



the women's
the royal women's hospital

Creating healthier futures for women and babies

The Women's
Strategic Plan
2022-25



Summary

Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

The Royal Women's Hospital acknowledges and pays respect to the Wurundjeri and Boonwurrung peoples of the Kulin Nations, the Traditional Owners of the country on which our sites at Parkville and Sandringham stand and we pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

The Women's is committed to improving health equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, children and families and we recognise the fundamental significance of cultural traditions, beliefs and connection to country for the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We acknowledge the importance of kinship and family structures as a cohesive force that binds Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and we recognise their cultures, community connection, and self-determination as critical protective factors for wellbeing.

Gender impact assessment

The Women's is committed to meeting the diverse needs of our patients, consumers, and people and our gender equality work intersects with our commitment to human rights. In line with Victoria's Gender Equality Act 2020, this plan has been subject to a gender equity review, which subsequently found a gender impact assessment will be required during the planning and implementation phase of each of the 14 initiatives. In addition, the Women's will develop a key performance indicator for our global measures of success to capture our gender equality progress.

Copyright © 2022, The Royal Women's Hospital

Printed on Ecostar+ 100% Recycled Silk



Our Vision

Creating healthier futures
for women and babies

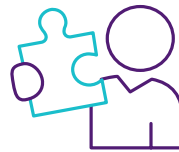
Our Strategic Directions



We provide
leading care
for women
and newborns



We partner to
create exceptional
experiences
every day



We are the best
place to work,
learn and
contribute



We lead
and partner
to influence
change

Our Declaration

We are committed to the social model of health
We care for women from all walks of life
We recognise that sex and gender affect health and healthcare
We are a voice for women's health
We seek to achieve health equity

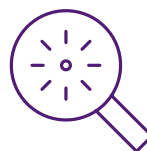
Our Values



Courage



Passion



Discovery



Respect

Our community

Our community is made up of our patients and consumers, our people, and our partners.

Our patients and consumers

Our patients¹ and consumers² live in Melbourne's inner north, south east and across Victoria. They come from a range of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, reflecting the full diversity of Victoria's rich and varied population. They speak 87 different languages and come from 178 different regions across the globe.

We are committed to the inclusion of our diverse patients and consumers and to closing the gap in health status between Indigenous and non-Indigenous women and babies. We care for vulnerable women, many of whom may be newly arrived migrants who face cultural, language or other barriers when accessing healthcare. Ensuring our services are culturally sensitive and responsive to the often complex needs of these women and their families is an ongoing priority as is ensuring consumers from a diverse range of backgrounds are given the opportunity to partner with us as we seek to improve our health service.

Our people

Our people are critical to the delivery of our services, the patient experience and the quality of our care. Our highly skilled and committed workforce has a broad range of qualifications and expertise and is instrumental to the success of the Women's and this strategy. Specialist roles span: nursing and midwifery; administration; clerical and support; medical; allied health; research; and social support services. Our volunteers help to create a welcoming and professional environment for the thousands of women and their families who come through our doors, with around 100 active hospital and community volunteers and auxiliaries undertaking a wide variety of support roles.

Our partners

We partner with other organisations and key stakeholders in the health sector to strengthen our services and advance the health of women and newborns. Our partners include local and state government, universities, other health services, and donors. Our location within the Melbourne Biomedical Precinct affords many opportunities for sharing knowledge and services, and for collaboration with health services, universities, and research organisations nearby. Further, we work with rural and regional services around Victoria and other health services around Australia to expand the delivery of our services and build capability throughout the sector.

- 1 The term 'patient' refers to people who are currently receiving care from the Women's. This includes babies, women, men, and people of all sex and gender identities.
- 2 The term 'consumer' refers to people, families, carers and communities who engage with our services. They may be past or future patients, family or community members. The term includes people involved in decision-making, health consumer representatives who provide advice on behalf of consumers, and carers who often have an important role in healthcare decision-making and care-giving.



Foreword

We are delighted to present *The Royal Women's Hospital Strategic Plan 2022-25* — an ambitious and bold roadmap that will guide our organisation over the next three years.

While we proudly embrace the Women's long and distinguished history as Australia's first and largest specialist hospital for women and newborns, our new vision reflects our aspiration towards a broader and bigger horizon.

This strategy identifies the challenges we need to address and outlines how we will draw on our current and future resources to transform the way we operate and achieve our goals. It acknowledges the many different aspects of our work that contribute to the betterment of an individual woman or baby, as well as the areas beyond our immediate sphere that influence systemic and structural change.

While we have big ambitions, our focus is first and foremost on the provision of high quality, evidence-based, person-centred healthcare that is safe, effective, and supportive of all women and babies. We are committed to continually improving and utilising the social model of health to ensure we acknowledge, understand, and respond to the individual needs of women and, across all aspects of our work, we are committed to identifying and reducing inequities in healthcare.

This strategy was developed during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in Australia. It recognises, responds, and proactively plans for the dynamic environment within which we find ourselves. While we know the strategic initiatives outlined in this plan for the next three years are ambitious, we are confident they are achievable. We look forward to the successful realisation of our strategic directions by 2025 when:

- The Women's is nationally recognised as a leader in women's health, and we have partnered with others to ensure all our patients and consumers receive the highest quality and safest care.
- Our consumers, patients and community are empowered to truly partner in their care and work with us to co-design the Women's experience models and initiatives.

- Our diverse, highly skilled workforce, volunteers and contributors are energised and equipped to bring their very best to work and proactively contribute to the realisation of our vision.
- The Women's is recognised as a health system leader, and our peers are actively seeking our support and partnership on innovative service models, expert advice, transformative research, and system solutions.

Critically, the progress the Women's will make in the next three years will form the first steps in realising our longer-term ambitions:

- Our health service is widely recognised as truly world class
- Women's and newborn's lives are deeply transformed through solving complex problems
- Our reputation as an employer of choice is recognised on a global scale.

This strategy has been developed through extensive consultation with our Board, Executive, staff and volunteers, partners, community, consumers and their families/carers. Our engaged and committed Board and Executive have set the strategic focus for the next three years, which has informed the directions and initiatives outlined in this plan. These have been tested, shaped, and refined by our leaders, frontline and corporate staff and consumers.

We are especially proud of the significant contribution of our consumers and community to this strategy. The Board and Executive thank everyone who has made a contribution to the development of this strategy. We are grateful for their time, insights and generous reflections shared throughout this process.

We look forward to partnering with you as we work towards our vision over the next three years.



S Matthews

Professor Sue Matthews

Chief Executive Officer
The Women's



Lyn Swinburne

Ms Lyn Swinburne AO

Board Chair
The Women's

Our vision, declaration and values

The Women’s vision, declaration and values reflect our promise to our patients and consumers, and articulate our culture and commitment to our community and each other.

Our vision: Creating healthier futures for women and babies

The Women’s vision describes our aspirations for the future; it paves the way forward and informs the Women’s declaration, values, and ultimately our strategic priorities.

During 2021, we actively engaged a wide variety of stakeholders to help us articulate our vision statement. This process was critically important and helps to inspire and motivate our people to achieve.

Creating healthier futures for women and babies declares our aspiration to be impactful beyond the confines of our hospital, ambitious in our pursuit of change, and deliberate in our approach to partnering with and listening to the varied and powerful voices of women.

Our legacy: the Women’s Declaration

For more than 165 years, the Women’s has led the advocacy and advancement of women’s health and wellbeing; advocating for women and babies, campaigning for change, and championing the cause of health equity.

We are committed to the social model of health

We care for women from all walks of life

We recognise that sex and gender affect health and healthcare

We are a voice for women’s health

We seek to achieve health equity

Developed over a decade ago, the Women’s Declaration reflects that legacy and captures the essence of who we are and what we stand for. This culture has endured through more than a century of transformations in health and healthcare, as well as major changes in the social, economic and legal status of women.

As part of the strategic planning processes, we refined the Women’s Declaration to better reflect our advocacy and equity commitment.

Values

The Women’s values align our people to a common purpose. They help to build productive working relationships, and support us to achieve our strategy and vision. As part of the development of this plan, we have engaged in an organisational discussion about how we embody our values: Courage, Passion, Discovery and Respect. The resulting value statements seek to bring the values to life, reflecting the language used by our people.



Courage

We have the courage to listen, act and change.



Passion

We are passionate about the work we do together.



Discovery

We bring curiosity to our work every day.



Respect

Our relationships are built upon respect.

Our changing landscape

The Women's is operating in a highly dynamic environment.

Ongoing pressures, such as increased demand for healthcare, the COVID-19 pandemic, rising rates of chronic and complex conditions within our community, funding constraints and rapidly developing technology, and climate change continue to impact our organisation. More recently, the Women's is increasingly influenced by changing consumer expectations of healthcare, the need to focus on gender and gender equity, and significant reform within the Victorian and Commonwealth health systems.

In this context, a number of strategic opportunities and challenges present themselves and have fundamentally shaped the development of this strategic plan.

Contributing to an effective and efficient health system

As a specialist hospital within the Melbourne Biomedical Precinct, the Women's plays an important role within a cooperative and networked precinct, as well as the broader health system. From a precinct perspective, the Women's is experiencing major change and opportunity, and our health service partnerships are playing a significant role in shaping the Women's services, capacity and future models. From a state-wide perspective, there is a continuing need to build capability within the sector; and as a tertiary centre for specialist care, we have a critical role in building system capacity and improving access to non-acute, as well as specialist services, for women and babies across the state. Nationally, the health reform agreement includes new funding models and other significant reforms, which are still in

transition, and additional research and investment opportunities are emerging. To ensure this complex environment is effectively managed and opportunities realised, we must be well positioned to influence strategic and funding decisions and diversify our revenue sources, ensuring we are a natural partner for all levels of government.

Addressing demand

Significant population growth is expected in Victoria's inner north and west over the next few decades, with growth in the female population aged 20-44 years and 70 years and over. Accordingly, we are likely to see growth in demand for maternity and neonatal services as well as healthcare for older women. Increasing complexity in these cohorts and other demographic and social changes are also impacting service demand and placing additional pressure on existing health service infrastructure, models of care and workforces.

Our limited capacity to respond to demand, due to our restricted space and infrastructure at Parkville and current models of care, is a major consideration of this strategy and one which we are seeking to address through collaboration with government, health service partners, and the Parkville precinct as well as the appropriate use of our Carlton assets. As part of the Victorian health ecosystem, we will work to better understand how infrastructure investment across the system will also assist in meeting future demand.



Attracting and retaining the very best talent

Like all health services, a major challenge is the attraction and retention of highly skilled and engaged professionals, particularly in some key clinical roles. Our people are our most important asset and fundamental to the delivery of exceptional patient care. In a highly competitive labour market, the Women's needs to anticipate and respond to workforce shortages while ensuring its existing workforce is empowered, engaged and supported. To enhance our attraction and retention, work has been ongoing to develop our unique employment offering with an emphasis on promoting healthy teams through safety and wellbeing programs, encouraging diversity, inclusion and belonging, enhancing leadership capabilities and opportunities, and promoting cultural change to address discrimination, family violence and poor behaviour.

Reducing growing inequity

A number of economic, social, environmental and political factors continue to lead to growing inequity within our community; and for some, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated inequities, particularly amongst our patient cohort. People experiencing homelessness, mental illness, addiction and those who are newly arrived, and may have experienced trauma, have significant health, social and economic disadvantage. Meanwhile family violence and sexual assault is experienced across the full social spectrum. Indigenous women are vulnerable to health inequities that prevent access to culturally appropriate and effective health services, and women with disability experience significantly poorer health over their lifetime. Other groups face barriers in accessing services many of us take for granted, such as assisted reproduction services and abortion and contraception. Victoria's Royal Commission into Family Violence and the Royal Commission into Mental Health both highlight the ongoing issues facing many people and provide effective recommendations to change the service system, as well as our culture and day-to-day actions. The Women's will continue to strengthen our social model of health approach in its efforts to address some of the inherent inequities in our health system.

Meeting changing consumer expectations

Consumer and community expectations of health services are rapidly changing. Women rightly expect to be actively involved in decision-making about every aspect of their care, and to be able to access information that will inform these decisions. Contemporary models of care for women and newborn services reflect the primacy of the patient experience underpinned by the key principles of safety, continuity of care and choice. Partnering with women on patient experience models and care plans is important to us and aligns with our commitment to reducing health inequity.

Rapidly changing technology

The exponential growth in technological solutions and their application within healthcare settings has challenged established practices and provided previously unimaginable opportunities. Health services within the Melbourne Biomedical Precinct are now realising the benefits of a precinct-wide electronic medical record system, vastly improving our ability to diagnose, treat and care for patients. It has improved patient safety, clinical processes and collaboration. Data is being applied to machine learning, artificial intelligence and analytics to improve our systems and research capacity. Technology also offers improvement for the patient experience, enabling our patients to access their own health information and interact with clinicians. Further advances in virtual health, telemedicine and technologies are enabling the delivery of healthcare in the home or close to home, improving access for patients while maintaining the quality of our care.

Environmental concerns

Environmental and financial sustainability are persistent challenges faced by all health services. Health services contribute to Victoria's overall energy and water use and it is important that we continue to develop initiatives to reduce use and waste, and contribute to the state government's goal of net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Climate change continues to have a great effect on our community and we expect this will contribute to changing expectations and service delivery. Sustainable healthcare practices mean the Women's will focus on reducing waste and addressing energy consumption, benefiting both the environment and our bottom line. Over the life of this plan, our people will be engaged in a number of local activities aimed at continuously improving our sustainable healthcare practice.

Our strategic directions

The Women's strategic directions describe the outcomes we aim to achieve by 2025.

There are four strategic directions that will guide our work over the next three years:



We provide leading care for women and newborns



We partner to create exceptional experiences every day



We are the best place to work, learn and contribute



We lead and partner to influence change

Each strategic direction is supported by a set of initiatives. There are 14 initiatives in total, each contributing to the overall success of the strategic plan. The detail included alongside each initiative characterises the actions that will be taken over the next three years.

A set of eight global measures of success will be used to monitor our progress against each of the strategic directions. Our performance will be measured against these global measures over the life of the strategic plan.

This will enable us to demonstrate continuous improvement; analyse progress against achieving our strategic directions and vision; and help us to better understand areas that may require more investment or focus.

Progress against each of the global measures will be regularly reported to the Women's Board, Executive, and internal and external stakeholders.

Realising our vision

Strategic directions and initiatives will be implemented through the annual operational and business planning process. This will be aligned to our annual budgets to ensure we have the resourcing we need to achieve our strategic objectives.



Strategy on a page



Strategic direction

We provide leading care for women and newborns

Global measures

- Responsive and accessible care
- Exceptional health outcomes
- Safe and high quality care

Initiatives

- Strengthen and implement evidence-based, person-centred models of care
- Further expand our services beyond the hospital walls to increase access and choice
- Embed an integrated and systemic social model of health to meet the diverse needs of women and newborns



Strategic direction

We partner to create exceptional experiences every day

Global measures

- Exceptional experiences at every interaction

Initiatives

- Embed shared patient/consumer decision-making across care settings based on a deep understanding of our patients and consumers
- Strengthen our digital health environment to improve the way we communicate and share information
- Address demand capacity through our physical spaces to promote positive experiences for all



Strategic direction

We are the best place to work, learn and contribute

Global measures

- Engaged and satisfied staff and volunteers

Initiatives

- Evolve how we work and secure a skilled and diverse workforce
- Strengthen our workplace culture and improve our people's wellbeing
- Transform our people management systems and tools to improve our everyday experiences
- Realise the potential of our people by creating opportunities to foster learning and growth



Strategic direction

We lead and partner to influence change

Global measures

- Greater impact on the health issues that matter to women
- Increased research impact and reach
- Increased systems leadership, capability building, and partnership with external stakeholders

Initiatives

- Strengthen our leadership role and collaborations to effect positive change for women and newborns
- Courageously lead advocacy, informed by the voices of women
- Accelerate our role as experts and translate research, knowledge and evidence to inform everything we do
- Grow our funding base through philanthropy and partnerships to amplify our impact



Strategic direction:

We provide leading care for women and newborns

We remain committed to providing accessible, high-quality, and safe care that achieves the best possible health outcomes for women and newborns. As clinical advances and technologies continue to improve, the design and delivery of our services must also evolve. Co-designed, contemporary, and person-centred models of care will be essential for sector leadership and critical to the future of our service as we work to expand our capacity and meet demand.

Initiatives

We will strengthen and implement evidence-based, person-centred models of care.

- Developing and evolving new models of care, such as consumer led models, across all clinical specialties – in partnership with patients and consumers
- Embedding processes for continuous improvement of existing models in response to our rapidly changing environment
- Strengthening and expanding models of care, such as Caseload Midwifery and Midwives in Small Teams (MIST)
- Expanding our reproductive and fertility services to improve equity of access through the provision of public fertility services

We will further expand our services beyond the hospital walls to increase access and choice.

- Implementing novel virtual care technologies and modalities to deliver services closer to home
- Building on the virtual care measures implemented during COVID-19
- Improving workflows, platforms, and the digital literacy of consumers, patients, staff and volunteers
- Expanding and enhancing the Parkville Health Hub patient portal as part of the electronic medical record system, to give more patients access to their health information

We will embed an integrated and systemic social model of health to meet the diverse needs of women and newborns.

- Embedding the social model of health across all clinical specialties and continuously looking for ways to consider the social determinants of health for all patients
- Embedding best practice in the social model of health across sites, patient cohorts, and service types
- Enhancing community outreach and collaboration with health and community based providers to ensure the Women's meets patient and consumer diverse needs

Global measures of success

Responsive and accessible care

Exceptional health outcomes

Safe and high-quality care

Strategic direction:

We partner to create exceptional experiences every day



Creating exceptional experiences with our patients and consumers is fundamental to the provision of leading care. As our models of care evolve, we will continue to develop new ways to create the exceptional experiences for which we are known. The increasing diversity and variety of our patients and consumers means there are greater opportunities to improve the patient experience and make sure all women consistently experience a safe, respectful and seamless journey through our service.

Initiatives

We will embed shared patient/consumer decision-making across care settings based on a deep understanding of our patients and consumers.

- Engaging and partnering with our diverse consumers to develop and embed an overarching approach to consumer engagement
- Developing our staff, volunteers, and management capability so consumer partnership principles become part of the fabric of our day-to-day work
- Continuing to roll out the Creating Exceptional Experiences program

We will strengthen our digital health environment to improve the way we communicate and share information.

- Ensuring electronic medical record data is accurate, easily extractable and analysed, and clearly communicated
- Enabling timely two-way digital communication with health partners, primary care, and specialists
- Utilising the Parkville Health Hub patient portal to its fullest potential
- Redeveloping our website to further position the Women's as a trusted and authoritative source of information
- Upgrading and embedding digital working tools and systems to reduce manual work, duplication and errors and increase integration and automation

We will address demand and capacity through our physical spaces to promote a positive experience for all.

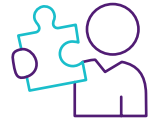
- Planning and preparation, in partnership with other health services, for a new hospital site at the Arden Renewal Precinct in North Melbourne
- Completing the asset strategy review and partnering with the Department of Health to ensure the best use of our assets to meet the strategic directions
- Working with a diverse range of consumers, staff, and management to continuously improve the inclusivity and accessibility of our sites and spaces

Global measures of success

Exceptional experiences at every interaction

Strategic direction:

We are the best place to work, learn and contribute



Our people are instrumental to the success of this plan and to ensuring we continue to provide safe and high quality care. Managing and responding to the day-to-day pressures and demands of a busy public hospital, while striving to create exceptional experiences with our patients and consumers, requires us to think differently about how we support our staff and organise our services. We need to be responsive in offering contemporary workforce models to attract, recruit, and retain the brightest and the best.

Initiatives

We will evolve how we work and secure a skilled and diverse workforce.

- Developing the workforce models that support our vision for high quality provision of leading care
- Developing flexible working arrangements, greater workforce and management diversity, more advanced scope roles and career pathways, and greater utilisation of volunteers and alumni
- Implementing a strategy to retain our workforce and address current and future workforce shortages

We will strengthen our workplace culture to improve our people's wellbeing.

- Ensuring a working culture of support and encouragement, built on positive reinforcement and an understanding of our people and their needs
- Focusing on a foundation of physical and psychological safety across all areas and levels of our organisation

We will transform our people management systems and tools to improve our everyday experiences.

- Upgrading outdated people management systems
- Improving how we facilitate the transfer of information across our services and sites

We will realise the potential of our people by creating opportunities to foster learning and growth.

- Embedding a culture of continuous learning across the Women's
- Investing in the capability and skill building of our staff, volunteers, and management
- Investing in leadership development at all levels

Global measures of success

Engaged and satisfied staff & volunteers

We lead and partner to influence change



Fulfilling our role as a health system leader enables more women and newborns to access leading care and exceptional experiences. This is inherently reliant on high quality translational research, strong partnerships, focused advocacy, and a leadership mindset at all levels of the organisation. Growing and diversifying our funding sources will give us the scope to pilot initiatives that will inform new and innovative practices, including programs that reflect our social model of health.

Initiatives

We will strengthen our leadership role and collaborations to effect positive change for women and newborns.

- Using our expertise, knowledge, and research in women’s health to deliver better health outcomes for women and babies
- Leading key partnership projects that support the health system to build capability for change
- Partnering with other health services and women’s health organisations at the precinct, Health Service Partnership, regional, state-wide and national level to build capacity and expertise

We will courageously lead advocacy informed by the voices of women.

- Focusing on complex social issues such as family and sexual violence, promoting gender equality within a health context, and de-stigmatising women’s health issues
- Continuing to drive policy change and advocating for women’s choice and ability to exercise their reproductive rights
- Advocating for greater understanding of and responses to the social determinants of health

We will accelerate our role as experts and translate research, knowledge, and evidence to inform everything we do.

- Expanding the depth and breadth of our research and undertaking new research into underfunded and stigmatised areas of women’s health
- Attracting and retaining the brightest and best researchers from across the globe
- Exploring the establishment of a Women’s Research Institute as the first and only hospital-based research institute in Australia with a dedicated focus on women’s health

We will grow our funding base through philanthropy and partnerships to amplify our impact

- Creating a new model and culture of philanthropy and community investment that has a clear and compelling case for support and works in partnership with donors to meet their philanthropic goals
- Creating additional funding streams to support our core services and partner to pilot new initiatives that deliver increased value to the community
- Working with investors and supporters to strategically invest in high value innovation and research
- Building a sustainable donor base

Global measures of success

Greater impact on the health issues that matter to women

Increased research impact and reach

Increased systems leadership, capability building, and partnership with external stakeholders

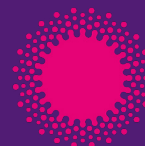


For more information or to
request this document in
another format, please contact:

T (03) 8345 2234
E comms@thewomens.org.au

Locked Bag 300
Parkville VIC 3052
Australia

www.thewomens.org.au



the women's
the royal women's hospital