



Merri Health
Healthcare that moves with you

Research + Innovation

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Above: photo by DocuSign

Welcome to the second edition of Research and Innovation for 2021! It's been an eventful few months since our last edition. We are continuing to adapt to the new COVID-normal, adapting our programs and services to ensure the wellbeing and safety of clients and staff. As always, our commitment to health care goes beyond providing health services. We remain active participants and contributors to research and innovation.

This period in time is making history around the world and in years to come, we and the next generations will look back to determine the pivotal factors that reshaped our civilization, what long and short term effects this pandemic had, both positive and negative, and how different elements – cultural, financial, health, social and psychological – transformed around the world.

It is our duty therefore to not only respond in these times but also to document these unique challenges and outcomes but also the lessons along this journey, now more than ever research and evaluation of our services is critical.

In this edition you will find more information on our HRAR team and vaccine hub, specialised equipment library for people with dementia,

what our Social Support Programs has been achieving, and much more.

Merri is proud to have partnered with DPV Health to run the only pop-up clinic in Moreland administering the AstraZeneca vaccine to those eligible - so far that has been an incredible 2480 people! You can find the hub at Uniting Church, 19 Victoria St, Coburg 3058 (next to our VIC Place site) and pick up a free 'I got my vaccine badge' at any of our Merri health sites.

Our High Risk Accommodation Response team is also taking the vaccine right to the doors of some vulnerable residents in share housing.

Happy reading!

Tassia Michaleas, Merri Health CEO.

COVID-19 vaccinations soar among inner-north residents thanks to partnership with DPV Health

Merri Health and DPV Health have partnered to open the only pop-up COVID-19 vaccination hub in Moreland, making it easier and more convenient for residents to get the AstraZeneca vaccine. Since it opened, over 2480 inner-north residents have been vaccinated!

We worked closely to find a venue and open the doors with only a few days' notice after recognising the need for a local vaccination centre.

"It's made it quicker and easier for people in Moreland to get their COVID-19 vaccine and we're proud to partner with DPV Health to help keep this diverse local community healthy and safe." Tassia Michaleas, Merri Health CEO.

In addition to our hub, we have been working with DPV Health and Merri Outreach Support Services (MOSS) to bring vaccinations to the doorstep of some of Melbourne's most vulnerable residents, with a mobile vaccination clinic at high-rise Barkly Towers in Brunswick.

As of June 2021, 72% of residents were vaccinated through the engagement and on-site support of Merri Health and MOSS, with many facilitated by the mobile vaccination clinic from 24 - 26 May.

This achievement was recognised by Victorian Minister for Health, Martin Foley, who praised our "local knowledge, local contacts and local confidence" within the community.

To build relationships with residents and reduce vaccine hesitancy, Merri Health and MOSS visited residents ahead of the mobile clinic, to talk about the COVID-19 vaccine, answer questions, help them book, and discuss other services to support their wellbeing.

To help increase vaccine knowledge and reduce vaccine hesitancy within Supported Residential Services (SRS), Merri Health's High-Risk Accommodation Response (HRAR) team listened



"I've got to give a shout out to the fantastic work being done by the Community Health partners, Merri Health, CoHealth, Star Health, a whole coalition of groups have been working for months building up really close relationships with those public housing communities and other high risk housing groups, both in terms of training up people as community leaders, dealing with some of the misconceptions around vaccines."
The Hon. Martin Foley MP

to barriers those in SRS settings may face when wanting to be vaccinated. The HRAR team delivered vaccine Q&A sessions, provided pre and post vaccine support, supplied taxi vouchers for residents to get to vaccine centres, and once again, partnered with vaccinators to bring mobile vaccination clinics to SRS settings around Moreland. As of July 2021, over 285 residents and staff have been vaccinated because of the work the HRAR team have done building that local trust.

The Coburg vaccine clinic will reopen Thursday 5 August for people to receive their second dose of AstraZeneca.

Find out more about HRAR



<https://bit.ly/3r9exvF>

Implementing research and evaluation Merri-wide



Above: photo by Redd

Merri Health established a research and evaluation committee.

This purpose of this committee is to promote best practice in research and evaluation, review organisation-wide proposals for research projects, provide advice on governance, and much more.

We have conducted research and engagement community of practice meetings which enables our staff to discuss and learn more about embedding research and evaluation practices into our programs.

These meetings provide a forum to build the research and evaluation knowledge and capability of staff and to promote an organisational culture of knowledge translation.



Above: photo by Georg Arthur Pflueger

An innovative equipment library set to launch for people with dementia

Our Specialist Aged Services team have been busy working to set up an assistive technology library to help clients who are living with cognitive impairment and dementia. The library is made up of many aiding technology items which will be loaned to people with dementia and their carers to support them with improving their function at home, as well as supporting safety for them in the community.

The items include orientation boards, key locators, chair alarms, medication reminders, [tracking] personal alarm devices, modified telephones and mobile phones, plus much more.

Led by the Specialised Aged Services occupational therapy team, the equipment library is a much needed and unique innovation to the specialist

memory and dementia service at Merri health. The equipment library will allow clinicians to have an in-depth working knowledge of the assistive technology products, as well as providing people with dementia and carers at least two weeks to trial the equipment before committing to purchasing the items.

Final stages are being completed on the project with a full roll out aimed for August/September 2021.

Find out more about our memory loss and dementia support service.

[www !\[\]\(899d8b7697d64725bf017d3296cfcf1b_img.jpg\) https://bit.ly/3BrVWPQ](https://bit.ly/3BrVWPQ)

“The equipment has been selected to support clients across the continuum of dementia.”



Above: photo by Helena Lopes

Become a volunteer and form a partnership with someone with a disability

Merri Mates is a one-on-one social outreach program that matches volunteers with like-minded people with a disability based on mutual interest.

Merri Health has just launched a new program for passionate people living with a disability who would like support with accessing the community, exploring their interests and connecting with like-minded people.

This is a 12 month pilot program that consists of planned social activities for a minimum of four hours per month.

The program is suitable for people who:

- is between 18-50 years old

- have a mild to moderate disability
- have the ability to move around the community without a carer
- is living in Moreland or surrounds

We are now looking for volunteers to join our program. Get in touch if you are a passionate volunteer who would like to help someone with a disability achieve their social goals.

Find out more



<https://bit.ly/36wqySc>



Above: staff assembling wellness packs

to-face service, to a combination of telehealth and outreach services. These included:

- Introduction of telephone contact with all clients to ensure that they were safe and well and to identify any emerging needs.
- Development of theme-based wellness and wellbeing packs which included mind fitness activities, crafts, gardening packs, jigsaw puzzle lending library, recipes, reminiscence activities, and more.
- Telehealth groups such as seated movement, singing, quizzes, coffee chats, poetry, gardening and bingo groups. Groups were offered in English, Italian, Greek and Turkish, the four most commonly spoken languages in the area.
- Introduction of individual one-on-one support by converting group-based funding. This was offered in home, in the community or over the phone.

Incredibly, the team achieved the following in just 12 months:

- 10,000 wellbeing packs were delivered - with over 200 wellbeing packs being delivered every week.
- Over 250 clients received an average of two phone calls per week
- Approximately 100 clients attended telehealth groups every week

Keeping vulnerable people active and social through a global pandemic

Merri Health supports older people, people with dementia and people with disabilities to stay healthy, active and connected with their community for as long as possible through enjoyable and meaningful activities. We call these our Social Support Programs.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the team ran more than 25 groups each week. These included walking groups, garden programs, arts and crafts, exercise classes and social outings aligned to people's needs and interests. These programs promoted participants' physical activity, connection in the community, emotional wellbeing and helped them build or maintain daily skills and capacity.

With COVID-19 restrictions, the team had to move quickly and ultimately changed their whole program which included a redesign of the suite of offerings and the mode of delivery to ensure that the identified needs of clients were met in an ever-changing environment. Within a week, the service moved from a predominantly centre-based face-

With these results, it's no surprise that our Social Support Program team have been named finalists for this year's Leading Age Services Australia Excellence in Age Services Awards!

This award celebrates the innovation, contribution and achievements of organisations, teams and individuals in the service of older Australians.

The award ceremony will be held online on Aged Care Employee Day, Saturday 7 August.

Find out more about our Social Support Programs.



<https://bit.ly/3yX8UmO>

Evidence-based program successfully delivering improved health outcomes to those with chronic conditions

HEAL™ (Healthy Eating and Active Lifestyle) is a lifestyle modification program that supports people who are overweight, have diabetes and other chronic conditions to develop lifelong healthy eating and physical activity behaviours.

HEAL is an eight week program which includes information about a healthy diet, including health and exercise tips.

Julia* came to the program at 59 years old with a history of diabetes, osteoarthritis and morbid obesity. She also had low activity levels and struggled with everyday tasks such as shopping.

She attended all eight weeks of the program and showed significant results.

When Julia attended her dietitian review six months post completing the HEAL program, she had lost a significant amount of weight and reported a huge improvement in her diabetes management with her blood results now within the targeted range for her diabetes.

Julia is now confident to move again and is able to do tasks like her shopping as well as enjoying her gardening regularly.

*Client's name has been changed to maintain privacy.

Learn more about HEAL



<https://bit.ly/3r9JhMX>



Above: photo by Hush Naidoo

An animation to guide community to the right services for them



We created an animation to showcase the range of services we have to support our diverse communities. This animation is also available with translated captions in Turkish, Arabic, Italian and Greek.

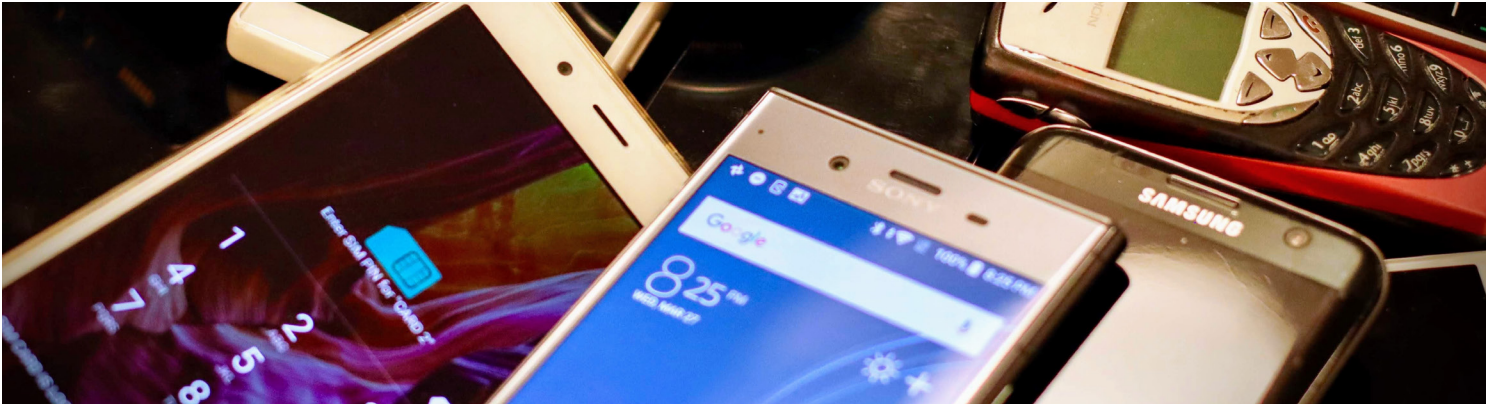
Through COVID-19, lock-downs and beyond – we're here for you at every age and stage of life.

Want to know what services we offer and who can benefit from our support?

Watch on!



<https://bit.ly/3yjXM3G>



Above: photo by Eirik Solheim

\$1190 raised for Phone for Homes!

Merri Health swaps 169 phones to help our community have stable homes

Merri Health has raised \$1190 to help people move out of social housing by donating 169 unused phones to the Phones for Homes initiative. The initiative, run by Head Start Homes and Mobile Monster, re-homes old phones and tablets to raise money for those that need a secure home, or recycles them to reduce landfill.

The money raised will help Head Start Homes provide financial empowerment services that open doors for families living in social housing to buy their own home.

“As our first corporate donor for our Phones for Homes initiative, Merri Health is shining a spotlight on how easy it is to turn old phones and tablets into improved housing opportunities for our clients while helping the environment at the same time.”
Stephen Woodlands, Head Start Homes Founder and Managing Director.

Hansha Gengaradoo, Merri Health Facilities Officer, coordinated the donation to Phone for Homes,

“Merri Health is proud to support those in our community who need a safe and stable home. Through donating old and unused phones to the Phones for Homes initiative, we have made a difference in helping our community and the environment.”

Head Start Homes supports single mums, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and other families living in community housing buy their own home, without the need for a deposit, via their Head Start Guarantee and empowerment services. This helps free up social housing to some of the approximately 100,000 homeless or 194,000 households on the social housing waitlists in Australia.

Quick contacts

T: 1300 637 744
Carers 1800 422 737
Victims Assistance
1300 362 739

Brunswick

11 Glenlyon Road
Brunswick VIC 3056

Brunswick West

382–386 Moreland
Road Brunswick West
VIC 3055

Coburg

93 Bell Street
Coburg VIC 3058

Coburg

21 Victoria Street
Coburg VIC 3058

Coburg

Ground floor,
19 Pentridge Blvd
Coburg VIC 3058

Craigieburn

120 Hothlyn Drive
Craigieburn VIC
3064

Fawkner

79 Jukes Road
Fawkner VIC 3060

Glenroy

5D Cromwell Street
Glenroy VIC 3046

Preston

Ground floor, Suites
3-4, 306-308 Bell Street
Preston VIC 3072

Preston

Level 2, 110 Chifley Drive
Preston VIC 3072

Wangaratta

Level 3, 62-68 Ovens
Street Wangaratta
VIC 3677

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