



Merri Health
Healthcare that moves with you

MerriNews

Volume 24. June 2020



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 Merri-Health

 @MerriHealth

 Merri Health

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Welcome.

A message from Chief Executive Officer, Tassia Michaleas

The last few months have been difficult for many due to the changes we've all experienced in our lives, work and surroundings, as we work towards slowing the spread of Coronavirus. I wanted to take this opportunity to check in with you and let you know that support is still available. We are here and will support you as best as possible.

At Merri, our drop-in support is still available but over-the-phone for now, Monday to Friday between 1pm and 3pm. Call 1300 637 744 to access.

If you are aged 50+ and experience anxiety and/or social isolation, get in touch with our Living Well, Ageing Well team. If you are 65+ (or 50+ for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples), get in touch with our Stepped Care program. To access either service, call 1300 637 744. Our teams will identify how we can best support you during this time.

There are also many other hotlines you can call. If you are in crisis, anxious or depressed and want to talk with someone, call Lifeline on 13 11 14 or the Kids Helpline (for people aged 5 to 25) on 1800 55 1800. In addition, the Department of Health and Human Services has information and resources on looking after your mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic. To access this, see <https://bit.ly/2X2DScZ>.

Our services and teams are still here to help you and we are still operating. For some services, support may look a little different for now, such as over-the-phone and via video conferencing. Keep up-to-date with how our services are being delivered by visiting <https://bit.ly/2X4Kwjb>.

On Monday 25 May, we introduced new COVID-19 screening protocols at our three sites open to the public; 93 Bell St, Coburg, 79 Jukes Road, Fawkner and 11 Glenlyon Road, Brunswick.

In addition to asking you our usual screening questions, we introduced temperature checks and isolation rooms at these sites for all visitors attending a face-to-face service. This is to ensure we continue to operate in a COVID-safe working environment and our safety precautions continue to protect you, our staff and the broader community. To find out more, see page 5.

Finally, I'd like to thank you for your understanding and support as we work through these changes together. We understand the changes haven't been easy, however we thank you for your commitment and support – we all play a part in continuing to flatten the curve across Victoria. It is important that we work together to stay safe and healthy.

In-home videos to stay well at home



Photo by Ketut Subiyanto

A set of videos are now available to help you stay healthy while at home.

Due to the restrictions put in place to combat COVID-19, our Supported Residential Service team has developed videos to support residents with mental health and physical support while social isolating at home.

The video series includes:

- > In-home exercises: chair stretching exercises, meditation and light in-house exercises
- > Four-part series: how to sew lettuce, carrots and peas
- > How to make lavender bags

The exercise videos feature facilitators Rodney and Belinda who take you through a number of ways to stay healthy in the home including gentle exercises, stretching and meditation.

The gardening and lavender bag making videos feature Diana, our gardening worker that has been supporting Supported Residential Service residents with their edible gardens for many years.

The videos can be used by anyone in the community while at home but if you do, do so safely. We recommend consulting with a qualified healthcare professional before taking part in online fitness programs or activities, to decide if it is right for your needs.



Watch the videos



In-home exercises
<https://bit.ly/368ZGXg>

How to sew lettuce, carrots and peas
<https://bit.ly/367ISih>

How to make lavender bags
<https://bit.ly/2TRZyXt>

New support for Victorian carers



Photo: carer Mikala and son

New, improved and expanded services became available to Victorian carers as of Monday 6 April.

A consortium of Victorian health providers offer free, early intervention support under the brand Carer Gateway, in an effort to avoid carers reaching a crisis point.

Carer Gateway state manager for Victoria Vicki Down said nationally, anxiety is the biggest driver of traffic to Australian carer websites.

“Carers have told us they only seek support when they are in crisis and struggling to cope – we’re trying to change this.

“Everyone’s journey is different. Whatever is important to you is important to us.”

Carers can access over-the-phone and in-person support such as coaching, counselling, peer support, information and advice. Online groups and courses, and crisis and emergency support are also available. Find out more on page 7.

Led by Merri Health, the Carer Gateway consortia in Victoria includes Alfred Health, Ballarat Health Services, Barwon Health, Bendigo Health Care Group, FamilyCare and Uniting [Victoria and Tasmania] Ltd.

Anyone caring for a family or friend with a disability or mental illness, or is frail, aged or has a chronic condition may be eligible for support.

Get in touch



1800 422 737



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

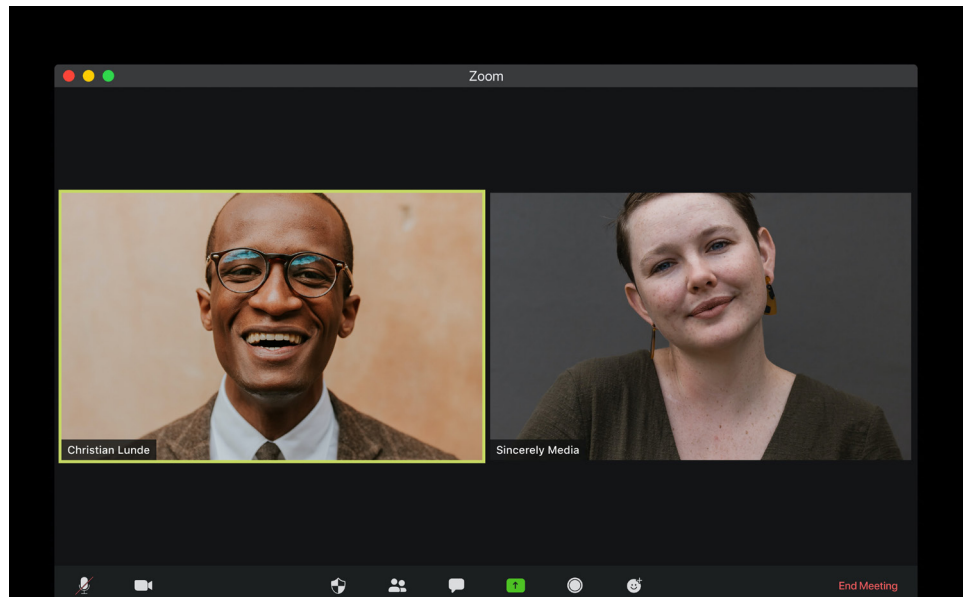
Keeping up-to-date with COVID-19



We have collated some trustworthy and reliable news, resources and support networks for all ages, to keep you informed with COVID-19 developments and any Victorian restrictions.

Stay up-to-date

- > Latest on Victoria's restrictions levels: <https://bit.ly/302pMKD>
- > Translated news and resources translated: <https://bit.ly/2xNQ3kb>
- > Easy English resources: <https://bit.ly/3cOrm6f>
- > LGBTIQ+ resources: <https://bit.ly/2yAqqmQ>
- > Information on protecting human rights: <https://bit.ly/2XWKjPB>
- > Parents seeking support to educate younger children: <https://bit.ly/3eCsRpE>
- > Facebook support network for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples: <https://bit.ly/2xRvzXE>
- > Health tips for people with asthma: <https://bit.ly/3eFICMz>
- > Financial support for businesses in Moreland: <https://bit.ly/3eCSYNn>



Supporting you remotely

Some of our services have turned to telehealth to continue to help you access support.

Telehealth refers to health care delivery and related processes like education, via communication technologies, such as over-the-phone and video conferencing.

Instead of seeing you face-to-face for appointments at our sites or in your home, our health professionals will contact you via phone on the date of the appointment (or earlier) to talk through your health

needs and how best to best support you.

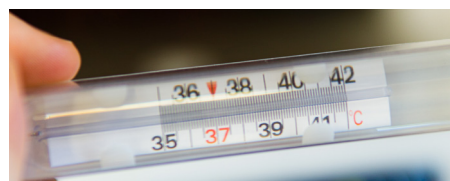
This change ensures we can continue to provide you with care without putting you and others at risk.



Questions or concerns?

 1300 637 744

COVID-19: what to expect at your next site visit



Next time you visit Merri Health for a face-to-face appointment, you'll notice a few changes. As of Monday 25 May we introduced COVID-19 screening protocols

for all visitors. In addition to the usual screening questions, we will be doing temperature checks. This is to ensure we continue protect your wellbeing, our staff and the broader community.



Learn more

 <https://bit.ly/2TVJm7F>

Equality still key at Merri Health



Merri Health is Employer of Choice for Gender Equality once again!

Our commitment to gender equality continues strong following last year's successful citation. This year, we are one of only five organisations in the health/social assistance industry granted the citation by

the Workplace Gender Equality Agency for 2019/20 period.

Gender equality continues to be a priority under the direction of new chief executive Tassia Michaleas.

"Since taking on my new role, I've made one new personal commitment to gender equality by ensuring there is an equitable ratio of gender representation across any speaking panels that I'm involved in. For me, this is one small but important thing I can do to encourage diverse representation, particularly in leadership environments.

"I am proud of our commitment to gender pay equity, zero tolerance of gender-based harassment and discrimination, sexual harassment and bullying," Tassia said.

Gender inequality is the key driver of violence against women and impacts on health and determinants of health. It is one of the many reasons Merri is committed to it, promoting gender equity to staff, clients, partners and broader community.

Safe Spaces campaign a success!

After three months of zooming around the Melbourne tram network, our rainbow tram officially retired in late March.

Developed as part of our Safe Spaces campaign and supported by Yarra Tram's Community Partnership Program, the tram and campaign highlighted the need for safe and welcoming spaces for LGBTIQ+ folks for better health.

Accompanying the tram was a range of activities that were rolled out across summer, including Safe Spaces posters, calendars and stickers, ally badges and phone screens, raising awareness and supporting LGBTIQ+ folks at our Midsumma stall, and an awareness campaign down Sydney Rd Coburg that

involved by displaying visuals to show that their space is safe for all.

What's next?

Our efforts will continue throughout 2020 as we advocate and raise awareness of the need, and how to create safe spaces for LGBTIQ+ folks.

Once COVID-19 restrictions are lifted, keep an eye on Sydney Rd, Coburg as we unveil a mural! Stay in the loop by visiting merrihealth.org.au/ally



saw many businesses including Telstra, Chemist Warehouse and Baker's Delight get

Folks or folx?

You may have noticed the use of the word folks throughout this article. If you're wondering why, folks or folx are common terms used collectively to refer to a group of people. Both are inclusive, however, some people prefer the term to be used with an 'x' which is specifically inclusive of the LGBTIQ+ community.

In this together

Did you know 27 May – 3 June, 2020 was Reconciliation Week?

In light of National Reconciliation Week, we wanted to share the Gambay first language map which allows you to navigate different regions of Australia and learn about the first languages. These reflect the names and groupings favoured by language centres and communities across the country. For instance Gambay means 'together' in the Butchulla language of the Hervey Bay region in Queensland.

<https://loom.ly/7Vb1dfE>

The map is one of many projects and resources being developed by First Languages Australia in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Check them out here: https://loom.ly/BRFK_PI



Art by
Reconciliation
Australia

Photo: carer Doug and their daughter



Carer Gateway support during COVID-19

Even in isolation, a carer's time is precious. We've rounded up some tips and resources to support you during this difficult time.

Learn something new

If you have 15 to 30 minutes, why not check out Carer Gateway's Carer Skills courses?

Each online module provides quick and easy information, insights and practical tips. Designed to help carers develop new understanding and skills important to their caring role, you can access the courses on the Carer Gateway site:

<https://skills.carergateway.gov.au/>

Support for older persons

The Older Persons COVID-19 Support Line provides information, support and connection to Older Australians.

Older Australians, their families, friends and carers can FREECALL 1800 171 866 if they:

- > would like to talk with someone about the COVID-19 restrictions and its impact
- > are feeling lonely or are worried about a loved one
- > are caring for someone and need some information or a listening ear
- > need help or advice about changing aged care services they are receiving
- > need help to access new care services or essential supplies such as shopping
- > would like to arrange a one-off or regular wellbeing check for themselves, or someone else
- > are concerned about themselves, a friend or family member living with Dementia.



Find out more about Carer Gateway



<https://www.carergateway.gov.au/>

COVID-19 and the impacts on carer services

Given the current situation with COVID-19, our new in-person services are turning to telehealth.

In cases where in-person services are not possible due to the impact of coronavirus, we will aim to find alternative supports for carers including telehealth. Telehealth is when health care and related processes like education, are delivered over-the-phone or using video conferencing.

Carers can continue to access online and phone-based supports via www.carergateway.gov.au

Carers who need access to services or information should contact:
Carer Gateway 1800 422 737 Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm local time.

If you are in crisis, anxious or depressed and want to talk with someone, call:
Lifeline - 13 11 14



Kids Helpline [for people aged 5 to 25] - 1800 55 1800



We support all carers. Get in touch to find out more.



1800 422 737

Meet the team



Jacqueline, counsellor

What is your role?

I am the team leader for our Carer Counselling team at Merri Carer Services.

How does Merri Health support carers?

Our qualified and experienced team of counsellors are familiar with the sorts of issues that carers face; from dealing with the stress, anxiety or grief that being a carer can bring, to helping with goal setting or developing strategies for your particular situation. We offer up to 6 free sessions each year. We are still counselling in the current environment but sessions are now over the phone. Once a carer is referred to the team one of the counsellors gets in touch to set up an appointment. Sessions normally go for an hour but we are more flexible right now; it is all about what is going to work best for carers in these challenging COVID-19 times.

From your experience, what's one tip you can share with carers?

My tip for carers is that if you are not sure if counselling can help, go ahead and set up an appointment. Counsellors are often the best people to help you work it out.



New video series support school readiness

The Ready, Set, Prep! educational video series and materials are being released over the coming weeks on Merri Health's social media.

The videos are part of the larger Ready, Set, Prep! initiative to support children and families in Fawkner to have a great start to primary school. As part of the project, schools, kindergartens and early years settings in Fawkner provided feedback that they wanted a sustainable resource that shared key messages with the community about supporting children to have the best start in life and at primary school.

Through a six month consultation with families and early years services in Fawkner, a video series answering some of the most common questions about starting school was chosen as the preferred resource. This would also be something the community could share for years to come.

During the consultation, many newly arrived families shared their experiences about starting school in Victoria. We found that families want the best for their children, but aren't always sure about how to access or enrol in many early years health and education services.

The Ready, Set, Prep! partnership, made up of over 20 local schools, kindergartens and early years services, are hoping these videos will be used and shared to support early childhood health, wellbeing and development. These videos are just one of the many strategies the partnership is working on to increase the number of children starting school 'ready' and developmentally on track in Fawkner.



Find out more



<https://bit.ly/3d3IJIH>

To receive this newsletter electronically or to update your details, email communications@merrihealth.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 Hothlynn 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 Street
Wangaratta VIC 3677

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