



Merri Health
Healthcare that moves with you

MerriNews

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 Merri-Health

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Welcome.

A message from Chief Executive Officer, Tassia Michaleas

I hope you are all well and keeping spirits high as we continue to navigate through changing COVID-19 restrictions across Melbourne.

We are still operating our vaccine hub with DPV Health at Uniting Church, Coburg and we are also continuing to educate and vaccinate some of most vulnerable community members in share housing through our High Risk Accommodation Response (HRAR) program.

We are delighted to have been nominated, and have won, some awards recently. Our Social Support Program team were 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.

We also received a silver award for the Australasian Reporting Awards (ARA). We are so pleased that the efforts from our teams to deliver great stories and outcomes have been recognised by the ARA.

Last month we launched a new campaign, 'We're Here for Carers', to encourage carers across the state access support through Carer Gateway.

New estimates show that over 720,000 Victorians caring for someone with a disability, medical condition, mental illness or frailty due to old age are missing out on vital support services, with many unaware that assistance is available to them until they reach crisis point.

If you are a carer, we encourage you to visit carergateway.gov.au to learn about the services and supports that are available to help you.

If you have a story to share about being a carer, we would love to hear from you! You can call 1300 637 744 or email our team at Communications@merrihealth.org.au.

As always, stay safe and well and look after each other as we navigate through the COVID-19 pandemic. We will continue to communicate changes to how we operate through restrictions to make sure you are always informed.

Working together to vaccinate our vulnerable communities



Above: Susy and James with resident

Over 70% of residents at high-rise Barkly Towers in Brunswick have been vaccinated against COVID-19 through a unique partnership with Merri Health, DPV Health, and MOSS (Merri Outreach Support Services) that brought education and vaccinations to the doorstep!

This successful initiative is part of the Victorian Government's High-Risk Accommodation Response (HRAR).

On 10 August, Merri Health's HRAR team delivered a vaccine Q&A session to help increase vaccine knowledge and reduce vaccine hesitancy. Residents were also able to grab a free coffee and treats while discussing the COVID-19 vaccine. Residents were given Merri Health packs to help with the recent Melbourne lockdowns with goodies such as a word search, pen, hot and cold pack, playing card, and much more.

On 17 August, residents were provided with on-site COVID-19 vaccinations and a celebration that recognised them doing their bit in keeping our community safe. The residents enjoyed coffee and a treat again, followed by free freshly made pizza put on by Merri Health's HRAR team.

Coburg vaccination hub, Uniting Church Coburg, will be closing on 8 September.

COVID-19 vaccinations are free and completely voluntary. Please share news about the Coburg vaccination hub with your networks if you would like to.

Check your eligibility or book your vaccine now: 1800 675 398

The clinic is open Monday-Friday only, not open on weekends.

Have any questions?

Contact your GP or call the COVID-19 Hotline on 1800 675 398.



<https://bit.ly/3CwgM1j>

Merri Health has won silver for the Australasian Reporting Awards!



Above: Front cover of 2020 report

We are so delighted to win a silver award and be recognised for the incredible stories and health and wellbeing outcomes made possible through the work of our dedicated teams and partnerships with community.

We are proud to share our stories, achievements and challenges authentically and transparently.

Keep an eye out for the 2021 report coming out later this year!

Take a look at our annual reports.



<https://bit.ly/3iS2ArJ>

Calling all LGBTIQA+ carers!

Merri Carer Services are looking for LGBTIQA+ people to be part of or run a peer lead carer group.

Are you, or do you know, an LGBTIQA+ carer who would benefit from a group to connect through shared experiences, socialise and relax?

Merri's Nicholas Colicchia and Jager Corvus, along with Yarra Council, are creating a support, peer lead group where LGBTIQA+ carers can come together.

These carers could be someone who assists a friend, family, or a partner with a disability, mental health issues, alcohol and drug use or chronic illness. The care they provide can be anything from a couple of hours to daily or weekly.

This group could be a space for them to connect through shared experiences, socialise and relax. There is scope for carers to create specific groups in their area of interest, age and identities.

Merri Health and Yarra Council will provide the meeting place for the group and the resources to make this all happen.

Email Nicholas.Colicchia@merrhealth.org.au to enquire.



From clothing designer to co-founder: How Clothing the Gaps is healing through community health

NAIDOC Week celebrates the rich history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal peoples. This year Merri Health celebrated NAIDOC Week by holding team quizzes about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and highlighting young achievers including Laura Thomson, co-founder and Managing Director of Aboriginal Streetwear label and social enterprise, Clothing the Gaps.

This Wurundjeri based business in Brunswick sells clothing and accessories with conversation-starting messages that celebrate Aboriginal people, culture and identity. The collections include 'mob only' – campaigned and created for Aboriginal people and 'ally friendly' a way for non-Aboriginal people to support and embrace Aboriginal Australia.

Sales from merchandise fund the Clothing the Gaps Foundation, which aims to add years to Aboriginal peoples' lives through a virtual run series encouraging communities to get moving with positive lifestyle habits.

"I've been designing clothes for years as incentives for the Aboriginal Community to participate in our health programs. Usually, it was an Aboriginal designed training singlet that celebrated cultural identity and created a sense of team amongst the participants," says Laura.

Find out more about Clothing the Gaps and the foundation:

 <https://bit.ly/2XA4rZV>

Read about Merri Health's commitment to closing the

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

Merri Health recognises 100+ aged care staff for Aged Care Employee Day

An initiative of Leading Aged Services Australia, Aged Care Employee Day celebrates and recognises the many roles involved in aged care.

There are 360,000 aged care staff around Australia, including allied health professionals, hospitality teams, drivers, cleaners, volunteers, lifestyle officers, administration staff and many more.

Merri Health has over 100 staff dedicated to aged care support. To

celebrate this year's theme #ThanksForCaring and recognise their incredible work improving the lives of vulnerable older Australians, Merri staff have been publicly recognised for their work.

Tassia Michaleas, CEO Merri Health said, "As part of Aged Care Employee Day, I'd like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank our aged care employees across the organisation. It is important that we all recognise this important work as they place the needs

the needs of clients at the centre of everything they do.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has been no different. Merri staff have continued to provide services to one of our most vulnerable client groups using many different modalities and ensured they felt supported, connected and received the best possible care. Thank you for your passion and determination to continue to provide a purposeful service for each and every client."

[Learn more about our aged care services.](https://bit.ly/3k5ZIXo)



<https://bit.ly/3k5ZIXo>



Above: Chris playing live at Lentil As Anything

NDIS participant reaches musical high

Chris Kapiniaris, a 50 year old NDIS recipient with Merri Health, reached one of his goals over the past year: improving his musical abilities and performing in public.

Chris plays acoustic guitar and loves to sing covers. After spending time with his Merri Health support worker, Bastian,

a performance was organised at Lentil As Anything in Thornbury. Chris says, "We get along like a house on fire."

He plays the music he grew up with – artists like Bob Dylan, Melissa Etheridge, Rodriguez and Neil Young. Chris and Bastian love practicing music, going fishing and BMX bike

riding together. This has immensely improved Chris's overall wellbeing by having access to hobbies and creative outlets.

Chris explained, "I was nervous before my first performance but I can't wait to play again".

Become a carer advisor



Merri Health is developing a Carer Gateway Advisory Group and a Young Carer Gateway Advisory Group to inform our work across Victoria. Carers will have an opportunity to be involved in decision making, designing and evaluating services, policies, communications, and programs. Carers have valuable perspectives and can help shape services to be more effective and equitable.

Carer Representatives will be paid for their time and participation.

Carers from anywhere in Victoria are able to apply. You do not have to be currently receiving supports or services through Merri Health or Carer Gateway, though some knowledge of Carer Gateway is beneficial. Carers who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, LGBTIQ+, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse and people with disability are encouraged to apply.

More information.

 <https://bit.ly/CGAdvisers>

We're here for carers - help is available

New estimates from Merri Health indicate that over 720,000 Victorian caring for someone with a disability, medical condition, mental illness or frailty due to old age are missing out on vital support services, with many unaware of the assistance available to them until they reach crisis point.

Merri Health has launched a campaign to raise awareness of Carer Gateway – ‘We’re Here for Carers’ – to ensure carers in Victoria know they can access support as COVID-19 continues to impact daily life.

The 2020 National Carer Survey revealed that half of carers in Australia were experiencing high or very high psychological distress last year, with one in three reporting high levels of social isolation. One in three respondents also reported that they never get time out from their caring responsibilities.

As Victoria continues to face COVID-19 restrictions, Vicki Down, State Manager of Carer Gateway, is encouraging carers to contact Carer Gateway to access free services and support including counselling, coaching, practical help and respite.

“With the resurgence of COVID-19 in our communities, many carers may be feeling particularly overwhelmed and struggling to cope.” said Ms Down.

“Many people don’t realise that they’re carers – they often view themselves as family members or friends simply supporting their loved ones. Because they don’t identify with the term ‘carer’, they don’t access the support available to them,” said Ms Down.

Carer Gateway has assisted more than 7,800 carers across Victoria since the service launched last year, and has recently launched a state-wide campaign celebrating the inspiring stories of carers.

Kellie King – a carer to her ageing parents, daughter with an acquired brain injury and grandson with autism – explains how common it is for family members to transition into carer roles and overlook the vital need for their own care.

“I think, deep down in my core, I always knew that I was in a caring role, but there was always this push back and resistance around wanting to identify as a carer,” Ms King said.

Kellie reveals that she eventually embraced her role as a carer and now acknowledges that help and support are an integral part to her wellbeing – a discovery that she made while seeking support from Carer Gateway.

When explaining the positive addition of Carer Gateway’s services to her life, Kellie expressed: “life doesn’t need to be so hard... [Carer Gateway] are amazing, they are supportive... Most of these people that I’ve spoken to have got lived experiences and it’s really made a difference.”

Find out how you can receive help as a carer.

 <https://bit.ly/3CSpKG8>

From Homelessness to a Home - how we are helping people sleeping rough



Above: Image by John Tyson

From Homelessness to a Home (H2H) is a new Victorian Government initiative that is focused on providing 1,845 houses and support packages to people experiencing homelessness and who are residing in emergency accommodation due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We recognise that this is opportunity to make a significant impact on homelessness and rough sleeping in Victoria, with the primary aim to house people as quickly as possible to prevent further harm from sleeping rough or living in emergency accommodation.

In partnership with Neami National, Housing Choices Australia, Uniting VicTas and Bolton Clarke, Merri is delivering mental health support the

initiative to those in Melbourne's north east.

Once our consumers are safely in a house, we work to support them to stay housed, improve physical and mental health and develop connections in the community with our targeted and tailored support packages.

These can include implementing a case manager, a plan to achieve the consumer's goals, referrals to connect to the community and other services, plus much more.

[Learn more about the H2H initiative.](#)



<https://bit.ly/3B7UT75>

Word search - how many words can you find?

COVID-19

I P S S Y M P T O M S S X T F V E Y B N
 F U W O F J E C I D N R H R H N R H Q O
 F N O U R P R O P L W E L E C T V P U I
 T R M T O Z E U V D Q U W P O E T R A S
 J A M D N T F G S P R E A D R S J E R O
 R G T U T P A H N W U W J Y O T O V A L
 A Q E V L B T I W K H B G X N I Z E N A
 Y V K A I F G N P C T T A M A N A N T T
 Y T N C N D B G Y O P W Z A V G B T I I
 F M I C E C D Y P A N D E M I C W I N O
 E U T I I D Y G V L J E K G R S A O E N
 V N F N R Y P Y R A K B N C U O S N C S
 E A U E K U M P S U D E T K S R H I P G
 R Q S C O C C C Y O H N Z A R E H P S P
 M W U C F P O Z X T U C Q H C T A F U M
 G G C V K A L O C K D O W N C H N I U A
 S A N I T I S E R O O A N G Y R D Z K S
 Q A S T R A Z E N E C A U O K O S E E K
 W L T B I P F N M B F F Z J D A A R J G
 R E S T R I C T I O N S R F K T U S M J

VACCINE
 PFIZER
 ASTRAZENECA
 LOCKDOWN
 RESTRICTIONS
 MASK
 SANITISER
 PANDEMIC
 CORONAVIRUS
 SYMPTOMS
 WASH HANDS
 SPREAD
 TESTING
 PREVENTION
 FRONTLINE
 QUARANTINE
 ISOLATION
 COUGHING
 SORE THROAT
 FEVER

To receive this newsletter electronically or to update your details, email communications@merrihhealth.org.au

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 Hothlyon 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 1 and 2,
 110 Chifley Drive Preston
 VIC 3072

Wangaratta

Level 3, 62-68 Ovens
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 VIC 3677

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