratings. This is also reflected when the ratings are considered on a percentage basis, with most suppliers falling within the 'medium' risk rating.

### Supplier risk ratings



It is expected that this may be because suppliers are gaining a better understanding of modern slavery risk and this is being reflected in their ability to respond to certain questions in a positive way, indicating that some actions have been taken.

## Actions taken

(Criterion 4)

The following actions were undertaken by the Eye and Ear during the 2023-24 reporting period to address modern slavery risks in supply chains:

1. As part of a rolling three-year internal audit program, the hospital's policies and procedures were reviewed, which included the effectiveness of our documentation relating to the management of Modern Slavery risks. There were no adverse findings from the audit, however, the following two items were identified as areas for further improvement. The below two items remain an ongoing process improvement that the Eye and Ear are continuing in FY2024/25.
  - i. Conduct risk assessments for high-risk suppliers outside of the non-HSV Supplier data.
  - ii. Contract manager roles and responsibilities to include reviewing modern slavery risks during review periods of the contracts.

During FY2024/25 HSV will conduct a risk assessment of all non-HSV suppliers on behalf of hospitals. This is in addition to conducting the same assessment for HSV contracted suppliers. A planned report will detail the outcome of the assessment and will be issued to hospital's in conjunction with the assessment of their suppliers.

2. In December 2023, the Hospital submitted its third Modern Slavery Statement.
3. The focus of our fourth reporting period of 2023-24 was to continue to work collaboratively with HSV to identify mitigation efforts to combat modern slavery risks, and foster collaboration between the Eye and Ear and suppliers to seek to address these risks. The Eye & Ear joined and participated in the HSV Risk Mitigation Program. This group has been formed to allow HSV to seek the view of health services to support reporting for criteria 3 and 4. This is intended for health services to use a risk assessment questionnaire as a single-sector approach.
4. We are continuing to update our existing contracts to ensure they have appropriate modern slavery clauses. We will ensure all contract templates include an updated modern slavery clause and with each contract renewal, we will include this clause.
5. Contracts and Procurement staff continued to attend Community of Learning (COL) forums held and facilitated by HSV on modern slavery. The HSV forums continue to support Victorian health services in addressing modern slavery risks in their operations and supply chains. HSV provided these forums monthly to health services. Staff attended five community-of-learning sessions throughout the year. These sessions focussed on:
  - a. Last minute tips for reporting.
  - b. 2023 supplier risk assessment results.
  - c. Sector focus on the freight industry.

- d. KPI's for effectiveness; and,
  - e. What a good statement looks like.
6. The HSV modern slavery e-learning module was updated into the Eye and Ear E-Learning Hub, a new portal that went live in June 2024. Training will be provided to all relevant staff in 2024-2025, some of which will include purchasing and procurement and executive staff.
7. HSV issued letters to all very high, high and medium-risk suppliers, which provided them with links to resources and free online modern slavery risk training. HSV also provided supplier engagement sessions to both HSV and non-HSV suppliers over the course of last year to assist with increasing awareness of modern slavery risks and lifting the capabilities within suppliers on modern slavery risk management.

## **Assessing the effectiveness of actions taken**

(Criterion 5)

1. The Eye and Ear will continue to work in partnership with HSV to understand and comply with its modern slavery obligations, which should assist in reducing modern slavery risks within the Health Service's supply chain. Part of this approach is to continue to participate in the HSV Risk Mitigation Program, working with the consultation group to provide suppliers with a single-sector approach.
2. The health service will take actions to ensure all key personnel undertake the necessary training requirements by:
  - i. Last year the Eye and Ear provided a staff forum to communicate Modern Slavery obligations of health services to key staff and invited Healthshare Victoria as subject matter experts to expand the staff's knowledge base and awareness. This session was conducted in September 2023, with a total of 50 staff members attending both online and in person.
  - ii. Continue training of Contract Managers to monitor adherence to modern slavery risks during review periods of the contracts.
  - iii. Access to a new E-Learning Hub (from June 2024) will allow for better reporting and monitoring of the completion of modern slavery training modules for nominated staff.
3. The Eye and Ear will continue to promote the Modern Slavery e-learning module and key staff will continue to be involved in the Modern Slavery Community of Learning sessions provided by HSV.
4. The Eye and Ear will work with Healthshare Victoria to conduct a supplier risk assessment of all direct suppliers.

## **Closing statement - Approval and signature**

The 2023-24 Modern Slavery Statement has been prepared by The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital and outlines the steps taken as an organisation to identify,

manage and mitigate specific risks around modern slavery in our operations and supply chains.

The hospital is confident that the steps taken this year continue to build on the foundation for a robust modern slavery framework. The hospital recognises there is more to do and will continue to refine and further improve its approach and assessment to identify and respond to the risk of modern slavery practices within our organisation.

Having HealthShare Victoria continue to take a lead role in assessing and managing the sector's wider risks of Modern Slavery benefits the Victorian Public Health Service and provides a single supplier sector approach.

This statement has been prepared in accordance with the Australian Modern Slavery Act 2018 which came into effect on 1 January 2019.

The Board of The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital approved this statement on 12 December 2024.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brendon Gardner". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Brendon Gardner  
Chief Executive Officer