

The Women's Strategic Plan 2026–2030

Creating healthier futures
for women and babies



the women's
the royal women's hospital



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A note on language use: While we have used the word 'women' as a reference point in this document, The Royal Women's Hospital welcomes all cis and trans women, gender non-binary and gender-diverse individuals to our hospital. We acknowledge that many people of diverse identities, bodies, and lived experiences require and deserve access to our services. Our commitment is to provide care that is inclusive, affirming, and respectful of all identities, genders, sexualities, abilities, and beliefs. Using the term 'women' helps to retain consistency in communicating our vision and purpose, while our strategy acknowledges, respects and responds to the diversity of those who seek our care.

Foreword

For 170 years, the Women's has stood alongside women, babies and families—providing care, advancing knowledge, and advocating for health equity in areas that are too often overlooked. Our history is one of leadership, courage and impact. This strategic plan sets our direction for the next chapter of that legacy.

The Women's Strategic Plan 2026–2030 is shaped by a clear and enduring purpose: **to create healthier futures for women and babies**. It reflects who we are today, the needs of the communities we serve, and the responsibility we carry as Australia's leading specialist women's and newborn health service. It outlines our ambition for the next decade, while articulating our strategic focus for the next five years.

The health system in which we operate is shifting—marked by increasing demand, growing complexity, workforce changes and significant reform. At the same time, women's health is receiving unprecedented attention and investment, creating new opportunities to affect large-scale change. This plan responds to both realities. It is ambitious, outward and forward looking and grounded in our role as a trusted leader in care, research and clinical practice and reflects our commitment to being a system partner.

At its heart, this strategy is about impact—improving experiences and outcomes for women, babies and families; strengthening health system capability across Victoria; and driving discovery that translates into better care now and for generations to come. It recognises that progress depends on genuine partnership: with consumers and communities, with our workforce, with First Nations people, and with our many partners across healthcare, research, philanthropy and government.

Equity, inclusion and cultural safety are foundational to our work and to this strategy. This plan reinforces our commitment to reconciliation, to listening to lived experience, and to addressing long-standing inequities in health outcomes. It celebrates our workforce and underscores our commitment to their development and wellbeing. It also affirms the importance of sustainability—environmental, financial and organisational—as essential to delivering lasting change.

We are proud of this strategy and confident in its intent. Most importantly, we are committed to its delivery. Our Board and Executive will lead with clarity and purpose, ensuring strong governance, accountability, and active engagement as we translate this plan into meaningful action.

We thank our staff, consumers, partners and communities for the expertise, insight and passion that helped shape this plan. Together, we will continue to lead, innovate and advocate—creating healthier futures for women and babies across Victoria and beyond.



Sue Matthews
Chief Executive Officer
The Women's



Shelly Park
Board Chair
The Women's



Acknowledgement of Country

The Women's acknowledges the Wurundjeri peoples of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners of the land where we are privileged to work and provide care. We extend that respect to the Traditional Owners of neighbouring lands where we operate programs and provide services.

We pay our deepest respect to Elders, Ancestors and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We recognise that sovereignty was never ceded, and that colonisation continues to impact the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

We are committed to walking alongside First Peoples in the spirit of truth, justice and self-determination. At the Women's, we strive towards health equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, children, and families. We honour the enduring cultural traditions, knowledge systems, spiritual practices, and deep connection to Country that are essential to health and wellbeing. We acknowledge the strength of kinship networks, community ties, and cultural identity as powerful protective factors that uphold health and resilience.

Our commitment to reconciliation

Promoting health justice and providing culturally safe care are core to our mission and values.

The Women's will continue to engage in truth-telling and strive for health justice by consulting with First Nations people on all matters relating to health and wellbeing, embedding self-determination in service delivery and research.

We will learn from and reflect on the findings of the Yoorrook Justice Commission and incorporate Treaty pillars.

We will continue to strengthen relationships with Aboriginal organisations and community members.

Communities we serve

Serving a diverse community

The Women's provides services to diverse communities living in central Melbourne, the inner north and inner west, and across Victoria. Our patients come from more than 190 countries and speak over 90 different languages. Our community reflects a wide range of cultural and religious backgrounds, abilities, genders and beliefs.

Many patients face cultural, language, psychosocial, physical or other barriers to accessing care. Ensuring our services respond to the complex and intersecting needs of individuals and communities is an ongoing priority.

Committing to culturally safe care

Colonisation continues to disproportionately impact First Nations peoples. Evidence demonstrates that when First Nations families are supported through culturally safe, continuity of care models, health outcomes improve, engagement is strengthened and women report more empowered and culturally affirming care experiences. Enhancing access to early, coordinated and culturally responsive services supports First Nations people to draw upon their inherent strengths, cultural identity and community support.

Victoria is home to more than 65,000 people who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Through dedicated programs, services and partnerships, we are committed to providing specialist care and support to First Nations women, babies and families from across Victoria and interstate.

Providing care across the lifespan

We provide care across the lifespan, supporting individuals and families at every stage of life; from preconception to neonatal care; from fertility preservation to pregnancy and birth; and for people of all ages navigating cancer treatment, menopause, pain, sexual assault and family violence.

Responding to a changing community

The needs of our community are evolving, with growing social vulnerability and complexity, increasing maternal age, rising rates of chronic and complex conditions, and growing demand for specialist services.

Patients and consumers are expecting to be active partners in their healthcare, with personalised information, greater choice and flexibility in how, when and where care is delivered. At the same time, a generational shift is underway; by 2030, more patients will have high levels of digital literacy and heightened expectations of integrated, digitally enabled care.

Together, these changes require redesigned and more flexible models of care, stronger integration across settings, and inclusive digital innovation to ensure safe, equitable and high-quality care.



Strategic context

An evolving health system

The Victorian health system is undergoing significant reform to improve equity of access and create a more connected system. This reform has seen the establishment of Local Health Service Networks (LHSNs). These are geographically defined groups of health services responsible for planning and delivering coordinated, high-quality care that meets community needs, as close to home as possible. The Women's is a member of the Parkville LHSN, with six other specialist and tertiary services that deliver care locally and across Victoria.

Alongside the establishment of LHSNs, the Department of Health continues to pursue systemic advancements that encompass preventative care in the community, innovation and improvement, First Peoples health and wellbeing, and building the strength and sustainability of the health workforce.

Focus on women's health

In Australia, women's health has become a government priority, underpinned by significant policy reform and investment. The Victorian Government has strengthened access to women's sexual and reproductive healthcare, enhanced responses to family violence, and invested in specialist care for women. At the Commonwealth level, reforms to Medicare, the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme and the Therapeutic Goods Administration—along with changes to professional practice—are improving access to medical abortion, contraception, menopause therapies and pelvic pain care. Through government partnerships and state-wide initiatives, there is further opportunity for system-wide improvement by uplifting clinical practice, care models and workforce capability across Victoria. This presents a strategic opportunity to translate reform into sustained, system-level impact.

Financial environment

We operate in an environment where public resources are inherently finite, reinforcing the importance of judicious and accountable financial management. This context requires health services to proactively strengthen their financial discipline to ensure that resources are used efficiently and deliver maximum value for the communities we serve. Rising demand, increasing clinical complexity and broader cost pressures underscore the strategic importance of this approach. By deliberately focusing on efficiency, prioritisation and careful stewardship, health services can build resilience and sustain the delivery of safe, high-quality and accessible care.

Workforce trends

Shifting expectations and trends across the local and global health workforce are creating an opportunity for health services to adapt and modernise how they attract, support and retain staff. Many experienced clinicians are approaching retirement, while newer generations are seeking different career pathways, greater mobility and more flexible ways of working. At the same time, growing patient demand, increasing clinical complexity and the use of technology are reshaping the skills and workforce models required. Responding effectively to these dynamics calls for sustained investment in recruitment, training and retention, alongside more flexible workforce models and a strengthened focus on wellbeing and safety. Together, these efforts support the development of a strong and sustainable workforce.

Our digital landscape

Digital technologies present significant opportunities to improve access, efficiency and quality of care. Advanced digital technologies and artificial intelligence are transforming care—streamlining workflows, supporting data-driven decision-making, and improving patient outcomes. Virtual care, remote monitoring and digitally enabled outpatient models will reduce pressure on inpatient services, while supporting care closer to home. Meanwhile patients are becoming more adept at using technology to monitor and educate themselves about their health. Navigating the integration of these digital solutions in an equitable way will be key to delivering our vision.

About us

Services

The Women's is Australia's first and leading specialist hospital dedicated to the care of women and newborns. Based in Parkville in the Melbourne Biomedical Precinct, the Women's plays a dual role, providing women's and newborn care for the local community and for those with complex needs from across Victoria.

For decades, we have been a leading advocate for women's health and health equity, focusing on areas that have historically been under-resourced or stigmatised. These include areas such as complex pregnancy, substance use in pregnancy, fertility care, pelvic pain, sexual assault, abortion and contraception care and menopause after cancer.

Our services include specialist adult inpatient wards, a 62-cot neonatal intensive care unit, 18 birthing suites, eight theatres, a women's health emergency centre, and specialist outpatient clinics. We have close linkages with the Royal Melbourne Hospital's intensive care unit and neonatal surgical services at the Royal Children's Hospital.

Each year, we provide almost 300,000 episodes of care across inpatient, specialist outpatient and women's emergency care settings — with over 8,000 babies born annually. The Women's receives over 400 referrals for specialist counselling support and advocacy services, and our sexual assault crisis line receives over 7,000 calls each year.

As a specialist referral centre for maternity and neonatal services (Level 6 capability) and a centre for gynaecological surgery, we receive referrals and transfers from across Victoria and interstate. We have a state-wide role leading specialist services, including public fertility care and provision of remote fetal medicine services in partnership with other health services.

Impactful research

The Women's is internationally recognised for its clinical excellence and groundbreaking research, led by research leaders shaping the future of women's and newborn health. We have pioneered national and global firsts, including the world's first pregnancy from ovarian tissue grafted outside a woman's pelvis, the birth of Australia's first IVF baby, Australia's first blood test to predict pre-eclampsia, and promising research on a simple test that could transform the diagnosis of endometriosis.

Our research drives advancements across a range of areas such as fertility technology, improving survival rates for premature babies, and delivering better outcomes for women with cancer. As a tertiary hospital, our research is directly embedded in our care, informing clinical practice nationally and globally.

People

Our people are fundamental to the delivery of safe, effective and equitable care. Their expertise and commitment across nursing and midwifery, medicine, allied health, research, social support services, administration and corporate services are essential to the achievement of our goals and the delivery of our organisational vision. Many of our staff strongly identify with our organisational values and have chosen to build long and enduring careers at the Women's, bringing deep expertise, continuity and a strong commitment to health equity. Our people reflect the diversity of the communities we serve, drawing strength from a wide range of cultural, religious and social backgrounds, and lived experiences. This enhances our capacity to deliver inclusive and culturally safe care. We are further strengthened by the contribution of our dedicated volunteers, whose generosity and commitment reflect our strong connection to our patients and community.

Partners

The Women's is a member of the Parkville Local Health Service Network, collaborating with our health service partners to deliver integrated, high quality care. Together, we are committed to improving equity of access by bringing specialist expertise closer to home and driving innovation in care delivery, research and workforce capability. As a state wide tertiary hospital, we partner with communities, local hospitals and primary care services through training and education programs, collaborations, research and shared models of care. Through our partnerships with governments, universities, research institutions and the philanthropic sector, we collaborate on initiatives to improve access, experience and outcomes.

Central to our work is our commitment to working in partnership with patients and consumers. We embed the voices of patients, families and community members in governance, planning and service improvement, recognising lived experience as essential to delivering safe, high quality and responsive care. Consumer perspectives inform our decision making through Board committees, alongside wider engagement mechanisms that ensure diverse community voices shape our priorities and improvement efforts.

Our promise

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.

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 170 years, the Women’s has been a leader in the advancement of women’s health and wellbeing, advocating for women and babies, campaigning for change, and championing the cause of health equity.

The Women’s declaration reflects this 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.

Our values

Aligning to a shared purpose

The Women’s values shape our culture, inform our decision-making, and guide our behaviours.

Our values support productive, respectful relationships with patients, families, partners and each other.

As we implement our strategy, our values act as a compass—helping us to navigate change, balance competing priorities, and make sound decisions. By embedding our values in leadership, workforce practices and everyday care, we strengthen trust, enable accountability, and support the delivery of our vision.

Our declaration

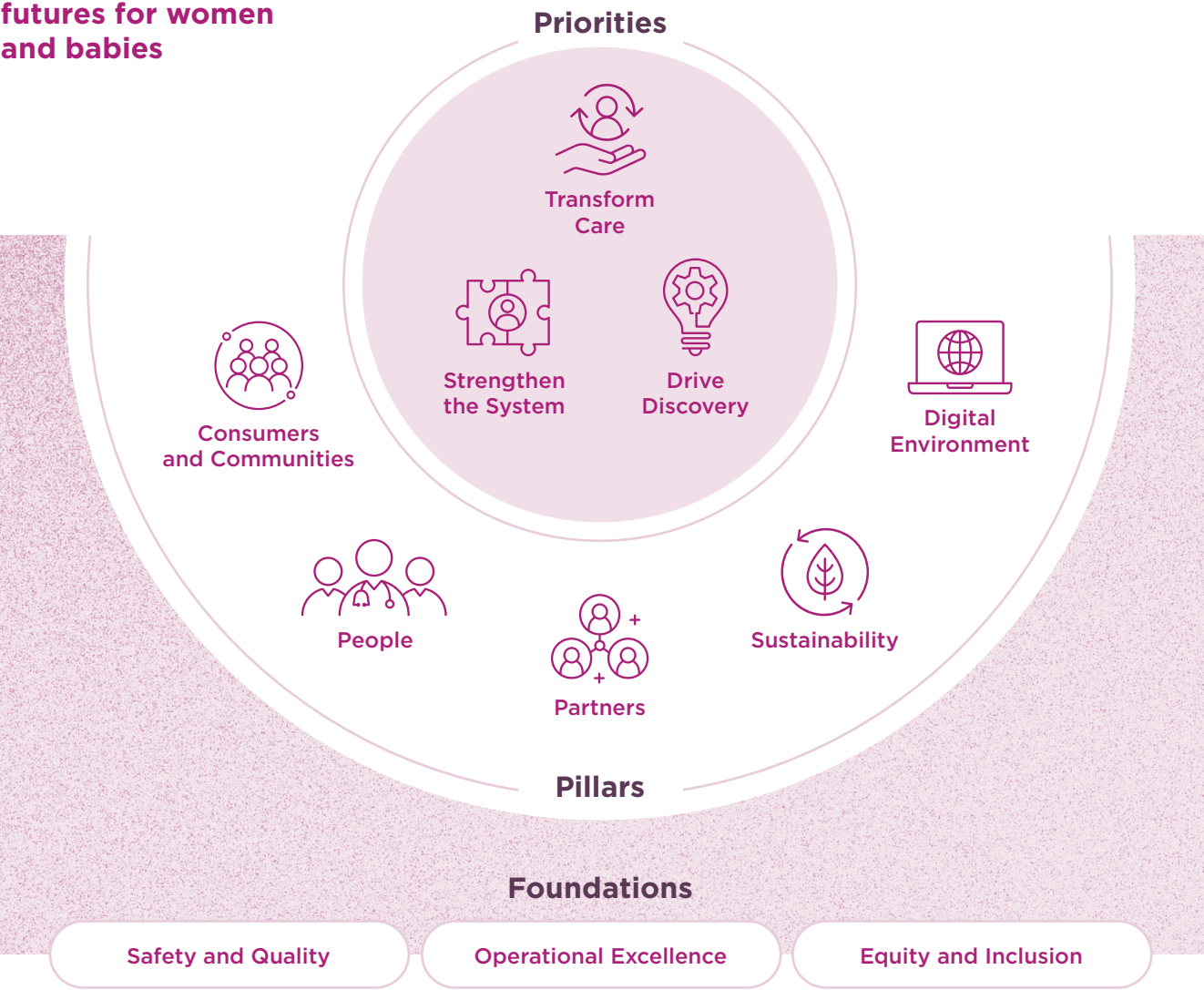
- We are committed to the social model of health
- We care for women from all walks of life
- We recognise that sex and gender affect health and healthcare
- We are a voice for women’s health
- We seek to achieve health equity

Our values

- **Courage**
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 strategy

Creating healthier
futures for women
and babies



Focus areas

Key areas where immediate, concerted and coordinated action is needed.

- Advance sex and gender equity in healthcare
- Increase in equitable pathways to parenthood
- Revolutionise outcomes and experiences of women with pelvic pain
- Close the access and knowledge gaps in abortion and contraception
- Enhance the experience of maternity care for all women
- Improve outcomes for the most vulnerable babies

Foundations

Our foundations are the critical, non-negotiable elements that underpin everything we do. These work together as the cornerstones of a safe, effective, sustainable and trusted public health service.

Safety and quality

The Women's is committed to the delivery of safe, high-quality care for our patients and maintaining a physically and psychologically safe environment for our workforce, volunteers, patients and their families.

We are assessed and accredited against the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards and comply with the regulatory and legislative requirements relevant to our specialist services and workforces. We also maintain strong clinical governance systems to continuously monitor, review and improve the reliability, safety and quality of our care across all our services.

We take a proactive approach to identifying and managing workplace hazards and risks. Through continuous improvement measures, we focus on preventing physical and psychological workplace injuries and illnesses and support the health and wellbeing of all who work in, receive care at, or visit our hospital.

Operational excellence

Operational excellence plays a crucial role in maintaining the provision of safe and high-quality care for our consumers and communities. Through continuous improvement and accountability, we make the best use of our valuable resources and assets, including our workforce, infrastructure, technology and funding.

This includes proactively managing and optimising our operational processes related to our people management, asset management, maintenance and security of our critical systems, data, infrastructure, and equipment.

As demand for the Women's services grow and community needs evolve, the Women's is advancing our models of care to ensure that care is responsive to patient and community needs. We also continue to partner with the Department of Health and the

Victorian Infrastructure Delivery Authority to advance the Parkville Precinct Redevelopment, which will deliver additional clinical capacity for the Women's, so that we can continue to meet the needs of women in inner Melbourne, and across Victoria into the future.

Equity and inclusion

Equity and inclusion are fundamental to the Women's role as a public health service. We recognise that health outcomes and experiences are shaped by factors like gender and gender identity, Aboriginality, disability and neurodiversity, culture, lived experience of trauma, socioeconomic circumstances and structural disadvantage, to name a few. We are committed to respecting and responding to these differences in the care we provide and the environments we create for our workforce and communities.

This strategic plan sits alongside frameworks and action plans that are specifically focused on identifying and enhancing equitable and inclusive approaches to healthcare. This includes our second Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2025–2027 and Aboriginal Workforce Plan 2026–2030, which set out actions to improve outcomes for First Nations consumers, communities and staff, and to strengthen cultural capability and safety across the organisation.

We meet our obligations under the *Victorian Gender Equality Act 2020* through the implementation and reporting of our Gender Equality Action Plan, reflecting both our specialist role in women's health and the role we play in advocating for safer and more inclusive workplaces that create strong foundations for a large and highly feminised workforce. Our Disability Action Plan further supports improved access, inclusion and participation for people with disability. Together, these plans provide a practical framework for progressing and sustaining equity, compassion, accessibility and inclusion across governance, workforce and care delivery.

Strategic priorities

As Victoria's flagship women's health service, we are committed to creating healthier futures for women and babies. Our strategic priorities are the core pathways through which we deliver our vision and create lasting impact. They connect our foundations, strategic pillars and focus areas into a coherent approach for action.



Transform care

Deliver best-practice care for exceptional and equitable experiences and outcomes.

Through innovation and the improvement of models of care and care systems, the Women's will reshape how healthcare is delivered for women, babies and families—making care more accessible, personalised, inclusive, and responsive to the diverse needs of the consumers and communities that we serve.

Our focus is on improving experiences and outcomes across the care continuum, leveraging virtual and digitally-enabled care, and elevating and embedding equity, safety and consumer partnership as standard practice. Our approaches will be scalable and transferable across the system, supporting better outcomes for women and babies well beyond our hospital.



Strengthen the system

Elevate health system capacity and capability.

The Women's has a unique role in strengthening capacity and capability across the health system through education, training and clinical leadership, with the goal of increasing health equity and enabling more care to be delivered closer to home.

We will build on our leadership in statewide programs, such as the Maternity Services Education Program and the Sexual and Reproductive Health Clinical Champions Network, to broaden capability and support of other services to deliver high-quality, evidence-based care. We will also strengthen our focus on system-wide leadership in women's and newborn health.



Drive discovery

Advance knowledge to improve health outcomes nationally and internationally.

The Women's is driven to fundamentally improve health outcomes for women and babies—now and for generations to come. As a world-class translational research hospital, we will continue to advance equitable health outcomes through the generation and application of discovery into practice. By leveraging the collective strengths of our researchers, clinicians and partners we will accelerate research translation to transform care and strengthen the system.

We will shape the future of health by advancing research into conditions that affect women exclusively, disproportionately, and differently, and by promoting a sex and gender-informed approach as a global standard for research and care.

Strategic pillars

Our strategic pillars advance and accelerate our impact across our strategic priorities. They are the key ingredients for effective, responsive and enduring change.



Consumers and communities

Partner with consumers and communities, placing them at the centre of everything we do.

Genuine partnership builds trust and confidence and is central to delivering safe, high-quality and equitable care. Listening through partnership ensures the voices of consumers and communities shape the way we design and deliver our care, recognising the vast lived experiences of the people we serve.

We will strengthen this pillar by:

- **Improving diversity and representation in consumer engagement** by removing barriers and creating more inclusive, culturally safe forums to share experiences and shape decision making.
- **Increasing access to clear, culturally safe consumer health information**, language support and decision-making tools to improve experiences and outcomes.
- **Strengthening feedback and learning systems** to enhance how we listen to, collect, analyse and respond to consumer feedback, and monitor equity in outcomes and experiences.



People

Create a culture of belonging, where our people learn, thrive and contribute to the future of healthcare.

Our people are central to our care, and their experience directly shapes patient outcomes. We will continue to be an organisation where people want to work, stay, and grow. By fostering wellbeing, development, diversity and sustainability, we create an environment where both our people and our patients thrive.

We will strengthen this pillar by:

- **Implementing our Aboriginal Workforce Plan** 2026–2030, with a vision for the Women's to be a rewarding place for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to work, thrive, and lead.
- **Building a culture of belonging**, where the workforce reflects the diversity of our community, and feels supported and psychologically safe to contribute and grow, including implementing the Women's Cultural Capability Framework and Anti-Racism Framework.
- **Re-imagining the future workforce**, including the development of new roles and scopes of practice, and leveraging the digital environment to enable more time to do the work that matters most with our patients, consumers and communities.
- **Fostering an environment** that cultivates innovation, creativity, research, improvement and learning, supported by investment in our digital and data capabilities.



Partners

Collaborate with our network, philanthropic and other partners to leverage the collective knowledge, expertise, and resources, and amplify impact.

Fostering strong external partnerships is not only a strategic necessity, but a powerful driver of innovation, impact and shared value. They are essential to realising our ambitions and in delivering greater benefit to the community.

We will strengthen this pillar by:

- **Expanding partnerships** with other health services, research institutions, universities, commercial partners, and philanthropy, to accelerate innovation, enhance the advancement of scientific knowledge, and address complex challenges across research and clinical domains.
- **Strengthen collaboration and partnerships** with key community and primary health services and organisations, including Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, multicultural community groups and networks, and women's health services, to advance progress towards our strategic goals.
- **Leveraging the opportunity of the Parkville LHSN** and linkages with other LHSNs to progress our strategic priorities through effective collaboration, including addressing sex and gender inequities in healthcare, enhancing access, experiences and outcomes of care, and developing and strengthening our workforce.
- **Exploring innovative approaches** to adapt to the changing clinical, research and funding landscape and embracing new opportunities, including commercial partnerships, and growing high-value, sustainable philanthropic partnerships.





Digital environment

Harness the full potential of the digital environment to advance our strategic priorities and our operations.

Digital tools and technological advances are transforming care by improving access, empowering patients and personalising diagnosis and treatment. These transformations are being informed and driven by data and analytics, with connected systems able to accelerate research, innovation, and new models of care-critical elements of the future of healthcare.

We will strengthen this pillar by:

- **Strengthening data foundations and intelligence** by improving clinical and operational data quality and access, building capability, leveraging precinct-wide data, and enhancing data and digital reliability, governance, security and resilience.
- **Embedding AI into clinical and operational workflows** to remove unnecessary administrative burden, and support predictive, personalised, and proactive care.
- **Scaling services using AI and digital tools** to enable virtual care, more connected care, and capacity uplift.
- **Developing staff and consumer confidence** in using digitally-enabled care models, through training, change management, and digital and data literacy, particularly considering needs of populations at risk of digital exclusion.



Sustainability

Be environmentally, socially and financially responsible, embedding sustainability in our operations.

Environmental and financial sustainability underpin the success of the Women's strategic plan and our long-term resilience. Responsible stewardship of resources means making decisions that balance current needs with those of future generations to ensure the hospital continues to deliver exceptional care.

We will strengthen this pillar by:

- **Renewing our Environmental Management Plan** to include clear priorities and measures, and leverage opportunities through the Parkville LHSN and the Parkville Precinct Redevelopment Project to advance progress.
- **Strengthening our financial sustainability and resilience** through prudent financial management, greater efficiency, and long-term planning, to create capacity to invest in our priority areas and improvement initiatives.
- **Enhancing our procurement and supply chain practices** to optimise value, ensure ethical, transparent and responsible sourcing, and reduce environmental impacts.

Focus areas

Our focus areas are where immediate, concerted and coordinated action is needed to advance outcomes for women and babies. These are the areas in which the Women's is best placed to lead. We will advance outcomes in our focus areas through initiatives that transform care, strengthen the system and drive discovery.

Advance sex and gender equity in healthcare

Advancing sex and gender equity in healthcare spans the full continuum of discovery and translation, through to holistic, inclusive and evidence-based care. The Women's has long recognised that sex and gender affect health and care across the lifespan.

As a specialist women's health service and a trusted system leader, we play a critical role in evolving care models, fostering sex and gender responsive care across the health system, and advancing sex and gender equity in research and translation.

We will transform care by:

- Identifying and implementing improvements in sex and gender responsive care models, including through better integration of research and clinical practice, guided by the voices of our consumers and communities.

We will strengthen the system by:

- Advocating, modelling and fostering the broad application of a sex and gender lens to healthcare and research across the Victorian and Australian health system, including strengthening data collection and systems.
- Collaborating to improve pathways to sex and gender responsive care within the Parkville LHSN and across Victoria.

We will drive discovery by:

- Supporting the advancement of sex and gender equity in health outcomes across the lifespan through research, including in under-researched areas of health which affect women differently and disproportionately, such as pelvic pain, cardiovascular, musculoskeletal, neurological and mental health.

Increase in equitable pathways to parenthood

Advances in technology and innovation are creating new pathways to parenthood for more people. However, overcoming geographical, cost and cultural barriers to care is fundamental to achieving equity.

Building on our established leadership in fertility practice and research equips us to lead the next frontier in equitable and inclusive public fertility care.

We will transform care by:

- Exploring cutting edge innovations and technologies, including conducting Victoria's first uterine transplant clinical trial in collaboration with our LHSN partners.
- Identifying and addressing barriers and inequities in fertility care for priority populations, in partnership with consumers and communities.
- Identifying opportunities to improve pathways for fertility preservation, in collaboration with our LHSN and other health service partners.

- Expanding virtual care models to address inequities of access and outcomes.

We will strengthen the system by:

- Collaborating with health service partners on training and other capacity building initiatives to expand fertility expertise and knowledge across the state and deliver care closer to home.

We will drive discovery by:

- Advancing understanding of the fundamental biology of human reproduction and infertility.
- Expanding knowledge, data and evidence on the utilisation of AI and other technologies in advancing reproductive outcomes.

Revolutionise outcomes and experiences of women with pelvic pain

Access to early, effective care for pelvic pain remains limited, contributing to long specialist wait times and significant impacts on women's wellbeing, relationships, workforce participation, and quality of life. These issues were surfaced and synthesised in the Inquiry into Women's Pain Report.

At the Women's, our well-established multidisciplinary care models and research into endometriosis and pelvic pain provide a strong foundation to transform the experiences and outcomes for women and girls across our state and beyond.

We will transform care by:

- Redesigning care pathways and services to better meet the holistic and diverse needs of women with pelvic pain across the lifespan, in collaboration with our LHSN partners.
- Establishing and embedding a dedicated intersectional consumer voice for pelvic pain to inform pathways and models of care.

We will strengthen the system by:

- Expanding the multidisciplinary pelvic pain management workforce, by leveraging our expertise and collaborating with education and training partners.
- Building capacity and capability in primary and community care, informed by our proven statewide models and programs working in collaboration with Women's Health Clinics across Victoria.

We will drive discovery by:

- Accelerating the translation of research into care, including non-surgical approaches to diagnosis and management.
- Leading the development of best-practice multidisciplinary care guidelines for pelvic pain, in collaboration with academic partners.

Close the access and knowledge gaps in abortion and contraception

Significant and persistent barriers to abortion and contraception care remain across Victoria and beyond. These are driven by intersecting factors including stigma, cost, geographic location and workforce capability.

The Women's has an established reputation in abortion and contraception care, based on our statewide leadership in care, capacity uplift, and system advocacy. Building on this foundation, we will continue to address access and knowledge gaps and strengthen equitable, person-centred care across Victoria.

We will transform care by:

- Investing in co-design with consumers and communities to develop models of care that are inclusive, accessible and responsive, with a focus on priority populations facing persistent barriers to care, including First Nations people, migrant and refugee communities, rural communities and LGBTQIA+ communities.
- Embedding psychosocial, wrap-around person-centred abortion care.

We will strengthen the system by:

- Seeking funds to establish a multidisciplinary abortion and contraception education and training centre, building on our existing leadership and statewide capability work, including support of Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health Hubs across Victoria.
- Leading the development of evidence-based guidelines for best-practice multidisciplinary abortion and contraception care.

We will drive discovery by:

- Leveraging our proposed abortion and contraception education and training centre to strengthen the evidence base and improve care, capability and outcomes.
- Strengthening data collection, research, and evaluation to drive continuous improvement in practice, service design and policy.





Enhance the experience of maternity care for all women

Improving experience and choice in maternity care, from conception through to the fourth trimester, is essential to achieving better clinical outcomes and reducing birth trauma and its long-term effects. This is particularly critical for priority populations, for whom access and choice is inconsistent, as highlighted by the Victorian Maternity Taskforce.

The Women's will drive a more inclusive, responsive, and equitable maternity care experience for all women by leveraging our strengths in care and our leadership in statewide capacity building and research.

We will transform care by:

- Developing and scaling best-practice models to improve access, care continuity and choice.
- Embedding a trauma-informed, respectful and holistic framework for perinatal trauma.
- Establishing the virtual hospital service for fetal medicine in collaboration with health service partners, and exploring further applications to enable care closer to home.

We will strengthen the system by:

- Continuing to enhance the Maternity Services Education Program to support ongoing capability uplift in regional and rural health services.
- Playing a lead role in elevating maternity care standards and improving access, continuity and choice for women across Victoria, including for complex cases such as cancer in pregnancy.

We will drive discovery by:

- Strengthening the evidence base across key areas, including continuity of care models, birth trauma, and integrated care in complex pregnancies.
- Putting research at the core of maternity care and developing a learning system culture, with our people and academic partners.

Improve outcomes for the most vulnerable babies

The most vulnerable babies—those born too soon, too small or with complex medical needs—face the greatest risk of mortality, long-term morbidity and developmental challenges. Yet, gaps remain in both the evidence base and clinical practices guiding care.

As a recognised state-wide and national leader, the Women's is uniquely positioned to strengthen research translation, advance evidence-informed care, and improve outcomes for these newborns and their families.

We will transform care by:

- Delivering, family integrated multidisciplinary neonatal care that combines clinical excellence with developmental, psychosocial and culturally safe support for babies and their families.
- Embedding evidence-based innovations in neonatal practice to improve survival, reduce complications and optimise long-term neurodevelopmental outcomes for high-risk babies, including advancing ventilatory strategies and techniques.
- Exploring opportunities for utilising virtual models to enable care closer to home, in collaboration with health service partners.

We will strengthen the system by:

- Building neonatal workforce capability across Victoria through education, training and specialist support, in partnership with health services and education providers, including supporting statewide capability uplift in point-of-care ultrasound.

We will drive discovery by:

- Expanding the evidence base and translation of research into clinical practice for identification of neurological and developmental delay and multidisciplinary care models.
- Advancing neonatal research, focused on prevention, early intervention and improved outcomes, particularly in respiratory and resuscitation practice.

Implementing our strategy

Consumer led

Our consumers bring essential lived experience that informs priorities, strengthens decision making, and ensures our strategic intent translates into tangible improvements in care and outcomes.

Implementation of this plan will be guided by a consumer-led approach, that will be designed in consultation with our consumers. This will embed consumers in governance, planning, design, and evaluation processes, including helping to define measures of success that reflect what matters most to women, babies, and families.

As part of our consumer-led approach, we will build on foundational engagement with the Women's Senior Aboriginal Advisory Council, aiming to strengthen and embed the First Nations consumer voice. Ongoing feedback mechanisms will support our continuous learning and adaptation, enabling us to respond to emerging needs and improve equity, access and experience. By placing consumers at the centre of implementation, we strengthen accountability, build trust, and ensure this strategy delivers sustainable value and measurable impact for the communities we serve.

Transparent and accountable

We are committed to transparency and accountability in achieving our vision. We will monitor the implementation and impact of the strategic plan through regular reporting informed by our strategic performance framework. The framework will articulate implementation and interim outcome measures associated with the goals for our strategic priorities, pillars and focus areas.

In addition to reporting through our Executive and Board governance structures, progress updates will be shared with other relevant stakeholders including consumer governance groups, and our workforce.

Responsive and agile

Our strategic framework sets a clear vision for the next ten years, through to 2035, with the Women's Strategic Plan 2026–2030 focusing on the first five years. In a rapidly evolving external environment, these five and ten-year horizons are designed to be responsive and flexible.

Through regular environmental and horizon scanning, we will identify emerging trends in women's and newborn health and the Australian health system more broadly, enabling us to adapt to the changing needs of our consumers throughout the life of this strategic framework.

As we approach 2030, we will undertake a comprehensive evaluation and reassessment of this strategic plan to ensure continued relevance and impact. We will identify new focus areas and initiatives that reflect emerging challenges and opportunities, ensuring we remain aligned with our long-term vision of creating healthier futures for women and babies.



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