



Merri Health
Healthcare that moves with you

Research + Innovation

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Welcome

Our commitment to health care isn't restricted to providing services. We pride ourselves on being an active participant and contributor to undertaking research and evaluation.

Research and Innovation is Merri Health's bi-annual publication that highlights some of our recent and current achievements in the areas of research and evaluation.

By conducting ongoing reviews of our programs and services, we ensure that they are based on best practice, are evidence-based and aligned to the population health needs of our community.

Research and Innovation highlights current research and provides the opportunity to identify new opportunities for collaboration, share our learnings and contribute to evidence base for population health and wellbeing.

In this edition you will find information on our recent health and wellbeing festival, our population health team's work in Fawkner, and our new services that are having a positive impact on our community.

This newsletter is aimed at current and potential partners, stakeholders, funding bodies and key players in the community, health and primary care field, such as the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Health and Ageing, academic institutions, Medicare Local, Primary Care Partnerships and other community health organisations.

Living Well, Ageing Well.

A new program to support older adults to transition into healthy ageing is set to launch this September.

Living Well, Ageing Well is open to anyone 50 years and over with a chronic or complex condition, living in northern metropolitan Melbourne.

Merri Health's Home Care and Healthy Ageing coordinator Christina Micallef said the program comes in response to an increase in isolation and loneliness being experienced by older adults.

"We ran a consultation session and found there was a gap. While we offer aged care services to support people 65 and over, those in their 50's are not eligible.

"Living Well, Ageing Well will help us keep people connected to their community and taking control of their health from a younger age – that's healthy ageing," said Christina.

Activities will include exercise and education, pain management, primary prevention of elder abuse and social support.

Living Well, Ageing Well will launch this R U OK? day on the 12 September 2019.

Stay in the loop



merrihealth.org.au



Meet Philippa, our speech pathologist



If you or someone you know has ever been referred to a speech pathologist, it can be hard to know what to expect. What do they do? How will they help?

At Merri Health, our speech pathologists help with communication and swallowing problems. To better understand the work of a speech pathologist, we spoke with Philippa from our NDIS team.

What does a speech pathologist do?

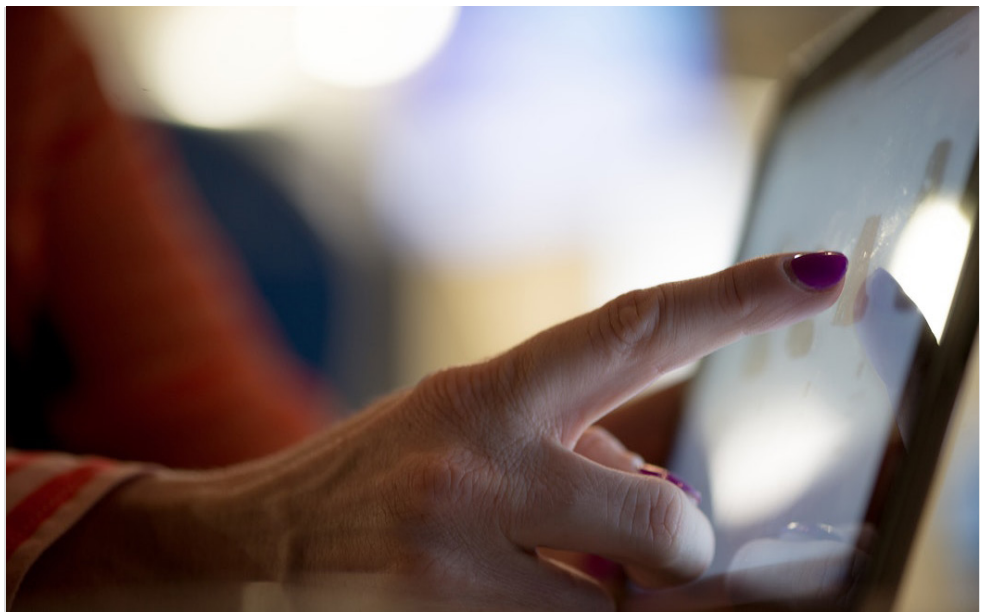
Speech Pathology Australia describes it as "...to study, diagnose and treat communication disorders, including difficulties with speaking, listening, understanding language, reading, writing, social skills, stuttering and using voice... People who experience difficulties swallowing food and drink safely can also be helped by a speech pathologist."

How do you approach working with new patients?

I approach everyone with an open mind. A person's disability is just a part of the story; each person and their situation is different and requires a different approach.

What strategies or methods do you find the best to work with?

Therapy has to be based on a person's real-world interests and goals. If it's not entirely of interest to them then you risk them tuning out. That's why working within the framework of the client's goals is so important.



Feedback in real-time

In late May, we introduced feedback kiosks at three Merri Health sites in Coburg and Brunswick.

The kiosks have been introduced as we look to provide more ways for clients, consumers and visitors to provide feedback.

Based at three locations; 93 Bell St and 21 Victoria St Coburg, and 11 Glenlyon Rd, Brunswick, the kiosks allow people to provide feedback electronically, before or after an appointment. Feedback is received in real-time so we can better respond to requests and needs.

Overseeing the project, manager of Quality and Customer Experience Philip Pharonides said the kiosks were proving to be popular.

"Within the first four weeks, we received 1,188 feedback entries, with 92.62% of clients providing a score of 100% satisfaction," said Philip.

Keeping it simple, users are asked five questions which they respond to using emojis. For accessibility, users can also choose to complete the survey in one of our top five spoken languages; Greek,

Italian, Turkish, Arabic and Urdu.

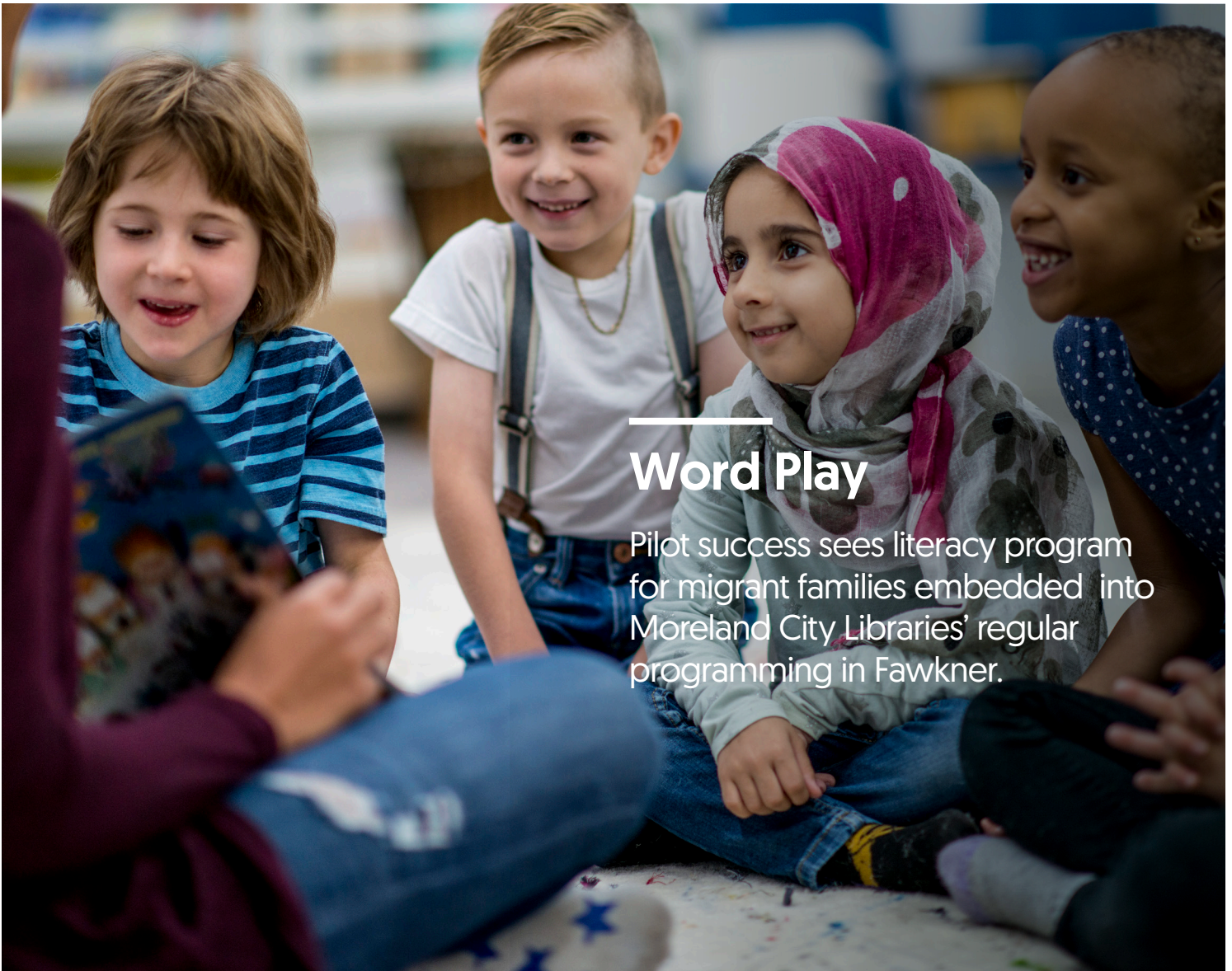
While to date all answers are anonymous, a new option will be introduced soon.

"We know that some users may want a call back or would like to tell us more about their experience. To address this, we'll be introducing an open field at the end, and the option for people to leave their contact details," said Philip.

Give feedback

- > Kiosk: visit 93 Bell St Coburg, 21 Victoria St Coburg or 11 Glenlyon Rd, Brunswick
- > In person: visit a Merri site to fill out a feedback form held near reception, and place inside the feedback box, or provide feedback to reception
- > Visit our website <https://bit.ly/2Jcl3NS>
- > Email Quality@merrhealth.org.au
- > Call our feedback line on **(03) 9389 2234**
- > Mail feedback to Merri Health, Ground floor, U4, 19 Pentridge Blvd. Coburg 3058

"Within the first four weeks, we received 1,188 feedback entries, with 92.62% of clients providing a score of 100% satisfaction"



Word Play

Pilot success sees literacy program for migrant families embedded into Moreland City Libraries' regular programming in Fawkner.

Following a successful pilot period throughout 2018, Word Play is now a regular fixture on Moreland City Libraries' Fawkner programming.

A dynamic literacy learning model targeting newly arrived migrant families with low English literacy, Word Play saw participants learn through songs, games and books, with an emphasis on families learning together with the support of reading buddies.

Addressing cultural diversity and disadvantage, the program was piloted in Fawkner which rates 28th on the most disadvantaged suburbs in Victoria (SEIFA score: 901.7). 68.8% of Fawkner households are parents with children and 66.7% of residents speak a language other than English at home (ABS, 2016).

During the 2018 pilot, we delivered 23 sessions, engaging 35 families and three bilingual volunteers. Pre- and post-evaluations revealed significant improvements across all seven program objectives, including improving children's English literacy and school-readiness, and the capacity of parents to support their child's learning. Overwhelmingly, parent respondents said Word Play helped improve their own English (80%) and 90% believed participation had improved their child's English literacy.

Other outcomes included building social connections for better community inclusion and cohesion, improving mental health for children and adults, and creating opportunities for volunteers to boost wellbeing through their participation.

How we're supporting long-term success

To support its ongoing sustainability following the pilot, the 10 most successful sessions were integrated into a toolkit. This includes themes, instructions for games and activities, and a collection of resources. By bringing together the materials necessary to deliver the program, sessions can now be run independently by the library into the future.

Join Word Play



Fawkner Library at Jukes Road, Fawkner

Tuesday, 12 February 2019 – Tuesday, 17 December 2019
10.15am every Tuesday during school term

Great Ideas Project:

Fawkner locals Kat and Sam granted funding to build their dream



Three Fawkner groups with a bright idea to make their world a better place, were offered a total of \$10,000 to turn their dream into reality. An initiative of Merri Health's *Hello, Fawkner!* project, we spoke to grant recipients Sam and Kat, who are introducing a wholefoods store via the 'Fawkner Wholefoods Collective'.

Tell us about the idea behind the wholefoods store and how you submitted this to the Great Ideas Project?

Sam - The wholefoods store is motivated by wanting to take strong action on environmental issues. I also really love the idea of doing something which has the potential to bring community together – and food is always a great catalyst for this.

Kat - I heard about this project through the Fawkner Food Bowls and was keen to help Sam as I have a passion for food and health. I saw this project as a great opportunity to bring ethical food to Fawkner in a more affordable way.

What do you have in mind for the store?

Sam - We imagine the store to be several trestle tables under umbrellas set up at the Fawkner Food Bowls with a vibrant community vibe going on. In terms of how it will operate, we are still to finalise this, but we are thinking about offering yearly membership and volunteer opportunities.

Kat - We'd like it to be a collective, where people can become members and volunteer their time, to minimise mark up costs. This may mean collecting food from one of our producers or operating the till once a month, that kind of thing.

What kind of things can we expect to see in store?

Sam - Good question, Kat has a survey out now which will determine this but essentially, various flours, rices, grains, oats, oils, nuts, honey, and someone we know is keen for us to include coffee!

Kat - We have had a great response to the survey so far! So many people have provided feedback, which is amazing! So far it looks like almonds are the most popular item, followed by rolled oats. So we will definitely be stocking these.

Was there any particular inspiration behind the project?

Sam - We were keen on the idea for a while. We had both heard that something like this might be happening at the Fawkner Community House, but it didn't come about. I thought I may as well get it up myself and approached Fawkner Food Bowls with the idea. I met Kat there and she had been thinking the same thing, so we came together and here we go!

Kat - I'm super interested in nutrition and was studying a nutrition degree so being able to provide Fawkner with wholesome, nutritious food is important to me.

There has been a whole lot of excitement from the community about the opening. When can we expect things to be up and running?

Sam - We are hoping to launch the 'Fawkner Wholefoods Collective' in spring – perhaps mid to late October.

Kat - A spring launch date would be great if we can get it sorted by then

Keep an eye out on Merri Health's Facebook page for updates.

 <https://www.facebook.com/merrihealth>



Adam has improved the health and wellbeing of Merri employees by implementing a Mental Health and Wellness Framework through programs, initiatives and resources specific to Merri Health

HR Rising Star, Adam Roden

Merri Health's very own Human Resources (HR) officer, Adam Roden, has been named 2019 HR Rising Star by Human Resources Director.

Adam has improved the health and wellbeing of Merri employees by implementing a Mental Health and Wellness Framework through programs, initiatives and resources specific to Merri Health. He has also taken over Merri's Occupational Health and Safety Committee which has resulted in having all members actively engaged and passionate about enhancing culture.

We sat down with Adam for quick interview to find out more about his work, and what motivates him:

Describe your role in three words.

Busy, interesting and challenging.

Tell us a bit about the wellbeing calendar you have implemented.

The wellbeing calendar is an annual calendar that has been developed to feature a number of local, national and international days of celebration, recognition and information. Each month we choose one of

these to focus on and run an event such as a morning tea, competition or lunch. Previous events have been Australia's Biggest Morning Tea, RSPCA Cupcake Day and Autism Awareness Day.

Let's talk inspiration: is there a particular book you are reading or podcast you are listening to?

My inspiration comes from teachings and learnings from people such as Wayne Dyer, Louise Hay and the concept around Buddhism in regards to giving back to the universe, being grateful, treating people with respect and love, helping others and inspiring people to be the best they can be.

Interested in a career in health and wellbeing?

Learn about roles and our team via LinkedIn



Charley's NDIS journey



Earlier this year we spoke to Charley, a young Moreland local receiving support under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

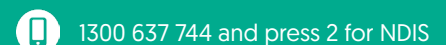
Charley was born prematurely which affected his development. As a child, he received support with his motor skills from an occupational therapist. Since receiving help from the NDIS, Charley has been working with Merri Health occupational therapist Craig, on his health and wellbeing.

Last time we spoke with Craig, he had been trialing a sleep app which aids with natural sleep patterns so Charley does not need to rely on his mum to wake up in the morning.

Since then, Craig has been working with Charley via fortnightly sessions on his health and wellbeing goals, and getting around on his own without the support of his mum.

"I've started meal preparation and food education sessions with Charley to work on increasing his food literacy, and to start to develop the capacity to prepare some meals for himself. A goal we're working towards is having him cook dinner for himself and his mum and hopefully making this a regular thing," Craig said.

Do you or someone you know need NDIS support? Talk to our team about how we can help.





Championing gender equality

Merri Health staff Aaron shared how the support he's received to take parental leave has impacted on his and his partner's experience as new parents.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, only one in 20 fathers take primary parental leave. With gender equality a key focus at Merri Health, we have been working on encouraging parental leave for all parents; primary and secondary.

Merri Health staff member Aaron recently had a baby. Supported and encouraged by his manager to take parental leave, Aaron shared how it impacted his and his partner's experience as new parents.

"Having the option and encouragement to take parental leave removed any stress... and will give the three of us more time together."

Partner leave recognises the critical importance of the early months in a child's life for bonding and social and emotional development.

Aaron took four weeks parental leave to support his partner Tess who gave birth to their baby in early June. For Aaron, the support he received from Merri has been invaluable, removing stress and financial worries.

"Tess and I strive to maintain an equal household and we're always going to find a way to spend as much time together as possible to bond with our new baby, especially in the critical first few weeks/months. Having the option and encouragement to take parental leave removed any stress, both financial and logistical, from the process, and will give the three of us more time together."

Learn more about Merri's commitment to gender equality in our 2018 Annual and Quality of Care Reports.



merrihealth.org.au/publications/reports/

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Coburg

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Coburg VIC 3058

Coburg

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Coburg VIC 3058

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Craigieburn VIC
3064

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Fawkner VIC 3060

Glenroy

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Glenroy VIC 3046

Preston

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Preston VIC 3072

Preston

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Preston VIC 3072

Wangaratta

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