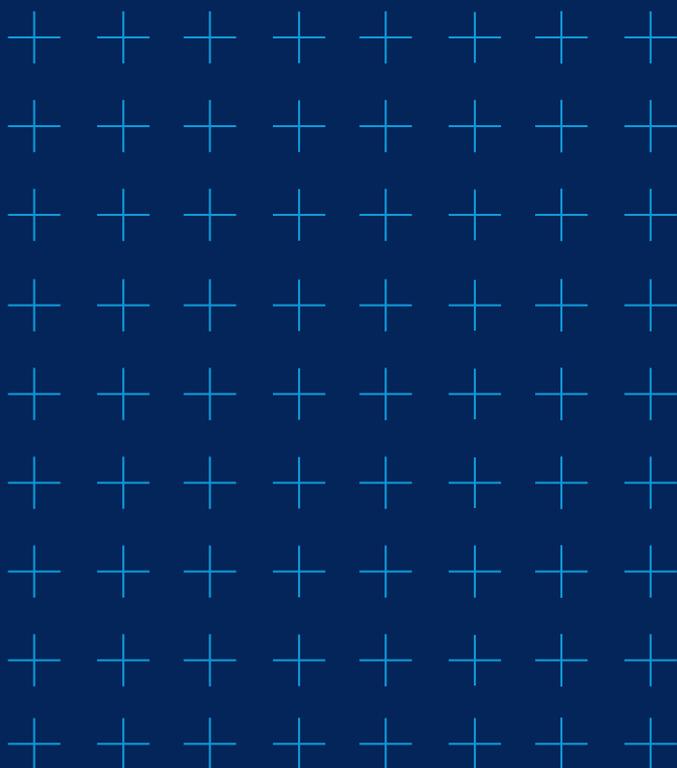




The Royal  
Melbourne  
Hospital

# Environmental, Social and Governance Report

## 2021-22



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**Linda Bardo  
Nicholls AO**  
Board Chair



**Professor  
Christine Kilpatrick AO**  
Chief Executive

# Message from the Chair and Chief Executive

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As Victoria's first public hospital and one of the largest hospitals in Australia, the Royal Melbourne Hospital (RMH) is driven by our purpose of advancing health for everyone, every day and our promise to the community to always be there when it matters most.

However, we also know that providing healthcare is bigger than our medical breakthroughs or the number of beds we have available. The benefits of equity to the health of communities are well established, as are the adverse impacts of discrimination. We also know that any community member who experiences disadvantage will experience greater barriers to healthcare and poorer health outcomes than the general population.

Our first Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Statement brings together our key achievements, as well as our future commitment to drive positive change to the health outcomes of our community.

We also want it to be a signal to our stakeholders, current employees and prospective employees, philanthropists and our community that they can confidently engage with us in the knowledge that we are a values-driven organisation actively working hard to address inequity in healthcare and removing barriers to access safe, person-centred care.

We are incredibly proud of the leadership our staff have already shown in these spaces, including the establishment of our LGBTIQ+ Staff and Allies Network, our RMH Sustainability Network that encourages internal collaboration to achieve sustainable change, and our Safety Champions, a volunteer group of employees who are working together to create a speak up for safety workplace through one conversation at a time.

Our Reconciliation Action Plan - Reflect launched in 2020 is the start in our journey to becoming a safe, caring place to receive care and an employer of choice for our First Nations People.

We know there is much work ahead to fulfil our ESG commitments and we look forward to continuing this ongoing journey to be a great place to work and a great place to receive care for all at the Royal Melbourne Hospital.

# About the Royal Melbourne Hospital

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The RMH began in 1848 as Victoria's first public hospital. And while we only had 10 beds to our name, we had the community of Melbourne behind us, and we were ready to provide the best possible care for those in need.

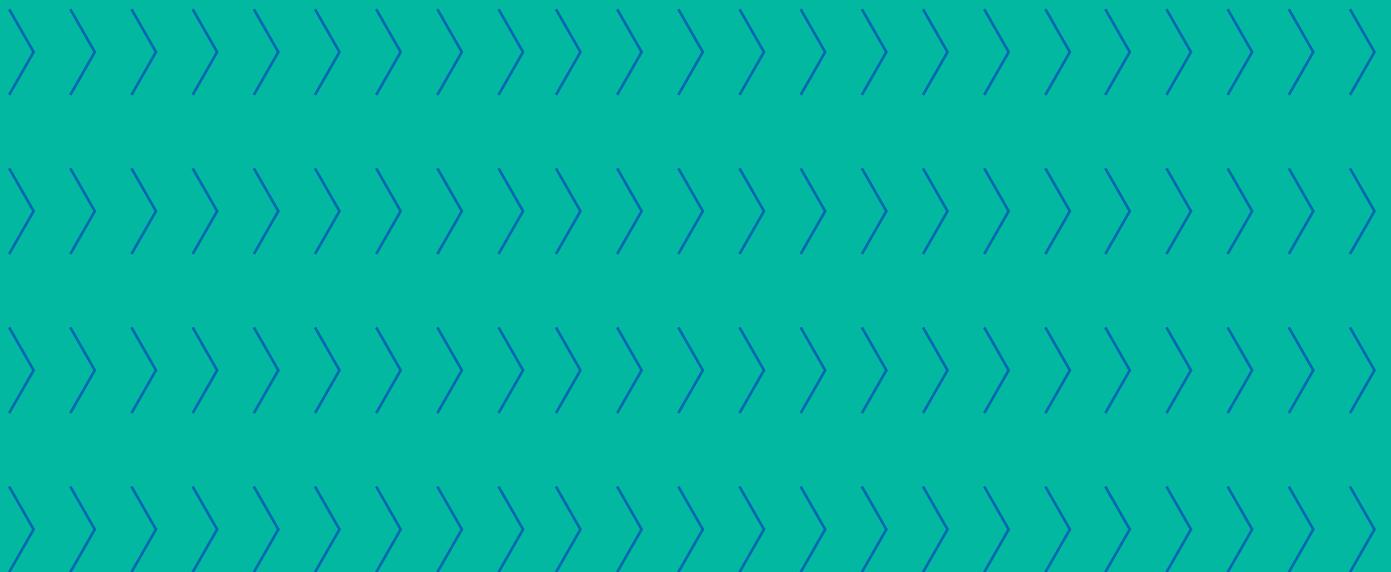
Since those early years, we've moved forward with purpose. Always at the forefront, leading the way on improving the quality of life for all.

Today, 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, outpatient and community programs.

Our care extends from Parkville through Royal Park and 26 mental health services across the inner western and western suburbs of Melbourne. We are a designated state-wide provider for a range of

specialty services including trauma; and we lead centres of excellence for tertiary services in several key specialties including neurosciences, nephrology, surgical oncology, cardiology and virtual health.

Our people of more than 11,000 embody who we are and what we stand for. Our reputation for caring for all Melburnians is as essential to who we are as any scientific breakthrough we make. We're here when it matters most, and we'll continue to be the first to speak out for our diverse community's wellbeing.



# Our Environmental, Social and Governance Statement

The Royal Melbourne Hospital's 2022 Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Statement is our commitment to driving sustainable social change across the organisation.

We commit to making business decisions that will lead to social and environmental positive change, and stronger governance arrangements that are to the betterment of our people, community and stakeholders.

As a government funded organisation, we are required to deliver upon a set of priorities agreed to by the RMH Board and the Minister for Health. Each year, this is reported in our Statement of Priorities in the annual report. For more information about our Statement of Priorities visit the [Department of Health Victoria website](#).

Our ESG Report looks at a unique set of priorities. It outlines what we believe intrinsically makes the Royal Melbourne Hospital to be a great place to work and a great place to receive care and we have also identified areas where we can, and must, do better.

In researching and preparing our first ESG Report, a working group was formed to consider a diverse array of health service operations and influences that meet our commitments. This included looking at projects that were considered best practice, programs that made a difference to the lives of our people and community, and areas of influence that set us apart from other health services.

This ESG Report outlines our achievements and challenges and our future goals.

## Our goals for the 2022/23 ESG Statement are to:

- 1 | Work closely with health service employees and stakeholders in **advancing** the organisation's **commitment** to improved environmental sustainability.
- 2 | Lead in organisational **equity, diversity and inclusion** and mobilise expertise in support of positive transformation.
- 3 | Amplify the use of data to improve the **care and wellbeing of our community**, especially our most vulnerable.
- 4 | Increase our capacity to deliver **inclusive services**, including for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, our LGBTIQ+ community, our Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) community and people with a disability.
- 5 | Continue to enhance our **cybersecurity resilience** to better protect our people, patients and consumers while working, providing and receiving care.
- 6 | Expand our digital healthcare program of work, building our capacity to **deliver care remotely to our patients** and in partnership with rural and regional health services.
- 7 | Work with **HealthShare Victoria**. To ensure our supply chain is supported by socially responsible services.

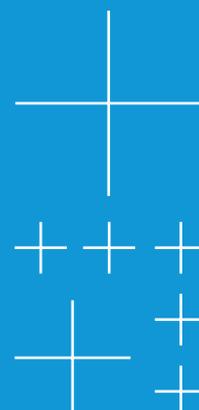
# Environmental, Social and Governance Working Group

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

## The ESG Working Group included the following members:

- **Pippa Connolly**  
Board Member and Chair of the Financial Committee, The Royal Melbourne Hospital
- **Kylie Bishop**  
Board Member, The Royal Melbourne Hospital
- **Christine Kilpatrick AO**  
Chief Executive, The Royal Melbourne Hospital
- **Emma Skinner**  
Board Member, The Royal Melbourne Hospital
- **Melea Tarabay**  
Director Strategic Communication and Media, The Royal Melbourne Hospital
- **Paul Urquhart**  
Executive Director, Finance & Logistics, The Royal Melbourne Hospital



# Our First Nations

We acknowledge the effects of more than 200 years of dispossession, racism and discrimination, which have left Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with unequal access to services and health outcomes.

In 2020, as part of our commitment to closing the gap, the Royal Melbourne Hospital Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) was endorsed. This RAP lays the foundation for more education, patient and consumer partnerships in care programs and employment outcomes, while creating and strengthening our ties with communities.

Our first RAP is an opportunity to examine what impact our services have had on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the history of the Royal Melbourne Hospital and what initiatives we can put in place to improve our role in the years to come. Some of this work has already begun, for example the development of our first Aboriginal Employment Action Plan in 2014, while other work, such as the increased collection of service metrics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander healthcare, will take time to establish.

We are acutely aware of our healthcare delivery responsibility in achieving health equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We understand that delivering high quality care must be intrinsically linked to providing culturally appropriate and responsive services. To that end, our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healthcare Needs Plan is already in place to leverage the Royal Melbourne Hospital network of excellence for improved care and research to help address chronic diseases and mental health issues among communities.

Together, with our commitment to providing great care is our aspiration for the Royal Melbourne Hospital to become a great place to work for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. As we continue to implement this Reconciliation Action Plan we aim to build a better understanding of our current workforce, and the barriers and opportunities

in place; with the ultimate vision of becoming an employer of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander healthcare professionals.

**As part of our Reflect RAP program there are several initiatives underway. They include:**

- **Cultural Awareness Training** for all staff and the development of a cultural safety plan;
- **Acknowledgement of Country** at all health service meetings and events and installation of recognition plaques and artwork across the health service;
- **Increasing our Aboriginal workforce**, including the creation of an Aboriginal Health Unit, staffed by an Aboriginal workforce and an Elder in Residence to further enhance our response;
- **Continue building relationships** with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations, including our memorandum of understanding with Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation;
- A **review of key performance indicators** across our health service, including our First Nations not attending scheduled outpatient appointments.

The COVID-19 pandemic, has resulted in delays to fully implementing our Reflect RAP. Work is underway with Reconciliation Australia to review our Action Plan and it is anticipated that by the end of 2022 all actions will be undertaken. You can read more about our Reconciliation Action Plan on our website <https://www.thermh.org.au/about/strategies-plans/reconciliation-action-plan>

# Supporting culturally safe and effective care



## At the RMH we are focused on improving the way we provide care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through our new Aboriginal Health Unit.

The Aboriginal Health Unit seeks to ensure that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients experience a positive journey through our healthcare service – receiving care and support which is appropriate to their own personal and cultural needs.

By working together with colleagues across the RMH and with groups in the wider community, the team is focused on building wider awareness of cultural sensitivities when engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients.

As Aboriginal Health Unit Team Manager, Steven Portelli explains it's all about ensuring we have the right people, delivering the right type of care, and at the right time.

***“One of the biggest challenges a lot of Aboriginal people in the community face is knowing they can come into an environment that's safe and culturally sensitive to them,” Steven said.***

People will have different views on what cultural safety is to them and how they engage, and it's important for us to understand everyone's unique needs, so we can tailor our services to provide effective person-centred care.”

## Engagement and understanding is key.

Encouraging patients to feel comfortable disclosing their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity is one of the key aims of the Aboriginal Health Unit, including an Elder in Residence.

And while we all have a role to play in fostering an inclusive and supportive environment, First Nations Liaison Officers will be on hand to offer specific support, helping to provide a culturally sensitive link between our medical teams and patients.

“As a team, our focus is really on breaking down barriers and building bridges,” Steven said.

***“Every positive experience which we can help facilitate will really have a ripple effect out in the wider community.***

“I like to think of it as the ‘Koorie grapevine’ with people spreading the word about how well they were looked after and how people took the time to truly understand their cultural needs.

“At the end of the day, we want to ensure that everyone receives the care they need, and by working together we can all play our part in ‘closing the gap.’”

### **Pictured (L-R):**

Steven Portelli, Team Manager Aboriginal Health Unit, with our First Nations Liaison Officers, Lani, Shiobhan and Grady

# Our Environmental Responsibility

We know that providing great healthcare that is evidence based, well-resourced and continually pushing the boundaries of medical science has a significant impact on the environment and sustainability.

One of the strategic goals of the RMH is to strive for sustainability and the momentum to continually drive improvements has been a passion for many of our people.

Our Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2020 – 2025 was endorsed by the RMH Executive Committee and the RMH Board in October 2019. The strategic targets in the strategy focuses on organisational leadership, emission reductions, waste minimisation and paper use reductions. Over the past 13 years we have improved our waste segregation, increased our recycling rate and decreased clinical waste generation.

**Our Environmental Sustainability Strategy is further supported by our social procurement strategy, which prioritises our investment in:**

- Environmentally sustainable business practices; and
- Implementation of the climate change policy objectives.

However, we acknowledge that the on-going COVID-19 pandemic has impacted our environmental performance over the last two financial years (2020/21 and 2021/22), especially in the generation of clinical waste. Infection prevention practices generate large amounts of personal protective equipment (PPE) waste and these single use items are disposed of as clinical waste. There are many clinical disciplines that need to use large amounts of natural resources to be able to provide great clinical care.

Hospitals contribute substantially to landfills. In Australia, each hospital bed produces 3.3 kilograms of waste per day, with hospital CO2 emissions accounting for 7 per cent of national emissions in Australia. We know it takes a great deal of natural resources to logistically run the RMH from large volumes of water usage for our patients with kidney failure requiring lifesaving dialysis treatment, to ensuring our healthcare sites have appropriate heating and cooling to the chemicals required to clean patient rooms.

To further support these initiatives, an employee led RMH Sustainability Working Group was established, to help make RMH a green place to work as well as a great place to work. **We are fortunate to have a network of over 200 RMH employees who identify themselves as green champions**, passionate about how we, as an organisation can improve our environmental impact from the little things such as finding safe alternatives to the traditional Blueeys, a bed pad consisting of layers of absorbent tissue paper with the waterproof plastic backing, used in theatre and wards, to composting food scraps.

In March 2022, we started offering reusable safety glasses and over-specs safety glasses for staff in the Emergency Department which will save 109,200 single-use plastic face shields / eye shields per annum from landfill. This initiative is now being rolled out across the RMH.

One of our many improvement projects was the transition to LED lighting at the RMH Royal Park Campus' Building 17 Administration Offices and Ward AC4. This project will result in a 79 per cent reduction

in energy usage from lighting – the equivalent of saving 135 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions, equivalent to 947 trees planted. The second stage of this project will see the rest of the Royal Park Campus transiting to LED lighting, saving a further 181 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions annually.

We also introduced waste injection trays made of sugarcane, a biodegradable product, into both the Emergency Department and Pathology. These are not only projected to save \$1300 per year, but will remove an estimated 45,000 pieces of plastic from landfill annually.

Our Information Technology Department is implementing a sustainability program for personal devices and acquired carbon offsets for greenhouse gases generated throughout the lifecycle of these devices.

The first tranche of offset certificates for the lease period 2022-26 supports a wind energy project in Ovalle, Chile, excitingly leading to over 2,000 tonnes of greenhouse gases to be offset during this period. Future carbon offsets from new improvement projects will be sought locally

## Our environmental performance

### **The Department of Health Victoria requires health services to report publicly on their environmental performance in accordance with the department’s environmental reporting guidelines.**

The table below shows the RMH’s environmental performance in line with these required reporting guidelines.

### **It is relevant to note that there were some one off items impacting the reporting of the 2021 - 22 data below. The three major items are:**

- A revised cogeneration contract resulting in the RMH being required to report emissions rather than the third party operator;
- Replacement of a heat exchanger plant on the Parkville Campus requiring the running of additional boilers; and,
- A steam leak in the cogeneration plant during the period that required additional gas to produce the required levels of steam.

Normalising for these items, the level of the RMH CO2 emissions in 2021 - 22 would have been 1.4 per cent below the prior year (32,547 tCO2e) which is the lowest in three years and consistent with the longer term reduction targets of the RMH.

The table below provides an additional column that allows for the removal of these “one-off” items.



Normalising Factors	FY 2019-20	FY 2020-21	FY2021-22	Actual % Change over 2020-21	Normalised % change over 2020-21(1)
Occupied bed days	325,502	301,299	320,046	6.2%	6.2%
Separations	104,517	99,886	105,831	5.9%	5.9%
Patients treated	623,700	625,108	618,146	(1.1%)	(1.1%)
Floor area m <sup>2</sup>	153,194	153,194	153,194	0.0%	0.0%

#### TOTAL ENERGY CONSUMPTION BY ENERGY TYPE (GJ)

Electricity (Grid)	53,654	60,310	60,697	0.6%	0.6%
Electricity (Co-generated)	66,275	56,603	56,452	(0.3%)	(0.3%)
Natural gas and LPG	16,101	14,054	53,281	279%	2%
Natural gas used for cogeneration <sup>(1)</sup>	n/a	n/a	267,367	n/a	n/a
Other energy types (e.g. steam, diesel)	106,895	78,907	107,745	36.5%	(5.1%)
Total energy (GJ)	242,926	209,874	489,091	133%	(1.7%)
Energy per unit of floor space (GJ/m <sup>2</sup> )	1.586	1.370	3.193	133%	(1.7%)

#### GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS (TONNES CO2e)

Scope 1	6,327	4,794	22,077	360.6%	(4%)
Scope 2	28,144	28,210	16,186	(42.6%)	(0.9%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>34,472</b>	<b>33,004</b>	<b>38,263</b>	<b>15.9%</b>	<b>(1.4%)</b>
Emissions per unit of floor space (kgCO <sub>2</sub> e/m <sup>2</sup> )	225	215	250	15.9%	(1.4%)
Emissions per patient treated (kgCO <sub>2</sub> e)	55	53	62	17.2%	(0.3%)

#### TOTAL WATER CONSUMPTION BY TYPE (KL)

Potable water	189,233	167,179	163,961	(1.9%)	(1.9%)
Water per patient treated (kL)	0.303	0.267	0.265	(0.8%)	(0.8%)

#### WASTE GENERATION BY TYPE (TONNES)

Clinical waste	355	497	513	3.2%	3.2%
General waste	1,158	1,071	1,075	0.4%	0.4%
Recycled waste	852	801	766	(4.4%)	(4.4%)
Total	2,365	2,369	2,354	(0.6%)	(0.6%)
Waste recycling rate (%)	42.4%	42.8%	41.6%	(1.2%)	(1.2%)
Waste per patient treated (kg)	3.8	3.8	3.8	0.0%	(0.0%)

(1) The data in this column has been normalised to allow for the energy consumption impacts of the three "one off items" described in the narrative above the table.

# Meet Gaia 1200



## The Gaia 1200 is our super-efficient composting machine, located underneath the RMH Parkville Campus down a very long, windy, old tunnel system.

Gaia takes all the food scraps from patient meal leftovers (up to 600kg of food/drink waste at a time) and munches, crunches and dehydrates the contents up to make organic soil.

We then donate the soil to an organic fertiliser company who then sells it off to customers. This process diverts 77.1 tonnes of food waste from landfill a year... and growing!

And importantly, staff are also welcome to take some of the soil home.

**Pictured:**  
The Gaia 1200 composting machine located at the hospital.



## Carbon neutral IT equipment leasing program

The RMH has decided to implement a carbon neutral leasing program with Equigroup as a result of a recent tender to replace our aging IT equipment (laptops, PCs and monitors).

The carbon neutral leasing program will ensure that the RMH offsets its total carbon footprint generated by leasing 2,200 IT devices. This will be achieved by reinvesting in certified climate change mitigation projects around the world in collaboration with Equigroup under our new leasing arrangement.

As outlined in the table below, we expect to offset ~1.5M kg of CO2 emissions across 2,200 IT devices over their life cycle, from production, use and disposal.

Asset Class	Co2e (kg)	Asset Quantity	Total Co2e (kg)
Laptops	487	600	292,200
Monitors	642	800	513,600
Desktops	928	800	742,400
<b>Total</b>		<b>2,200</b>	<b>1,548,200</b>

# Our people driving change



**When thoracic surgeon Ben Dunne started at the RMH in 2020, he brought a passion for sustainability in surgery. He quickly found that passion was widespread and is a member of one of the nine working groups to address sustainability in clinical areas.**

Ben said those working in the industry are all too aware of the impact that healthcare has on greenhouse emissions, as well as the ill effects these emissions have on people's health.

"One of the first things that we looked at that would have a big impact was reducing our use of nitrous oxide, which is a greenhouse gas that's far more potent than CO2," Ben said.

***"Effectively, we found data from the UK and other hospitals that indicated 80 per cent of the nitrous that's used in the hospital leaks out through the piping systems, and doesn't actually get used by the patients."***

"So we're in the process of switching over the pipe system to having cylinders placed in some of our working spaces to ensure that the nitrous that does get used isn't wasted. That's going to reduce our emissions pretty massively, as well as save on waste."

In Nephrology, staff have been working with external partners to better understand the carbon footprint of dialysis, which has led to a partnership project with Barwon Health.

Nephrologist Katherine Barraclough said this collaboration has created a new waste processing machine that can sterilise and shrink clinical waste, rather than leaving this to clinical waste processing facilities.

"By processing dialysis on site, what you end up with is sterile plastic, rather than contaminated waste that needs chemical processing," Katherine said.

***"We've then been able to send that plastic off to researchers at Deakin University, and they have been seeing if they can incorporate that plastic as an additive material into concrete."***

Katherine said healthcare workers were starting to see environmental sustainability as part of their mandate.

"At the end of the day, if we don't have a planet that can support us – there's no point to any of the work we do and we will absolutely be on the front line of dealing with the climate health impact," she said.

With collaborations continuing across the organisation, Ben is confident there are more ideas to come to continue to drive change for the better.

***"What's been most impressive over the last 12 to 18 months has been the build-up of grassroots support and the passion and work that is getting done in this area," he said.***

**Pictured:**  
Thoracic surgeon, Ben Dunne, champions green thinking across the RMH

# Our Social Responsibility

Our role in the community is to be a health service that ensures everyone in our care is supported and well cared for every day.

We believe in equal respect and access for all. The benefits of equity to the health of communities are well established, as are the adverse impacts of discrimination.

Integral to the RMH's purpose of advancing health for everyone, every day, is the work we do to promote the least intrusive and earliest effective care in our community. This was demonstrated during Victoria's second COVID-19 wave in 2020 when it was imperative to collaborate with our primary healthcare partners including cohealth and North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network. Initially established by the RMH, the collaboration grew to be known as the West Metro COVID-19+ Pathway.

It provided much needed health and welfare services to COVID-19 patients in the community. The success of this program in Melbourne's northwest resulted in the pathway being rolled out across Victoria in 2021. At its peak the COVID-19+ pathway had more than 24,500 patients on a single day in its care.

During this time, our mental health team also played a vital role providing earliest, effective care supporting people who were homeless with mental health conditions. Over 2,000 people were temporarily housed in hotels across Melbourne with 52 per cent in the RMH catchment area. This team ensured our most vulnerable were receiving care and treatment during the Victorian lockdowns and reducing the need to seek emergency care.

In 2021, following endorsement from the RMH Executive, our LGBTIQ+ working group transitioned to a formal Steering Committee. During this time the second LGBTIQ+ 2022 - 2025 action plan was developed following consultation in 2021 and endorsed in 2022.

Also, established in late 2021, the new LGBTIQ+ Patient Liaison Service supports patients, consumers and families throughout their hospital journey. The team brings specialist knowledge in LGBTIQ+ health and lived experience within LGBTIQ+ communities. We provide a mix of direct patient care and capacity building for staff across the RMH. To support this service, our Trans and Gender Diverse Inclusive Care Guide and patient brochures are available for all staff and people receiving care at the RMH. The care guide was co-designed with the Zoe Belle Gender Collective and provides some simple and effective actions staff can take to improve safety and inclusion for transgender and gender diverse patients. A training program is also available to staff to further support Trans and Gender Diverse inclusive care across the health service.

As part of our social procurement policy, we are now purchasing from Victorian social enterprises and Aboriginal businesses. In 2020-21, we spent \$8.4 million across 51 social enterprises and Aboriginal businesses. The majority of this spend came from our engagement with social enterprises, including universities and similar institutions. We have also embedded social procurement objectives into our standard procurement processes. This includes applying a weighted criteria up to 10 per cent for social procurement objectives as well as its inclusion during negotiations.

A key achievement in 2020-21 and now continuing in 2022 has been our partnership with Mazzei Homes, who work with us as a partner in the Royal Melbourne Hospital Home Lottery. Mazzei has demonstrated a strong commitment to implement a genuine reconciliation action plan, investment into Aboriginal businesses by utilising Kinaway and Supply Nation, as well as direct investment into Aboriginal artwork from Aboriginal businesses.

# Introducing our new LGBTIQ+ Patient Liaison Officers



**In what is believed to be an Australian first, the Royal Melbourne Hospital has created a Patient Liaison Service to support our LGBTIQ+ community.**

The Patient Liaison Service will work to advance mental and physical health outcomes for LGBTIQ+ people and their families, helping them to feel safe and supported while receiving care.

One of the LGBTIQ+ Patient Liaison Officers, Connor (they/them), said the role was created thanks to the motivation from our staff.

***“The development of these new roles were also supported following recent research from LaTrobe University that indicated that 41% of trans and gender diverse people would not attend the Emergency Department if they required medical attention,” Connor said.***

***“It is a really distressing percentage. So there is a health imperative for these roles.***

***“We know that LGBTIQ+ people also have higher rates of anxiety, depression, isolation, and complicated relations with drug and alcohol. So there was a real need for this service.”***

Patients who present to the hospital and identify as LGBTIQ+ can request one of our LGBTIQ+ Patient Liaison Officers to guide them through their healthcare journey.

**Pictured:**  
Patient Liaison Officers, Suzi and Connor.



## Providing safety in care

**The RMH is proud to support members of the LGBTIQ+ community – patients just like Kerrilie, who was supported by our Senior LGBTIQ+ Patient Liaison Officer, Suzi (she/they).**

Long term patient, Kerrilie, was initially reluctant to meet with the LGBTIQ+ Patient Liaison Officers as she “didn’t feel queer enough” to need them. Whilst Kerrilie identifies as a lesbian, she “can pass as straight when it’s safer and easier not to correct people.”

Although Kerrilie was able to build trust in the RMH health professionals, there were moments where she felt “othered”. Through the encouragement of her social worker, she agreed to meet with the LGBTIQ+ Patient Liaison team. Upon meeting Suzi, her stint in hospital improved – she was able to drop all pretences and be herself. For the first time, she felt truly seen and understood.

***“With them I am seen and known. The strength I have been able to draw from this has been crucial to my ongoing recovery and I will always be grateful for them.”***

# RMH volunteer service connecting virtually



## After 17 months 73-year-old resident Beverly and 35-year-old volunteer Melissa have finally had a chance to meet face-to-face.

In a bid to keep our residents safe through the COVID-19 pandemic the Royal Melbourne Hospital public aged care sites have followed strict visitor protocols for the last two years.

This allowed the RMH to keep its aged care residents safe, with no COVID outbreaks facing our facilities throughout the peak of the pandemic. Unfortunately this also meant our residents were not able to enjoy their usual visits from friends and family. To help keep our residents connected to the community the RMH's volunteer service team began doing virtual video catch ups.

Over the past 18 months Bev, who lives at the RMH's Boyne Russell House and our volunteer Melissa have formed a virtual friendship, catching up weekly and bonding over their shared love of knitting.

Now that Boyne Russell House is able to safely open to visitors Bev and Melissa have finally met face-to-face for the first time.

***"It's lovely to meet her after so much time online. I saw her photo on the screen but it's not the same." Bev said.***

Melissa was also thrilled to see Bev in person after so many virtual catch ups. "It's been so exciting to meet her in-person.

We've been chatting online for about 17 months, but to have that in-person connection this morning has been really special" Melissa said.

The RMH volunteer coordinator Keisha Jayasekera said the program has been a huge success.

***"We've been able to support a number of residents have meaningful conversations with our volunteers, giving them an opportunity to engage with the community and share their stories and interests, which was particularly important during the strict lockdowns." Keisha said.***

Boyne Russell House Nurse Unit Manager Val Lambevaska, also found the residents really enjoyed the program, giving them something special to look forward to every week.

***"While we couldn't have visitors it meant a lot to our residents to have a volunteer to catch up with during the week, to share stories and interests with, we definitely noticed it made them feel more connected." Val said.***

**Pictured:**  
Boyne Russell resident, Beverley (left),  
with RMH volunteer, Melissa (right)

# Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

The Royal Melbourne Hospital is committed to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion.

This is an important part of achieving our vision of advancing health for everyone, every day.

The first RMH Workforce Equity and Inclusion Audit was completed in 2021 to help identify strengths and areas for improvement in relation to diversity, equity and inclusion for those who work at the RMH.

The results of this audit informed the development of a draft Action Plan, which was shared widely with our staff for further feedback and refinement.

This is a dynamic and iterative plan. Ongoing consultation and engagement with staff and further data analysis will shape our work as we continue to review and refine our efforts over the life of this Action Plan. However the central objective will remain: to do our very best to provide a great place to work for people of all backgrounds and identities.

The Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector reviewed both our audit and action plan, and found them to be compliant with our obligations under the Gender Equality Act 2020.

Of particular importance for the RMH will be the ongoing work required to reduce the organisation's pay equity gap as well as continued work to raise awareness of systems in place to report inappropriate behaviours in the workplace.

While the majority of employees are women, we know that women are often concentrated in lower-paid administrative roles and have slower rates of careers progression due to a number of cultural and structural factors.

We are committed to taking clear and meaningful steps to support better outcomes for people of all genders, backgrounds and identities.

Our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Action Plan can be found on our website, which includes an overview of our audit results and our plan to drive change across our organisation. We look forward to measuring the impact of our efforts in future audits.

## **Our priorities for 2022/23 include:**

- Promoting a range of events that celebrate our diverse workforce community;
- Establish a program of works that looks into pay equity comparable to similar organisations;
- Set and monitor diversity targets for The Melbourne Way Leadership Program;
- Review Leadership Development offerings to enhance inclusive leadership skills including;
- Managing micro-aggressions and continue to raise awareness of the weCare reporting system to support increase sexual harassment reporting and inappropriate behaviours
- Aboriginal cultural awareness
- Disability awareness;
- Embed processes to ensure systematic policy review considers diversity and inclusion; and
- Review staff orientation processes to embed inclusion;
- Piloting equitable impact assessments and progressively rolling these out across the organisation.

# Our Governance

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Health services are governed by a series of policies, procedures and legislative standards to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of patients, consumers and staff is protected.

Simply put policies guide our decisions and how we operate. We implement our policies through procedures and protocols. We also have a range of policies and procedures to govern our daily operations and support the administrative functions of the Royal Melbourne Hospital.

However, governance is more than just a set of stringent rules and guidelines, it is what can set us apart from other health services to ensure we attract the best and highly qualified workforce and retain them within the organisation. We are working hard to ensure that the RMH is a great place to work and a great place to receive care.

We have a number of governance structures and programs in place to ensure our people can deliver safe, timely, efficient and effective, person centred care. The benefits of these structures and programs were highlighted during our response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

One of the impacts of the pandemic has been the significant increase in the number of patients and consumer requiring emergency care, as well as an increase in a patient's average length of stay. As part of our push to increase the capacity of RMH Parkville and RMH Royal Park to treat and care for more patients, we developed our Access and Flow Strategy.

The strategy has identified a number of initiatives to support our commitment of becoming a great place to receive care by relocating non-urgent outpatient clinics and non-clinical staff such as Finance, People and Culture and the Executive Office to new premises at 611 Elizabeth Street, to be known as RMH City. This will support the increase of clinical beds at RMH Parkville and enable us to care for more patients.

Our Community Advisory Committee (CAC) advises us on consumer and carer engagement. Members help ensure we partner with our patients, consumers, carers and the community in our planning, service delivery and improvement. They are a strong voice for promoting partnership with the people we serve. The CAC is chaired by a member of the Royal Melbourne Hospital Board and has 12 positions for community members. Members are patients, consumers, carers and community representatives who may be current or future users of the health service.

We are fortunate to have an engaged CAC membership to guide and support the delivery of key organisational projects including the development and delivery of Health Hub, a patient portal connecting to the organisations electronic medical record, the building of 22 new mental health beds at RMH Parkville, as part of the Victorian Government's P144 mental health project; the redevelopment of the RMH website to be delivered in early 2023; and the development and implementation of the organisations Access and Flow Strategy.

In 2021, a staff survey found that 10 per cent of staff had reported experiencing sexual harassment – that number was higher for gender diverse staff (41 per cent), staff with disability (26 per cent) and Aboriginal staff (18 per cent). To drive change, we released our first Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Action Plan, setting out our path for the next four years to ensure people of all backgrounds and identities feel safe and respected at work; and have equal opportunities to contribute and develop their career at the RMH.

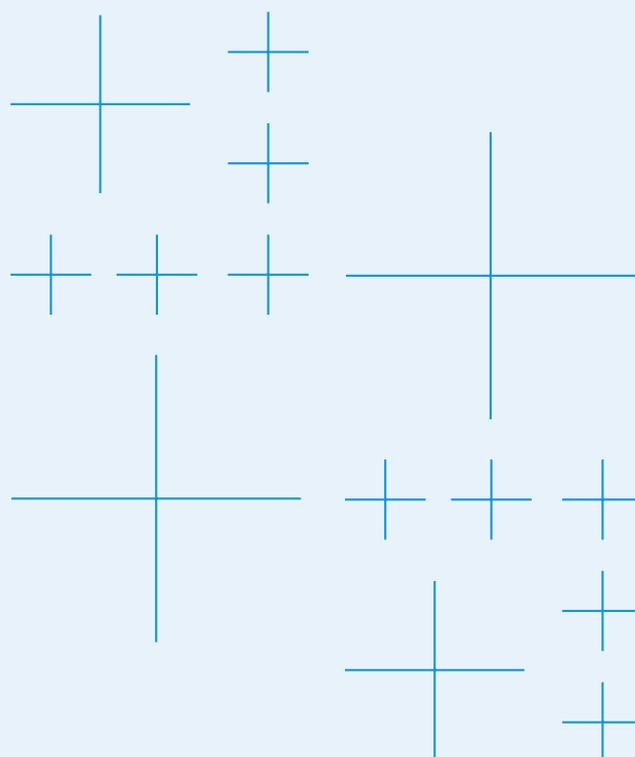
To support the work of the action plan staff are encouraged to complete the new diversity, equity and inclusion training modules on the RMH's Learning Hub, and join one of the staff action groups on our internal social network, Workplace by Meta, for disability inclusion, gender equity, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and allies, and LGBTIQ+ staff and allies. The RMH's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Action Plan is available on the [RMH website](#).

Our Safety Culture program is going from strength to strength with a number of programs in place to support our people who find themselves in challenging situations. These services include our Workplace Ombuds, our Peer Support Program and our Speak up for Safety Program.

Our Speak up for Safety Program was introduced across the organisation in 2016. It was designed for our patients, consumers and colleague to address unsafe and unprofessional behaviours in our workplace. As part of the safety culture program, the weCare feedback system was introduced to help in

those times when our people don't feel safe to speak up directly to the person, to their line manager or People & Culture.

As part of the weCare system, safety champions from different craft groups across the health service have feedback conversations with people reported via the weCare system. In 2022, we passed our milestone of having more than 200 Safety Champions across the organisation to have feedback conversations.



# The RMH's new Workforce Ombuds offers confidential support to staff



**The RMH's 2021 People Matter Survey showed 36 per cent of staff reported they had experienced violence or aggression at work, while 18 per cent reported they had experienced bullying, 10 per cent reported having experienced sexual harassment and seven per cent reported they had experienced discrimination.**

However, we know these issues are not unique to the RMH and we are fortunate to be able to draw upon our collective experience with other health services to take action. In 2022, the RMH established the 'Workforce Ombuds', created to help tackle these issues and help to make the RMH a great place to work for everyone.

The Workforce Ombuds is an independent, impartial, confidential and informal service available to all the RMH Staff. It has two main functions:

- providing support to staff and managers to address bullying, harassment and other workplace concerns
- independently bringing de-identified systemic concerns to the attention of the RMH for resolution and advocating for a safe, fair, positive and respectful workplace. Lisa Klug heads up the Workforce Ombuds and explained how the service can independently and confidentially help staff to identify different options and choose a path of resolution to address any concerns.

"The RMH has many great avenues for speaking up which is really terrific," Lisa said.

"The Workforce Ombuds does not replace any of those avenues, but in fact complements them and sits alongside them.

*"No issue is too small to bring to the Ombuds office and no issue is too large. I do encourage staff to come early though, particularly when something has just happened that troubles you.*

*"There are often a lot more resolution options available than people realise – both informal and formal – particularly at the earlier stages of a dispute or a conflict or behavioural issue.*

*"By listening with an open mind, I can help guide you through these options and provide the support you need to address any concerns."*

Bullying is repeated, unreasonable behaviour over time. It often starts with low level behaviours that create a growing imbalance of power, and make it harder for the victim to address with each repetition.

Lisa said, "While one or two low level abrasive interactions by a colleague may be put down to a bad day, and we all have those occasionally, it's a good rule of thumb that if you feel uncomfortable after a third interaction, it is time to act, as it's not ok for these behaviours to persist or escalate.

*"Speaking up can be hard for some of us, especially if we have a conflict avoidant or conflict accommodating style. Using the Safety CODE is a great option, and if you need some extra support to explore other options, or would like some conflict coaching to build your conflict confidence and address behaviours that are troubling you, help is available from the Workforce Ombuds."*

**Pictured:** Lisa Klug

# Modern Slavery Act

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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 FY21/22

The modern slavery statement (Statement) below represents our commitment to identify, assess, and address modern slavery risks in our operations and supply chain and is in compliance with our reporting requirements under the Modern Slavery Act 2018 (Cth).

This Statement is made 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 2021 to 30th June 2022.

## Modern slavery landscape

The International Labour Organisation estimates that up to 50 million people were living in modern slavery conditions in calendar year 2021. 28 million of which fall under corporate sector exploitation, including children.

The Asia Pacific region has the highest number of people in forced labour (15 million) and the Arab States the highest prevalence (5.3 per thousand people).

We know that there are modern slavery risks associated with the supply of equipment and consumables supplied across the health sector. This includes the manufacture of surgical gloves from Malaysia, surgical equipment from Pakistan, garments and linen from India and other medical equipment sourced from Asia.

## Our supply chain

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:

<https://healthsharevic.org.au/hsv-purchasing-policies/modern-slavery-2/>

## Key actions taken to assess and address risks

Over the FY2021/22 reporting period, the RMH has taken the following actions to identify and address modern slavery risks in its supply chain:

## Modern slavery risk assessment

In August 2021, HSV provided health services a Modern Slavery Risk Assessment Report (Report) to assist health services in their reporting obligation under the MSA. The Report risk rated 153 suppliers that the RMH transacted with.

We have continued to monitor and assess our transactions with suppliers categorised as 'very high' and in FY2021/22 determined that there were no transactions with such suppliers.

### People and training

As part of our ongoing training and development we have participated in a series of community of learning sessions around the following topics:

- Modern Slavery Statements (July 2021)
- Modern Slavery Risk Assessments (August 2021)
- Demonstrating Progress (September 2021)
- Good Practice Reporting (October 2021)
- Australian Border Force workshop (November 2021)
- Work Program Update (March 2022)
- Supplier Risk Remediation (April 2022)
- Modern Slavery Act 2018 (Cth) (May 2022).

### Tools and policies

- Developed a modern slavery framework and policy which includes a statement on combatting modern slavery in supply chains and capturing allegations of modern slavery practice(s) in its remit of complaints management, enabling the development of remediation processes. This policy will be an important internal document that outlines the RMH's position on procurement governance and activities, including its response to government policy.
- Developed an environmental, social and governance (ESG) risk assessment tool, which incorporates assessment of modern slavery risks.

### Supplier due diligence

- Included modern slavery questions in our market engagement documentation as part of due diligence and to gain a greater understanding of our supply chains.
- 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 ([www.buyingforvic.gov.au/supplier-code-conduct](http://www.buyingforvic.gov.au/supplier-code-conduct)).

- Included explicit modern slavery clauses into our contracts, which requires suppliers to meet its obligations under the Act with the option to audit and investigate non-compliance.

## Effectiveness of our actions

As noted above, we have taken a number of steps to build upon our modern slavery framework. This includes our ongoing work to train and educate staff on modern slavery risks, developing tools and policies as well as ensuring our contracts and tendering processes incorporate modern slavery compliance requirements.

While COVID-19 continues to present ongoing challenges to the global supply chain and our operating environment, we will continue to focus on our highest risk suppliers in the next 12 months, with a view to consult, collaborate and develop solutions to reduce the risk of modern slavery in their supply chains wherever possible.

## 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:

- Undertaking further modern slavery assessments beyond our collective purchasing agreements.
- Collaborating with HSV and our high risk suppliers, to explore options that create longer-term solutions to reduce the modern slavery risks in their supply chain.
- Working closely with HSV to develop tools, processes and policies to promote awareness of and address modern slavery risks in the health sector.

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.

# Our Finance and Investment Responsibilities

The Royal Melbourne Hospital (RMH) is primarily funded by the Department of Health is a not for profit entity.

We are fortunate to receive additional funding from a range of philanthropic sources including individual donors, philanthropic organisations and health advocacy groups that invest in medical research.

In 2022, we developed a RMH Gift Review and Acceptance Procedure to ensure we were governed by detailed principles when considering the acceptance of philanthropic gifts to the RMH. All donations to the RMH must comply with financial, legal, ethical and reputational standards while observing the interests of the donor.

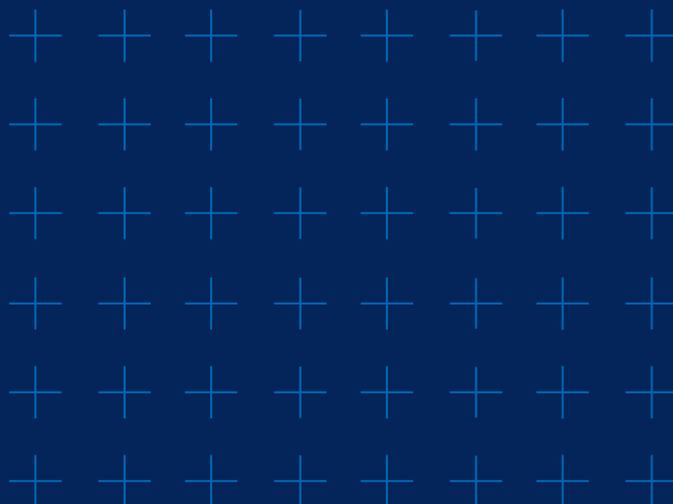
When the offer of a donation is made it is either ranked as low, medium, high or immediate escalation risk.

If a donation is deemed medium, high or immediate escalation risk, the Royal Melbourne Hospital Foundation must undertake appropriate due diligence which may include:

- Background research into a potential individual or organisation;
- Assessment of past philanthropic giving;
- Ensuring compliance with Australian Tax Office definitions of a charitable gift where no material benefit may be realised by the donor;
- Consultation with the donor regarding motivations in making a philanthropic gift;
- Documenting the terms of the gift through a gift agreement if the gift is greater than \$25,000;
- Depending on the size and nature of the gift, the assessment process may involve consultation with other appropriate RMH staff members and organisational leaders.



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**Advancing health  
for everyone, every day**



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