



**Merri Health**  
Healthcare that moves with you

# Research + Innovation

Volume 13. January 2019



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 Merri Health



# 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.

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# Respiratory event for health professionals

Merri Health hosts health professionals for a conversation on respiratory medicine.

Health professionals from around Melbourne came together to hear from a number of experts in the field of respiratory medicine.

Specialists from the Royal Melbourne Hospital provided insights into the management of patients with advanced chronic respiratory disease, diagnosing chronic respiratory conditions and recommended imaging techniques.

Respiratory Physiotherapist at Merri Health Christine Buckley, shared details of the newly established asthma education clinic, while Julie Steinkrug and Debbie Ng from

the Hospital Admission Risk Program (HARP) highlighted their role in managing patients with chronic respiratory conditions in the community.

The event was organised by the North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network in partnership with Merri Health, Melbourne Health, cohealth and Bolton Clarke.

Attendees received 4 RACGP points or 2 CAT points.



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## Speak Up, Speak Out

New education program to prevent violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will benefit from a new education program to prevent family violence and violence against women.

Set to launch in Moreland and Hume, Speak Up, Speak Out will work with 10-12 year olds, providing them with training to understand healthy, supportive and safe relationships, and training in bystander action.

General Manager at The Long Walk Trust Leanne Brooke said the program will use engaging methods to maximize learning.

“The program will use activity and play-based education to put learnings into practice. We’ll be looking at things like respect, power, control and influence, and how they can take action if things don’t feel right,” said Leanne.

The project has employed a project officer who will help shape the project. Young people are also encouraged to get in touch to be involved.

Speak Up, Speak Out is a partnership project with The Long Walk Trust.

### Did you know?

There are approximately 2,250 Aboriginal people who live in the Hume and Moreland local government areas, with an estimated 25-28% of that population aged between 5-17 years<sup>1</sup>.

In 2016-2017, Moreland recorded 1,799 family violence incidents: 1,029 per 100,000, and Hume recorded 3,040 incidents: 1,478.6 per 100,000<sup>2</sup>.



Get in touch



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<sup>1</sup> ABS, 2016

<sup>2</sup> Victoria Police, Crime Statistics, 2018

# Hello, Fawkner!

Fawkner continues to be a main focus for Merri Health's community wellbeing team, and will continue in 2019.

Addressing areas of disadvantage with a focus on social cohesion, connections and food security, the team have launched Hello, Fawkner!

Hello, Fawkner! is a three-year project providing an opportunity for locals and those living in surrounding areas, to learn more about Fawkner, the people who live there, projects and events.

Hello, Fawkner! includes a community leadership program for residents, a community newspaper and e-newsletter all about Fawkner, and a 'very small grants' program to support community Harmony Day events in March.

The community leadership program will launch in February for local residents who are passionate about making Fawkner a great place to live.

Hello, Fawkner! will further strengthen already existing projects in the area, such as Ready Set Prep; school-readiness program.



Stay connected to Hello, Fawkner! by subscribing to their e-newsletter at <https://goo.gl/7jsFYm>

Find out about the leadership program or Harmony Day grants:

1300 637 744

[hellofawkner@merrhealth.org.au](mailto:hellofawkner@merrhealth.org.au)



## Asthma education for Moreland

### Merri Health launch new asthma education clinic; the first dedicated clinic in Moreland.

The asthma education clinic at Merri Health offer asthma sufferers one-on-one sessions to manage the chronic disease and its symptoms. Patients will learn triggers, how to monitor asthma and correctly use a puffer or other medication, exercise, first aid and when to call an ambulance.

Respiratory Physiotherapist at Merri Health Christine Buckley, said that the new clinic responds to the low number of asthma sufferers who have received asthma education.

"Despite the high number of Australians diagnosed with asthma, Asthma Australia reported that only 24% of people with asthma have had asthma education in the last 12 months.

Asthma education including a personal Asthma Action Plan can help you better manage your condition and can prevent the number of deaths and hospitalisations associated with asthma," Christine said.

The education clinic comes in response to the unprecedented the thunderstorm asthma outbreak in 2016, which killed 10 people and hospitalised 8,500.

### Facts:

Moreland residents are more likely to have asthma than other municipalities <sup>1</sup>

10.5% of Moreland residents have been diagnosed with asthma <sup>2</sup>

People who use an asthma action plan are four times less likely to be hospitalised because of an asthma attack

Would you benefit asthma education?

1300 637 744

[service.access@merrhealth.org.au](mailto:service.access@merrhealth.org.au)

For referrals

[merrhealth.org.au/refer](http://merrhealth.org.au/refer)

<sup>1</sup> Moreland City Council Health and Wellbeing Profile 2017  
<sup>2</sup> Department of Health and Human Services Moreland Profile



## Collaborating for better care

Staff and client team up to improve feedback processes.

Merri Health Quality and Risk Coordinator Amelia Watkins, and client Rowena, are participating in a five-part leadership training program to help gain skills and insights needed to work on a shared challenge.

Since starting the project mid-2018, the pair have attended two sessions focusing on good questioning, conflict resolution and alternative ways of working collaboratively that seek to improve service and client outcomes.

The pair will collaboratively work on their chosen project: to improve feedback processes at Merri Health. Once implemented, these changes will make it easier for community to provide feedback and work to improve their care.

Amelia and Rowena have had the opportunity to work with other health providers and clients to workshop ideas and help each party understand the other's point of view.

"This project has been really beneficial for us. From my position, it is about looking at a situation from someone else's perspective and unpack their thinking as it's not always the same as you," Amelia said.

"I'm hoping to get into disability advocacy so this will help with my carer. It sounded like an excellent opportunity," Rowena said.

"This challenged my preconceptions of what a clinician is like and Amelia and I had to overcome those assumptions to get a better working relationship."

Collaborative Pairs aims to help consumers and health care providers work together to improve health care.

Collaborative Pairs was developed by the King's Fund in England and run by the North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network and Consumer Health Form of Australia.

# Co-designing your values: is it worth the time and effort?

Co-design is here to stay and at Merri Health, we're well and truly embracing the benefits that come from participatory design.

Coined in the 60's, the term defines the principles behind good design in which everyone has a role to play in the design of products, services, activities and places.

"Who knows best about what's right for them, than the people impacted by what we're trying to solve?" said Merri Health's Marketing and Communications Manager Viviana Rosas.

With this outlook, our human resources and marketing and communications teams partnered earlier this year to use the principles of co-design to review and revise our values. As a team we explored 'how might we refresh Merri Health's values to better reflect our culture, staff and future direction?'

"It made complete sense that our staff provided input into what makes our organisation unique: what we value and the people that we want to attract to help build on the work we do to better the health and wellbeing of our communities", said Merri Health Human Resources Manager Amie Reed.

Merri Health has used co-design for a range of projects that benefit our community, clients and staff. Moosh, our health and wellbeing education app is a great example of how we partnered with students, parents and teachers, and used co-design principles to create an app that's engaging, educational and fun.

"We're still testing our app with students and children to ensure we get it right. Our next step is to find partners that support our vision to bring it to life," said Viviana.

Amie and Viviana recently shared Merri Health's experience of using co-design to refresh Merri Health's values at the Not For Profit People Conference 2018. Key takeaways included:

- > At Merri Health, we focus on five stages of co-design: empathize, define, ideate, prototype and test.
- > There are a range of tools that sit under each stage. While it's best practice to use all the tools for thorough insights, don't get caught up in doing this if it's not possible. If you're exploring co-design, choose at least one tool at each stage and start there. There is always room for growth.
- > Co-design uses creative thinking. It's important to remember that creative ability does not equal artistic ability: everyone can be creative.
- > The first time is always the hardest. If you're looking to get started, the Design Kit by Ideo is a great online tool to explore stages, tools and tips when co-designing.



Learn more about how Merri Health is using co-design and what projects we're working on, using these principles.



[communications@merrhealth.org.au](mailto:communications@merrhealth.org.au)

# Art therapy for dementia carers

Eight carers participate in four-week art therapy pilot.

Through art-based activities at the Heide Museum of Modern Art eight people living with dementia and their carers were able to re-engage in enjoyable activities together and strengthen the retained abilities of the person living with dementia rather than focus on the problems associated with the condition.

The program sought to provide carers with tools to engage with a person with dementia and provide them with finished artworks they can share with their family and friends.

The program seeks to address two common losses experienced by carers of a person living with dementia: the loss of the opportunities to do things together and the loss of social connections.

"I am more aware of the need for play...to take time out for simple activities together – things we have always enjoyed," one carer

said during the evaluation.

Art therapy is part of the support CarerLinks North offer to carers of a person living with dementia. They also offer one-on-one support and dementia education workshops.



Find out more about how we support carers of a person living with dementia.

03 9495 2500

carerlinksnorth@merrihhealth.org.au



# Health and wellbeing program take out national award



Carer health and wellbeing coaching recently took out the national award for Leading Age Services Australia (LASA) Excellence in Age Services Awards for most outstanding team.

The award recognised the team's initiative in developing a holistic program that supports carers to prioritise their health.

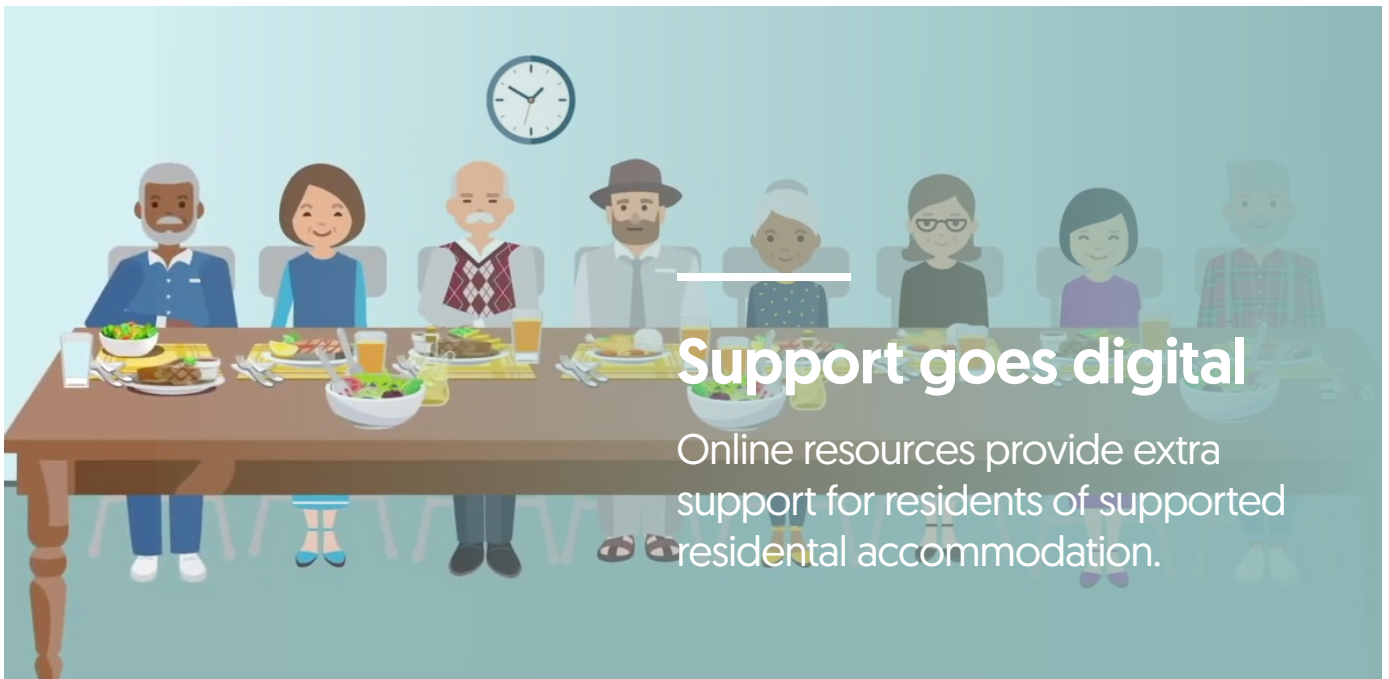
The carer health and wellbeing coaching program provide carers with tailored support, allowing them to work on individual needs such as nutrition, physical activity, stress and mood, fatigue, sleep and chronic disease management.



Ask us how carer health and wellbeing coaching could help you

1300 637 744

Carercoaching@merrihhealth.org.au



## Support goes digital

Online resources provide extra support for residents of supported residential accommodation.

A significant number of Supported Residential Services (SRS) residents live with chronic health conditions which require food and nutrition to be managed well. Traditional training options available to staff do not offer the flexibility that SRSs need; they are limited by funding and time constraints and do not always respond to SRS specific challenges.

As a result, four tailored videos have been released on the Merri Health website on topics of health eating, special dietary requirements and type 2 diabetes management — areas of the SRS food and nutrition benchmarks that SRS staff have the greatest level of difficulty meeting.

The videos were developed using the co-design process with SRS proprietors, residents, and an academic lecturer. Their input was key to ensure the content was relevant and evidence based, and met the needs of SRS staff.

As part of this kit, we have gathered supporting resources from a range of organisations that will support SRS to continue making improvements to their food and nutrition practices.

This includes templates developed in consultation with the SRS such as an individual diabetes management plan template, menu review checklist, dietary requirements log sheet, a weight monitoring template and blood glucose target ranges.

The content of the videos complements formal training provided to the lodges last year, further adjusted to incorporate participants' feedback.

It is envisaged that the videos will be used as part of training refresher sessions at the lodges during diabetes week and at the start of our annual planning cycle with each of the SRS. SRS proprietors will also be encouraged to use them during the induction of new staff members.

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