

Environmental, Social and Governance Report

2023-24



The Royal
Melbourne
Hospital

The Royal Melbourne Hospital Environmental, Social and Governance Report 2023-24

This report is part of our suite of reporting for the 2024 financial year (1 July 2023 – 30 June 2024).

More information about our performance is available in the Royal Melbourne Hospital 2023-24 annual report, which is published on our website thermh.org.au.

Other strategies and documents available on our website include our *Strategic Plan: Towards 2025*; *Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Action Plan 2021-26*; our inaugural *Reconciliation Action Plan*; and our *Disability Action Plan 2023 - 2026*.



The Royal Melbourne Hospital acknowledges the Kulin Nations as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which our services are located. We are committed to improving the health and wellbeing of First Nations peoples.

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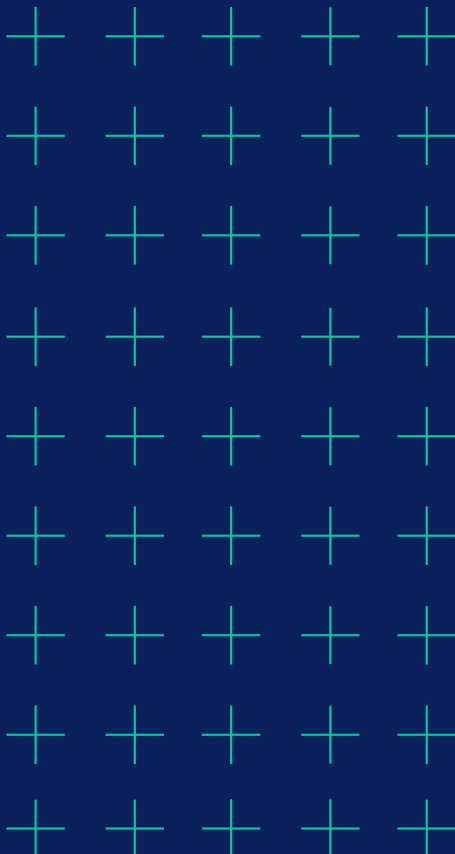
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Linda Bardo
Nicholls AO
Board Chair



Professor
Shelley Dolan
Chief Executive

Message from the Chair and Chief Executive

The Royal Melbourne Hospital (RMH) is driven by a deep commitment to advancing health for everyone, every day, and by our promise to be always there when it matters most.

As a large public health organisation, our purpose goes beyond care. We also embrace the important role we play in breaking down barriers to health, wellbeing, and access to compassionate treatment and support for all.

Our *Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Report* reflects the priorities that make the RMH a great place to work and a great place to receive care. It also identifies where we can grow. Each year, we set new goals to deepen our environmental, social, and governance efforts, continually working to make a positive impact on our staff, patients, and the wider community.

We are dedicated to being a health service that embraces all and are committed to creating a more inclusive future for everyone we serve. The RMH respectfully acknowledges the Wurundjeri peoples of the Kulin nations as the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we work, and we are committed to reconciliation. Through our first *Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)* and our current development of a second RAP, we are working to build a more culturally safe, inclusive, and responsive environment for First Nations peoples.

By ensuring the safety, wellbeing, and empowerment of our staff, we foster an inclusive and purposeful work environment, which translates directly into higher-quality care for our patients. The RMH *Workforce Equity Audit* was submitted to the Victorian Gender Equality Commission in the past financial year. The audit also reviewed the impact of the progress we've made in implementing our *Workforce Equity and Inclusion Action Plan 2021–2026*. This plan outlines clear, meaningful steps we are committed to taking to improve outcomes for people of all ages, backgrounds, and identities.

Our recent investments in thoughtfully designed spaces reflect our commitment to accessible mental

health support. In line with the Royal Commission into Mental Health and Wellbeing's recommendations, we opened a new six-bed Emergency Department Hub earlier this year. This dedicated space provides vital support and compassionate care to those dealing with mental health challenges, substance issues, or alcohol-related crises.

Now more than ever, sustainability is central to healthcare, and we are deeply committed to reducing our environmental impact. "Strive for Sustainability" is one of our core goals, underpinned by the RMH's *Environmental Sustainability Strategy*. We are constantly inspired by the dedication of our staff, who find creative ways to make a difference. Initiatives like the Parkville Precinct-wide sustainability competition, led by the RMH's Cardiothoracic Surgeon Dr Ben Dunne, showcase the passion of our staff as they find innovative ways to reduce waste and CO2 emissions while still delivering high-quality, person-centred care.

Looking to the future, we are investing in redevelopment projects that will support long-term sustainability. This year, we demolished our Parkville portables to make way for a new waste and logistics hub that will enhance recycling and food waste processing. Additional redevelopment projects planned for the coming years will further expand healthcare access and enhance services for our community, all with a steadfast commitment to sustainable practices.

These are just a few of the initiatives we are proud to have set in motion as we work to fulfil our purpose. While challenges remain, we are steadfast in our commitment to achieving our ESG goals and look forward to continuing this journey, together.

Striving for sustainability, every day.

The RMH began its journey in 1848 as Victoria's first public hospital. From those early days, we have moved forward with purpose, leading the way to improve the quality of life for everyone we serve.

Today, the RMH stands as one of the largest healthcare providers in the state, offering a wide range of services across Victoria—from our Parkville campus and Royal Park to our mental health services in Melbourne's inner north-west.




Our team of more than 11,000 staff reflects our values and commitment to all Victorians. Known for our dedication to inclusive and compassionate care, we are here when it matters most and will always advocate for the health and wellbeing of our diverse community. Proudly values-driven, the RMH actively addresses health inequities and works to remove barriers to safe, person-centred care.

We are committed to making business decisions that drive positive social and environmental change, along with stronger governance practices to benefit our people, community, and stakeholders. The RMH *Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Report* is one way we uphold this commitment, striving for sustainable social impact throughout the organisation.

Our *ESG Report* highlights the priorities that make the RMH a great place to work and receive care, while also identifying areas for improvement. Each year, we set new goals to enhance our environmental, social, and governance efforts, ensuring continuous progress. This report details our achievements and challenges, as well as our ongoing goals, as we work to create a positive impact on our staff, patients, and community.

- > **OUR PURPOSE**
Advancing health for everyone, every day
- > **OUR COMMUNITY PROMISE**
Always there when it matters most

OUR STRATEGIC GOALS

-  Be a great place to work and a great place to receive care
-  Grow our home-first approach
-  Realise the potential of the Melbourne Biomedical Precinct
-  Become a digital health service
-  Strive for sustainability
-  Build for the future

OUR VALUES

People First



Lead with Kindness







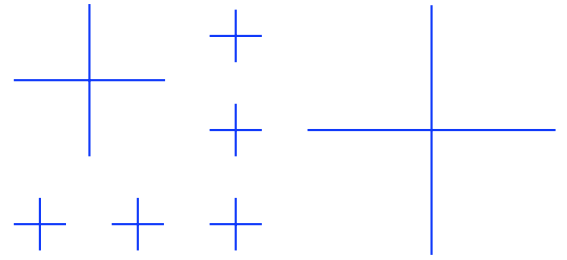
Excellence Together



Our environmental, social and governance statement

Our goals for the 2023-24 ESG Statement were to:

GOALS	 <p>Culturally safe and equitable health system</p> <p>ESG FOCUS SOCIAL</p> <p>Goal: Implement initiatives that prioritise the health and well-being of diverse populations, especially in regional and rural Victoria.</p>	 <p>Workforce wellbeing and diversity</p> <p>ESG FOCUS SOCIAL</p> <p>Goal: Enhance the health workforce's experience and diversity by implementing programs that support professional development, leadership, and flexibility, ensuring that our workforce is representative of our community.</p>	 <p>Climate action in healthcare</p> <p>ESG FOCUS GOVERNANCE AND ENVIRONMENTAL</p> <p>Goal: Develop and implement strategies that will contribute to committed emissions reductions targets, reduce wasteful practices, and enhance energy efficiency, aligning with global climate action goals and help the health system adapt to the impacts of climate change.</p>
KEY ACHIEVEMENTS	<p>New Director of Aboriginal Health</p> <p>Candice McKenzie welcomed as part of Victorian Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Partnership Agreement action</p> <p>7,500</p> <p>Patients and consumers</p> <p>Recorded gender identity on the RMH Patient Portal Health Hub, for appropriate support</p> <p>Victorian-first Mob Meal Plan</p> <p>To help First Nations feel more comfortable while receiving care</p> 	<p>Workforce Equity Audit submitted</p> <p>Comprehensive assessment of the diversity of our workforce</p> <p>Leadership development programs expanded</p> <p>Empowering employees to speak up</p> <p>21</p> <p>Safety Champions trained</p> <p>To show support and call out behaviours not aligned with our values</p> <p>Prevention and Management of Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment committee established</p> <p>Provides governance and oversight of sexual safety for staff, patients and visitors</p>	<p>\$66,000</p> <p>savings in energy costs</p> <p>From solar panels installed</p> <p>90,000</p> <p>Single-use tourniquets from landfill saved</p> <p>90%</p> <p>Reduction in paper letters by Dermatology Department</p> <p>200,000km</p> <p>Less travel led to 13 tonnes of CO2 saved by referring patients to virtual clinic</p> <p>3 tonnes</p> <p>of waste from landfill saved</p>



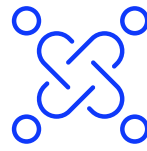
GOALS



Championing health literacy and preventative health

ESG FOCUS **SOCIAL**

Goal: Improve health literacy and promote preventative health initiatives in collaboration with primary health groups. Enhance access to high-quality health information, empowering individuals to make informed decisions about their well-being.



Community collaboration and integrated care

ESG FOCUS **SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE**

Goal: Strengthen collaboration with partner organisations, community health, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs), and other stakeholders to build an integrated health system, improving patient experiences and outcomes through connected digital health information and seamless care pathways.



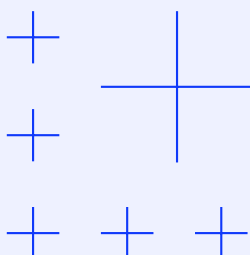
Mental health transformation

ESG FOCUS **GOVERNANCE**

Goal: Drive a comprehensive transformation in the mental health system by implementing the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, prioritising cultural change, lived-experience leadership, and investing in suicide prevention and mental health promotion.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Partnership with Google
Health service first, aimed at improving Australian health literacy



First Nations Social and Emotional Wellbeing (SEWB) team working with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs)
Connecting First Nations mental health consumers with community programs and support

Most Collaborative Health Service winner
Won for involvement in the Timely Emergency Care Collaborative (TECC)

Major partner of the Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing (VCCMHW)
Established in late 2023 to improve mental health supports

6 new mental health beds
In a brand-new Emergency Department Hub

Our goals for 2024-25



Governance

Excellence in clinical governance

GOAL:

- Strengthen all clinical governance systems, as per the Victorian Clinical Governance Framework, to ensure safe, high-quality care, with a specific focus on building and maintaining a strong safety culture, identifying, reporting, and learning from adverse events, and early, accurate recognition and management of clinical risk to and deterioration of all patients.
- Improve access to timely emergency care by implementing strategies that improve whole of system patient flow to reduce emergency department wait times and improve ambulance to health service handover times.
- Improve mental health and wellbeing outcomes by implementing Victoria's new and expanded Mental Health and Wellbeing system architecture and services.
- Maintain a commitment to delivering equitable access to planned surgery and drive reform in alignment with the Planned Surgery Reform Blueprint.



Moving from competition to collaboration

GOAL:

- Engage in integrated planning and service design approaches while assuring consistent and strong clinical governance with partners to connect the system to deliver seamless and sustainable care pathways and build sector collaboration.



Social

Improving access to healthcare and wellbeing

GOAL:

- Enhance the provision of appropriate and culturally safe services, programs, and clinical trials for and as determined by Aboriginal people, embedding the principles of self-determination.
- Expand the delivery of high-quality cultural safety training for all staff to align with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety framework.



A stronger workforce

GOAL:

- Improve employee experience across four initial focus areas to assure safe, high-quality care: leadership, health and safety, flexibility, and career development and agility.
- Explore new and contemporary models of care and practice, including future roles and capabilities.



Environmental

A sustainable future

GOAL:

- Utilise data analytics and performance metrics to identify areas of inefficiency and waste and make evidence-based decisions to improve financial sustainability and operational performance.
- Invest in sustainable design principles during stage one of the Parkville Redevelopment project.

These goals align with our key priorities for the 2024-25 financial year.

Environmental, social and governance working group

Our ESG Statement has been developed in consultation with key internal stakeholders across the organisation is overseen by the ESG Working Group.

The ESG Working Group included the following members:

Kylie Bishop | Board Member, the RMH

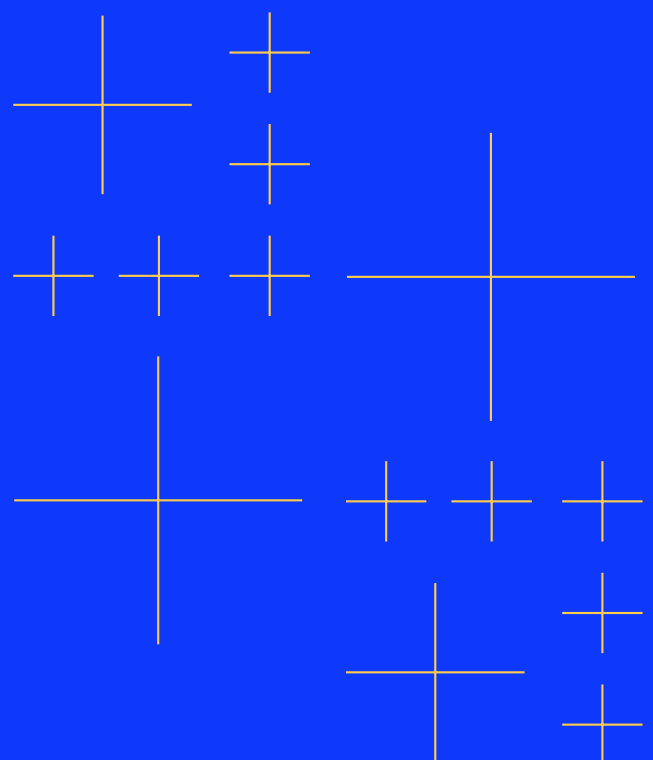
Pippa Connolly | Board Member and Chair of the Finance Subcommittee, the RMH

Professor Shelley Dolan | Chief Executive, the RMH

Emma Skinner | Board Member, the RMH

Paul Urquhart | Chief Finance Officer, the RMH

Hannah Robertson | Content and Channel Manager, the RMH



Our environmental responsibility

The RMH is deeply committed to sustainability, with “Strive for Sustainability” identified as one of our five key strategic goals.

This commitment is outlined in the RMH *Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2020–25*, which guides our efforts to balance environmental stewardship with safe, timely, and effective person-centred care.

Healthcare has a significant environmental impact, and the RMH is dedicated to implementing practical alternatives to reduce this footprint. Detailed information on our environmental initiatives, including greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and other environmental impacts, can be found in the RMH *Annual Report 2023–24*, available on our website thermh.org.au. The report complies with *Financial Reporting Direction 24 (FRD 24)*, as mandated by the Department of Treasury and Finance Victoria.

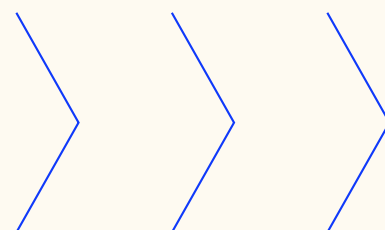
Our sustainability efforts have largely been driven by our people. The Dermatology Department has reduced paper usage significantly by using the RMH’s Health Hub patient portal app to send notifications, saving up to 200 letters per week. Furthermore, staff from the Women’s, Peter Mac, and RMH have collaborated to highlight their sustainable practices and innovative solutions, aiming to minimize our shared environmental impact.

Reduced COVID-19 case numbers, and a deeper understanding of infection control, have also enabled us to modify Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) protocols. These changes, combined with staff initiatives, led to a three per cent reduction in waste emissions between 2022–23 and 2023–24.

Electricity consumption rose by nine per cent in 2023–24 due to increased demand for services driven by an aging and growing population, a surge in surgeries following the easing of COVID-19 restrictions, and higher emergency department presentations. Major construction projects, including the relocation and commissioning of MRI machines to mitigate interference from the Metro Tunnel Rail Project, also contributed to this rise. These upgrades ensure accurate scans and timely access to diagnostic equipment, crucial for patient care.

Balancing growing demand with the need to reduce our environmental impact is an ongoing challenge. The RMH remains focused on finding opportunities to lower electricity use, waste, and GHG emissions wherever possible.

Sustainability is also central to our infrastructure projects. By integrating sustainable design principles, we aim to enhance patient outcomes, boost employee satisfaction and productivity, and reduce operating costs and emissions. During stage one of the Parkville Precinct Redevelopment, we plan to modernise power infrastructure by constructing a new central energy plant. This upgrade will significantly reduce reliance on fossil fuels, paving the way for a more sustainable future.



Greenhouse gas emissions

Indicator - GHG emissions

	2022-23	2023-24
Total Scope 1 GHG emissions (Tonnes CO2-e)⁴	23,059.78	26,674.59
Type of gas		
Carbon Dioxide	22,167.09	25,275.09
Methane	42.46	48.67
Nitrous Oxide	14.17	15.70
Fugitive emissions ⁴	836.069	1335.13
Activity source		
Stationary fuel	21,825.96	25,043.93
Vehicle fleet	397.75	295.53
Fugitive emissions ⁴	836.069	1335.13
Total Scope 2 GHG emissions (Tonnes CO2 e)	21,016.58	20,086.55
Co-generation electricity	-	
Electricity	21,016.58	20,086.55
Steam	-	
Total Scope 3 GHG emissions from commercial air travel and waste disposal (Tonnes CO2-e)	2,593.45	2,749.55
Commercial air travel	316.66	525.19
Waste emissions	2,276.79	2,224.36
Total GHG emissions (Tonnes CO2-e)	46,669.81	49,510.69

4 Fugitive emissions include medical gases and for the first time the RMH is reporting on emissions from air conditioning and electrical equipment.

Indicator - Waste trends

	2022-23	2023-24
Total units of waste disposed normalised by patient treated (kg/PT)	4.64	4.39
Total waste to landfill per patient treated	2.29	2.26
Total waste to offsite treatment per patient treated	0.76	0.62
Total waste recycled per patient treated	1.58	1.52
Total units of waste disposed normalised by floor area (kg/M2)	16.61	16.31
Total waste to landfill per M2	8.20	8.39
Total waste to offsite treatment per M2	2.73	2.29
Total waste recycled and reused per M2	5.67	5.63
Recycling Rate (%)	34.14%	34.53%
Greenhouse gas emissions associated with waste disposal (Tonnes CO2-e)	2,276.79	2,224.36



New solar panels helping the RMH reduce costs and environmental impact

The RMH will be saving more than \$66,000 in energy costs and reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 400 tonnes every year thanks to new solar panels installed at three of our sites.

“It was truly motivating to be involved in the effort to reduce our environmental impact and be part of a project that will contribute significantly to our sustainability goals,” said project manager Tugce Ozturk.

A total of 561 panels have been installed at the RMH Royal Park and the organisation’s two residential aged care facilities, Boyne Russell House in Brunswick and Cyril Jewell House in East Keilor.

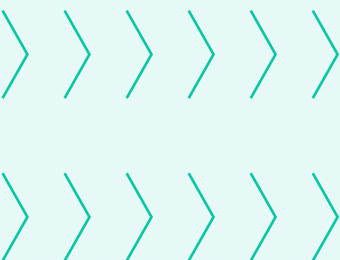
The panels will account for between 14 to 18 per cent of each site’s electricity needs.

“We had invaluable contributions and collaborations from the facilities coordinator, engineering team, nurse unit managers, and clinical staff to complete this project.

“This will help us improve our energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, which is a step towards a more sustainable future.”

This project was funded by the Victorian Health Building Authority through the Victorian Government’s Energy Efficiency and Solar Program.

Pictured:
The RMH staff members outside Boyne Russell House





Parkville Precinct collaborates for an environmentally sustainable healthcare system

Three of Parkville's largest health services are collaborating with the University of Melbourne to improve the environmental sustainability of their healthcare delivery.

The RMH, Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre (Peter Mac) and the Royal Women's Hospital (the Women's) will participate in the University of Melbourne 2024-2025 Health Services Environmental Sustainability Competition.

Each health service has been working hard to improve its environmental performance, to address the seven per cent of Australia's greenhouse gas emissions that stem from healthcare.

Worldwide, healthcare is responsible for over four per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, compared with two per cent from aviation.

Dr Ben Dunne – Senior Fellow in Sustainable Healthcare, Melbourne Medical School, thoracic surgeon at both the RMH and Peter Mac, and co-convenor of Sustainable Healthcare for Doctors for the Environment Australia – initiated the RMH's first Environmental Sustainability Competition in 2022.

In 2023, Peter Mac and the Women's joined the competition. Cumulatively, there have been 30 competition entries, keeping 2.6 million kg of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions out of our atmosphere, over three tonnes of waste out of landfill and resulting in over \$800,000 saved for our health services.

Ben said he's excited to read through this year's entries from across the Precinct.

"Last year we received 12 entries from the RMH who collectively saved 2.3 tonnes of waste, over 21 tonnes of CO₂-e emissions, and over \$150,000 at our services," Ben said.

"The strength and depth of these entries really highlighted to us the passion that exists in our workforce to collaboratively make healthcare more sustainable," Ben said.



Pictured:

Virtual Fracture Clinic Coordinator Emily Cross accepting the 2023 Sustainability Award



Skin-credible change: Health Hub helps Dermatology shine

After finding out they were sending up to 200 patient letters a week, the Dermatology Department switched to Health Hub, the RMH patient portal app.

As a result, the department has seen a 90 per cent drop in patient letters.

Manager of the Dermatology Department Kate Scholtens said Health Hub has changed the way her team works for the better.

“Now, we’re only printing 10-20 patient letters a week and the app’s ability to send pop-up notifications have really improved our DNA (Did Not Attend) patient rates,” Kate said.

Beyond cutting down on letters, Kate said Health Hub makes it easier for her team to communicate with other healthcare providers.

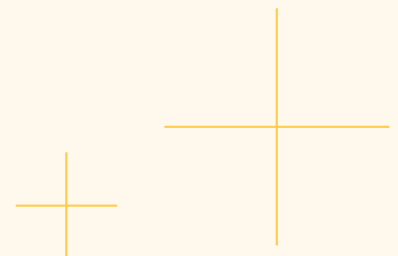
“When patients send us a message, it’s right there on their file. GPs are seeing those messages in real time too, so everything runs smoother.”

Kate encourages her clinical staff with access to EMR to sign patients up to Health Hub so they can play an active role in their healthcare journey.

“We want patients to actually use it and experience how great it is. Instead of waiting on hold to change an appointment, they can send a quick message through Health Hub, and we can update it right away.” Kate said.

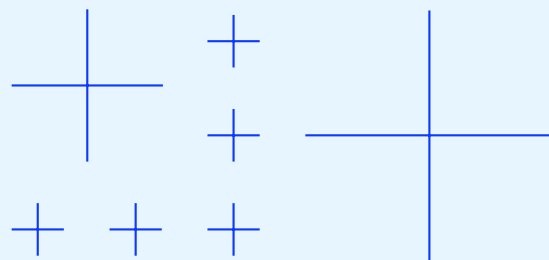
“After signing up, I get messages like ‘I’m on and it’s great’ or ‘love it!’

“It’s really nice to hear Health Hub is making a positive impact on our patients’ experience.”



Pictured:
Dermatology Department Manager Kate Scholtens

Our social responsibility



As a public hospital, the RMH has a fundamental responsibility to serve its diverse community. Our staff, patients, and community members reflect a broad range of identities, including different cultural backgrounds, sexual orientations, gender identities, religions, socio-economic statuses, and educational levels. Embracing and reflecting this diversity is essential to breaking down barriers to healthcare and improving outcomes for all.

A robust and equitable healthcare system must mirror the community it serves. At the RMH, we recognise the vital role we play in fostering a diverse, inclusive, and accessible environment. By engaging with individuals and communities on a personal level, we aim to understand and address their unique needs. This collaborative approach builds trust, strengthens community connections, and leads to better patient outcomes.

In 2023, the Victorian Government launched the *Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Partnership Agreement Action Plan 2023–2025*. As part of this initiative, we proudly welcomed Candice McKenzie as our Director of Aboriginal Health. A Warumungu-Walpiri woman, Candice has been instrumental in advancing our policies, strategies, and processes. Her contributions include workforce initiatives to create opportunities for First Nations people, advancing clinical governance and education, and fostering a culturally safe environment.

Our commitment to improving First Nations health is exemplified by the collaboration between the RMH First Nations Health Unit and Food Services teams. Together, they launched the Mob Meal Plan, a Victorian-first initiative that provides culturally safe meals to ensure First Nations patients feel more at ease during their care.

The LGBTIQ+ Liaison Service has implemented innovative strategies to create a safe and welcoming environment. One key initiative is a new identifier feature on the RMH Patient Portal, Health Hub, allowing LGBTIQ+ patients to record information such as gender identity, sexual

orientation, pronouns, and chosen name. Over 7,500 patients have used this feature, enabling clinicians to make sensitive and appropriate referrals to safe and inclusive support services.

We also recognise our responsibility to enhance health literacy within the community. By empowering individuals to seek appropriate care and make informed decisions, we can reduce barriers to healthcare. In collaboration with Google, the RMH Communications team created a series of 30 YouTube videos titled *Your Health First: Understanding Australia's Most Prevalent Health Conditions*. Covering topics like coronary heart disease, stroke, anxiety, and osteoarthritis, the series provides accurate, up-to-date information to improve health literacy across Australia.

Creating a safe and supportive workplace is equally essential. In 2023–24, our bystander training program expanded, with 21 Safety Champions trained to lead their teams. These champions model positive behaviour and offer guidance to staff who feel unsafe or unsure about addressing conflicts.

Leadership development programs have also been strengthened to foster team cultures that reject bullying, harassment, and discrimination. Employees are encouraged and empowered to speak up when issues arise.

Sexual safety remains a critical focus at the RMH. In 2023–24, we established a Prevention and Management of Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment committee to oversee sexual safety for staff, patients, and visitors. A new sexual safety guideline is in development to support staff who experience inappropriate behaviours from patients, and pilot training sessions have been conducted to equip leaders with tools to respond to staff disclosures of sexual harassment effectively.



Supporting LGBTIQ+ patient experience and care

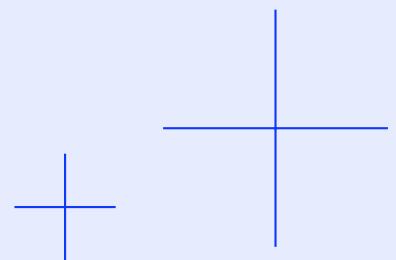
More than 7,500 patients and consumers have shared their sexual orientation and gender identity on the RMH patient portal, Health Hub, over the past 12 months.

Senior LGBTIQ+ Patient Liaison Tegan Murnane said Health Hub is one way to support great care to our rainbow community.

“We know that people from LGBTIQ+ community may not always feel comfortable visiting hospitals so having this Health Hub feature available signals safety – it could be the deciding factor in whether or not they choose to come to us for care,” Tegan said.

The app allows patients and consumers to record gender identity, sexuality, sex at birth, pronouns and chosen name as part of their electronic medical record. Importantly, LGBTIQ+ Patient Liaison Connor Gryffydd said patients don’t need to ask clinicians to record this information – they can record it themselves using Health Hub.

“Health Hub gives patients and consumers back their agency and offers great privacy; they don’t need to discuss this information publicly or face potentially uncomfortable follow-up conversations,” Connor said.



Pictured:
Members of our Disability Liaison and LGBTIQ+ Liaison teams



A taste of home

Keen's curried sausages, baked lemon myrtle barramundi, wattle seed cake, Davidson Plum panna cotta and more will now be available for First Nations patients to enjoy during their stay at the RMH, thanks to the launch of a new Mob Meal Plan.

The Victorian-first initiative has been specially crafted by the First Nations Health Unit and Food Services team to help patients feel more comfortable while receiving care at the RMH.

"We know how important food is for maintaining normalcy and improving patient experiences within an unfamiliar and sometimes distressing environment," Project Lead Officer and Senior First Nations Hospital Liaison Lani Wilson, said.

A proud Kombumerri woman, Lani emphasised how initiatives such as this help make healthcare more inclusive for First Nations patients.

"The Mob Meal plan was created to better the experiences of our First Nations community within the healthcare setting," Lani said.

"Our Mob having access to initiatives that have been designed solely for community, by community and super-star allies, to help aide in the ongoing commitment in Closing the Gaps makes a world of difference in their experience and therefor their healthcare outcomes." Lani said.

The full menu was officially launched earlier this year after more than a year of development and was made in conjunction with Monash Health.

It will be offered as an additional option to existing hospital food.

Pictured:

From L to R: Dietitian Aimee Dow, Senior First Nations Hospital Officer Lani Wilson, Food Services Manager Brendan Ridley and Dermatologist Dr Crystal Williams



Partnering with Google to improve health literacy

In late 2023, the RMH partnered with Google to produce a suite of 30 informative videos aimed at improving Australian health literacy.

‘Your health first: understanding Australia’s most prevalent health conditions’ stemmed from a need to provide accurate, up-to-date information on the Internet on the ten most prevalent health conditions in Australia.

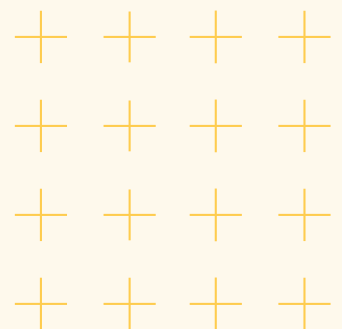
Specialists from across the hospital spoke on conditions such as anxiety, type 2 diabetes, falls, stroke, coronary heart disease, rheumatoid arthritis and more.

The videos have been viewed on YouTube more than 9,000 times and counting.

The RMH Content and Channel Manager Hannah Robertson said the videos are a valuable resource in an environment where public health information can be misleading.

“Misinformation on the Internet is rife and has exploded since COVID-19. This has led to people delaying care or relying on alternate treatments with no factual base,” Hannah said.

“The Communications team is so proud to be able to present free, easily digestible information from our renowned surgeons, doctors, allied health professionals and specialists on conditions that we see come through our doors daily, to combat this spread of misinformation,” Hannah said.



Pictured:
Head of the RMH Neurology and Stroke Department Professor Bruce Campbell in a still from the YouTube series

Governance



Effective governance in health services is essential to ensuring the safety, health, and wellbeing of patients, consumers, and staff. While governance frameworks are underpinned by policies, procedures, and legislative standards, they also encompass a broader mission: enhancing care pathways to deliver the right care at the right time.

This involves creating an integrated, patient-centred health system, improving accessibility, and driving innovation through the use of digital technologies. The RMH is committed to robust governance practices that ensure the highest standards of care and operational efficiency.

A key aspect of governance is fostering cultural safety and addressing health inequities. Research shows that Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) are highly effective in engaging Aboriginal clients. To strengthen governance in this area, the RMH First Nations Social and Emotional Wellbeing (SEWB) team works closely with ACCHOs to ensure culturally safe, patient-centred care pathways. This collaboration enables First Nations mental health consumers to access community-based programs and support, enhancing recovery outcomes and building trust in the health system.

Governance in mental health services has also evolved, with a focus on lived experience leadership and co-design. Following recommendations from the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, the RMH Mental Health Service expanded its Lived Experience (LE) leadership structure. This includes newly established roles such as Directors of LE (consumer and carer), Deputy Directors, LE educators, and an expanded LE peer support team. These roles are embedded across all programs, ensuring lived experience perspectives guide service direction, policy development, and system improvements.

The establishment of the Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing (VCCMHW) in late 2023 underscores the importance of governance in driving system-wide mental health reform. As a major clinical partner, the RMH works alongside the University of Melbourne and a network of collaborators to enhance mental health supports, integrating evidence-based governance frameworks that prioritise accountability, inclusion, and innovation.

Emergency care governance has also been strengthened to address growing demand for services. The RMH participates in the Victorian Department of Health and International Institute for Health Improvement's Timely Emergency Care Collaborative, which supports data-driven approaches to improve care delivery. By refining processes and enhancing operational oversight, the RMH has reduced the median length of stay for patients in its Emergency Department (ED) and lowered the number of outliers (patients cared for in non-specialty wards). These outcomes reflect the organisation's commitment to governance excellence and its ability to respond effectively to systemic challenges.

Strong governance is the foundation of a resilient healthcare system. Through rigorous oversight, strategic planning, and a commitment to continuous improvement, the RMH ensures we deliver safe, high-quality care while adapting to the evolving needs of the community.



Meet the team building strong links with First Nations community

Continuing to build their relationship with community is a key focus of the RMH's SEWB team to support culturally safe care and long-term benefits to consumers' health.

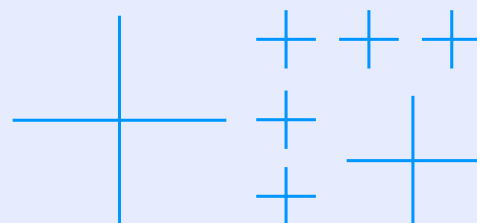
The SEWB staff work with ACCHOs to connect First Nations mental health consumers with community programs and support during their recovery journey.

"One of the most important things is that SEWB works over the long-term, so it is about making connections - in our relationships with other services but also with our consumers," said First Nations SEWB Project Officer Erin Alexander, whose mob is Walpiri.

"It can be quite different to the medical model ... it is not always culturally accurate to put people through a checklist...it is really important to see people as people and consider their whole social and emotional wellbeing."

Building the connection between the team and the community is also important, clinical specialist and Yorta Yorta and Taungurung man Grady Walsh said.

"I get contacts from community people to let me know someone is unwell, what can they do? That means we can be aware of them before they come in and community knows us ... we are seen as a safe place," Grady said.



Pictured:
The First Nations Social and Emotional Wellbeing team



New partnership to improve mental health and wellbeing support

The University of Melbourne and the RMH are among 18 service providers and institutions that form the State Government's Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing (VCCMHW), launched late 2023.

The partnership brings together a network of metropolitan and regional health services and research institutions in response to recommendations made by the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System.

There is a strong focus on improving people's experience of the mental health system by providing best practice treatment and support, as well as listening to the voices of lived experience, their loved ones and people who work in the sector.

Speaking at the time of the launch, the RMH Chief Operating Officer Jackie McLeod said the VCCMHW builds on the hospital's existing strengths in mental health service delivery.

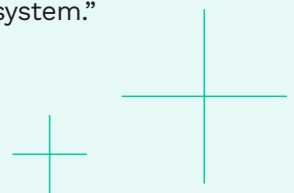
"We recognise the value lived experience has in improving our service through our strong consumer work and peer support services," Jackie said.

"The VCCMHW will build on our commitment to improving our practice through innovative programs and translational research initiatives, including lived experience-led programs, together with our partners."

University of Melbourne Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences Professor Jane Gunn AO said the initiative builds on the deep and enduring partnership between the University of Melbourne and the RMH as well as extensive networks throughout the state.

"Collaboration with a wide range of partners increases our ability to test new ideas, address gaps in evidence and translate research into effective models of care," Jane said.

"Collectively we share a vision to place lived experience expertise and leadership at the centre of our work to improve people's experience of the mental health and wellbeing system."



Pictured:

Members of the VCCMHW with the RMH CEO Shelley Dolan, on its launch in 2023

Modern Slavery Statement

MELBOURNE HEALTH – ABN 73 802 706 972
trading as the Royal Melbourne Hospital
Financial Year 2023 – 2024

The Royal Melbourne Hospital 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.

Modern Slavery Statement for FY23/24

This Modern Slavery Statement (Statement) is made pursuant to the Commonwealth Modern Slavery Act 2018 (the Act) by Melbourne Health ABN 73 802 706 972 operating as the Royal Melbourne Hospital (RMH). The RMH is a health service registered under the Health Services Act 1988 (Victoria) and does not own or control any other entities. This statement relates to the financial year period from 1st July 2023 to 30th June 2024. Annual reports can be accessed via this link: thermh.org.au/about/reports-policies/annual-reports

In making this Statement, the RMH 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 RMH commits to its ongoing responsibility to identify and act against modern slavery risks to maintain a responsible and transparent supply chain.

The Royal Melbourne Hospital

The RMH is one of the largest health providers in Australia, providing a comprehensive range of specialist medical, surgical, and mental health services, as well as rehabilitation, aged care, specialist clinics and community programs.

Our care extends from the RMH Parkville at Grattan St across to the RMH Royal Park, the RMH Elizabeth St and in the community. We are

a designated state-wide provider for services including trauma, and we lead centers of excellence for tertiary services in several key specialties including neurosciences, nephrology, cardiology, and virtual health.

For further information about the history, operations, and services of The Royal Melbourne Hospital visit thermh.org.au

Overview

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. Modern slavery practices include trafficking in persons, slavery, slavery-like practices (including forced labour and forced marriage) and the worst forms of child labour (including using children for prostitution or in hazardous work).

Modern slavery can occur in any country. The Global Slavery Index estimates there are currently 50 million victims of modern slavery worldwide, 10 million more than in 2018 when the Index started. In the private economy there are 17.4 million victims exploited. Most of these victims are in the Asia-Pacific region, where the supply chains of a significant number of Australian-based businesses have operations. Modern slavery can occur in any sector or industry, and at any point in a supply chain, with a recent study showing a total of 159 goods from 78 countries being linked to modern slavery.

Structure, operations, and supply chain

The RMH, was created, and incorporated as a Metropolitan Health Service pursuant to the Health Services (Governance) Act 2000 and an associated Order by the Governor in Council dated 28 June 2000.

To provide care, the RMH relies on suppliers of various specialised goods and services; from personal protective equipment to state of the art medical equipment. The RMH, as a public health service in Victoria, is mandated to purchase a large portion of its goods and services through collective purchasing agreements established by HealthShare Victoria (HSV).

This means that the RMH 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 attached link for further information on HSV's role in identifying and managing modern slavery risks across its collective agreements: healthsharevic.org.au/purchasing-policies-and-compliance/modern-slavery/

Modern slavery risks in the health care sector

Exploited workers are present in a wide range of sectors and at any stage of a supply chain. Most forced labour occurs in the lowest tiers of a supply chain, such as in the extraction of raw materials and the production of goods.

Within the health care sector, this is represented by industries such as garment production, surgical instruments, and electronic health care equipment. At the local operational level, service industries such as cleaning, security and catering represent a high-risk of workforce exploitation due to the predominance of low-skilled and migrant labour which are characteristic of these sectors.

Often the garment industries operate in locations where laws protecting human rights do not exist, are weak or are not enforced, leading to exploited workers with minimal avenue for redress. The sourcing of raw materials used in the production of surgical instruments and electronic goods and the significant use of labour hire companies in the production of pharmaceuticals contributes to exposing the medical goods sector to high risk. This is exacerbated by other risk factors including high risk geographies from which these goods are sourced, the vulnerable populations used to produce the goods, and the arrangements under which these vulnerable populations are accessed, contributes to significant risk of human rights abuses. Australia continues to be reliant on these imports from global supply chains for the supply

of these essential goods to health services.

In Australia, extended life expectancy and an ageing population is expected to grow demand for health care goods and services in the years ahead, further increasing the risk of modern slavery within complex global supply chains.

Key actions taken to assess and address risks

Over the FY2023/24 reporting period, the RMH has taken the following actions to identify and address modern slavery risks in its supply chain:

- **Modern slavery supplier risk assessment**

An increased number of supplier risk assessments were undertaken by way of a questionnaire provided to all identified suppliers. A total of 403 suppliers were sent a risk assessment (compared to 384 last year) with a total 75 per cent response rate. The methodology applied this year is consistent with the previous period, providing an opportunity for highlighting shifts in the identification, assessment and addressing of modern slavery risk by suppliers. This year an additional 307 suppliers beyond collective purchasing agreements were invited.

- **Longer term solutions**

We continue to collaborate with HSV and our high-risk suppliers, to explore options to create longer-term solutions to reduce the modern slavery risks in their supply chain by holding online engagement sessions.

- **Implementation of Mandatory Minimum Standards**

All tenders now have mandatory minimum standards, all suppliers with annual revenue of at least \$100 million are requested to submit an annual modern slavery statement. 268 of the 403 suppliers invited to undertake a risk assessment have a modern slavery policy in place, an increase of 22 per cent compared to last year.

People and training

As part of our ongoing training and development we have participated in a series of monthly community of learning sessions and conducted training across the RMH procurement team to highlight the importance of identifying and addressing modern slavery risks in our supply chain.

Tools and policies

We have developed a modern slavery framework and policy which includes a statement on combatting modern slavery in supply chains and an environmental, social and governance (ESG) risk assessment tool, which incorporates assessment of modern slavery risks.

Remedy

Remedial action plans and processes set out how the organisations respond to allegations of modern slavery within their own operations and supply chain. 240 suppliers (an increase of 65.5 per cent compared to the previous year) have processes in place to respond to modern slavery allegations. The overall trend reflects that there are fewer gaps in addressing modern slavery, and the increase in successful resolutions suggests improved monitoring, and proactive measures.

Supplier due diligence

We have included modern slavery questions in our market engagement documentation as part of due diligence process and to gain a greater understanding of our supply chains and obtained ongoing commitment from Suppliers to the Victorian Government; Supplier Code of Conduct, which requires suppliers to proactively identify, address and report on modern slavery risks in their business operations and supply chains buyingfor.vic.gov.au/supplier-code-of-conduct. An extra 72 increased their visibility over their supply chains and 60 more suppliers now conduct modern slavery audits compared to the previous year. This is a positive improvement in due diligence.

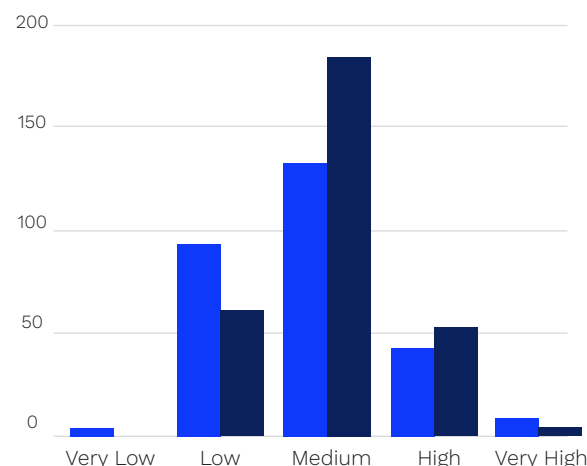
Effectiveness of our actions

As noted above, we have taken steps to build upon our modern slavery framework. In 2024 we completed our third supplier risk assessments, held initial supplier engagement sessions, and drafted supplier Mandatory Minimum Standards. The RMH identified 403 suppliers for the risk assessment survey for FY23-24 and received a 75 per cent response rate on questionnaires. Figure 1 shows that there has been an overall increase in the total number of suppliers with medium and high risk ratings, with percentage of suppliers recording these risk ratings also increasing. Based on supplier meetings, it is understood that the increase in supplier risk rating is due to increased supplier awareness of modern slavery obligations, more accurate reporting and a willingness to continuously improve their modern slavery risk rating.

Out of the 302 that completed the risk assessment, 268 suppliers have policies in place regarding modern slavery. A 22 per cent increase from the previous. Monitoring compliance with a policy shows that the supplier is committed to improving their position and risk rating and supports an effective means to reduce risk.

Supplier risk rating

Financial year
● 2023 ● 2024



Next steps and closing statement

The implementation of the modern slavery framework is an iterative process. Over the next 12 months, the RMH will embed the modern slavery framework further by:

- Collaborating with high and very high-risk suppliers.
- Continue to engage with medium and low risk suppliers.
- Continue to conduct dedicated sessions for suppliers to discuss risk management, share best practices, and provide further guidance.
- Ongoing collaboration with HSV to undertake modern slavery risk-assessment with suppliers not covered under a HSV collective agreement.

We continue to build on our modern slavery framework by acknowledging that modern slavery risks exist in our supply chain, identifying those risks wherever possible and taking meaningful steps to address them.

This Statement was approved by the Board of Melbourne Health on 18 December 2024.

Linda Bardo Nicholls AO
Chair

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Advancing health for everyone, every day



The Royal
Melbourne
Hospital