

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Wednesday, 29 March 2017

### **Outdoor support for carers**

A new program is challenging service delivery as it takes its work to the park.

Carer health and wellbeing coaches at Merri Health have come up with an innovative model to service delivery. Carers are invited to join free monthly walking sessions, where they take part in light exercise while learning more about support services.

Carer Lynne Delaney said the walks were a welcome change to supporting her in her caring role.

“I liked the idea of having a coach join me on a walk. By the end of my first session, I had some new tips to better manage in my role and was able to chat with other carers as to how they are coping. It saved me so much time as I got help with services and exercise at once and was able to connect with others,” Ms Delaney said.

Carers join coaches on a 45-60 min walk around their local area, with an opportunity to talk through their current challenges. Additional support is provided with in-home respite to help everyone attend.

“I felt safe knowing my mum was being taken care of and was able to better enjoy the session”.

Carer health and wellbeing coach and dietitian Collette Arnheim said the new approach was proving to be a hit.

“We’ve taken the idea of walking meetings and applied it to our services. We thought about the best way to support a carer’s wellbeing and fitness and knew this was it. We’re there to support them through the 60-minute walk, while providing information about services and coping techniques,” Ms Arnheim said.

The monthly walks take place in the northern region. The next session is on Wednesday 29 March at Yarra Bend Park, followed by Whittlesea in May. Carers are welcome to join by calling Collette on 03 9495 2500.

The sessions are run by Merri Health’s CarerLinks North service.

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