

# Hermitage Hastings Medical Centre

## Privacy Policy

**Effective Date:** 01/01/2025

### 1. Introduction

Hermitage Hastings Medical Centre (“we”, “our”, “us”) is committed to protecting the privacy and confidentiality of our patients’ personal information. This Privacy Policy explains how we collect, use, disclose, and store your personal and health information in accordance with the **Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)** and the **Australian Privacy Principles (APPs)**.

### 2. What Information We Collect

We may collect and hold personal information that is necessary to provide you with quality healthcare and for our administrative purposes. This may include:

- **Personal details:** name, date of birth, address, contact details, gender, Medicare number, private health insurance details, next of kin, and emergency contacts.
- **Health information:** medical history, symptoms, diagnoses, medications, test results, specialist reports, treatment plans, and other relevant health information.
- **Payment information:** bank details or credit card details (where applicable).
- **Other information:** as required by law or relevant to your medical care.

### 3. How We Collect Your Information

We collect information in several ways, including:

- Directly from you during consultations, phone calls, emails, or via our website or online forms.
- From third parties, such as other healthcare providers, pathology laboratories, radiologists, specialists, and health insurers, with your consent.
- When required by law, such as through government agencies or public health authorities.

### 4. Why We Collect, Use and Disclose Your Information

Your personal information is used for the following purposes:

- To provide you with medical treatment and care.
- To communicate with you about your healthcare and appointments.
- For administrative and billing purposes.
- To share relevant information with other healthcare providers involved in your care.
- To comply with our legal obligations, including mandatory reporting requirements.
- For quality assurance, practice accreditation, and staff training.
- For research or public health purposes (only with your consent or as permitted by law).

## 5. Telehealth and Electronic Records

We offer **Telehealth consultations** to improve access to healthcare. When you participate in Telehealth services:

- Your consultation may occur via secure video conferencing or telephone using platforms compliant with **Australian privacy and security standards**.
- Information discussed during Telehealth appointments is recorded in your **electronic health record** in the same way as in-person consultations.
- We take reasonable steps to ensure Telehealth platforms use encryption and secure connections, but some inherent risks in electronic transmission may remain.
- We recommend you conduct Telehealth consultations in a private setting to protect your confidentiality.

### Electronic Health Records

Our medical centre maintains electronic health records using secure medical software (e.g., [Best Practice / other systems]) hosted on secure servers and/or encrypted cloud-based platforms.

Access to these systems is restricted to authorised staff only. We use role-based access controls, passwords, firewalls, and regular data backups to safeguard your information.

If you choose to share or access your information through **My Health Record**, your information will be handled in accordance with the **My Health Records Act 2012** and its associated privacy protections.

## 6. Disclosure of Your Information

We may disclose your information to:

- Other healthcare providers (e.g., specialists, hospitals, pharmacies, pathology and imaging providers).
- Medicare, private health funds, and other government agencies where required.
- Our professional advisers (e.g., accountants, insurers, lawyers) as needed for business purposes.
- Third-party IT and administrative service providers who assist us in operating our practice (all bound by confidentiality obligations).
- When required or authorised by law (e.g., for public health or safety reasons).

We do **not** share or sell your information to third parties for marketing purposes.

## 7. Data Storage and Security

Your personal and health information may be held in both paper and electronic formats. We take reasonable steps to ensure your information is secure, including:

- Secure electronic health record systems with password protection and encryption.
- Restricted staff access to information on a need-to-know basis.
- Secure storage of paper files.

- Regular data backups and cybersecurity monitoring.

## **8. Accessing and Correcting Your Information**

You have the right to:

- Access your personal and health information; and
- Request correction of any inaccurate, incomplete, or out-of-date information.

Requests can be made in writing to our **Privacy Officer** (see Section 10). We may charge a reasonable fee for processing access requests.

## **9. Use of Our Website and Electronic Communications**

If you use our website or electronic forms, we may collect limited information such as your IP address and browser details for security and website improvement purposes.

Our website may contain links to external sites. We are not responsible for the privacy practices of other organisations.

Email and online communications are not always secure, so please avoid including sensitive health information unless using secure channels approved by our clinic.

## **10. Complaints and Concerns**

If you have a concern about the way we handle your personal information, please contact our **Privacy Officer**. We will respond to your complaint within a reasonable timeframe.

If you are not satisfied with our response, you may contact the:

**Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC)**

Website: [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au)

Phone: 1300 363 992

## **11. Contact Us**

**Privacy Officer – Ms Maryrose Burgess**

Address: 40 Watonga Street Port Macquarie NSW 2444

Phone: 02 65820104

Email: [maryrose@lhmc.com.au](mailto:maryrose@lhmc.com.au)

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## **12. Updates to This Policy**

We may update this Privacy Policy from time to time. The most current version will always be available on our website or upon request.

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