

# Health Promotion

## Narrative report 2018-2019



Written and illustrated by  
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# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Overview of initiatives</b>	<b>4</b>
Fawkner	5
Youth Settings	7
Glenroy	8
Merri Health	8
<b>Partnerships</b>	<b>9</b>
Working together	9
Local government	9
Regional partnerships	9
Resourcing prevention	9
<b>Case studies</b>	<b>10</b>
Ready Set Prep	11
<i>Steps to Prep</i>	20
<i>Word Play</i>	26
Hello, Fawkner!	30
Fawkner Urdu Women's Group	33
Count Me In	43
Count Me In 2	46
The Community Grocer Fawkner	49
Reconciliation Action Plan	58

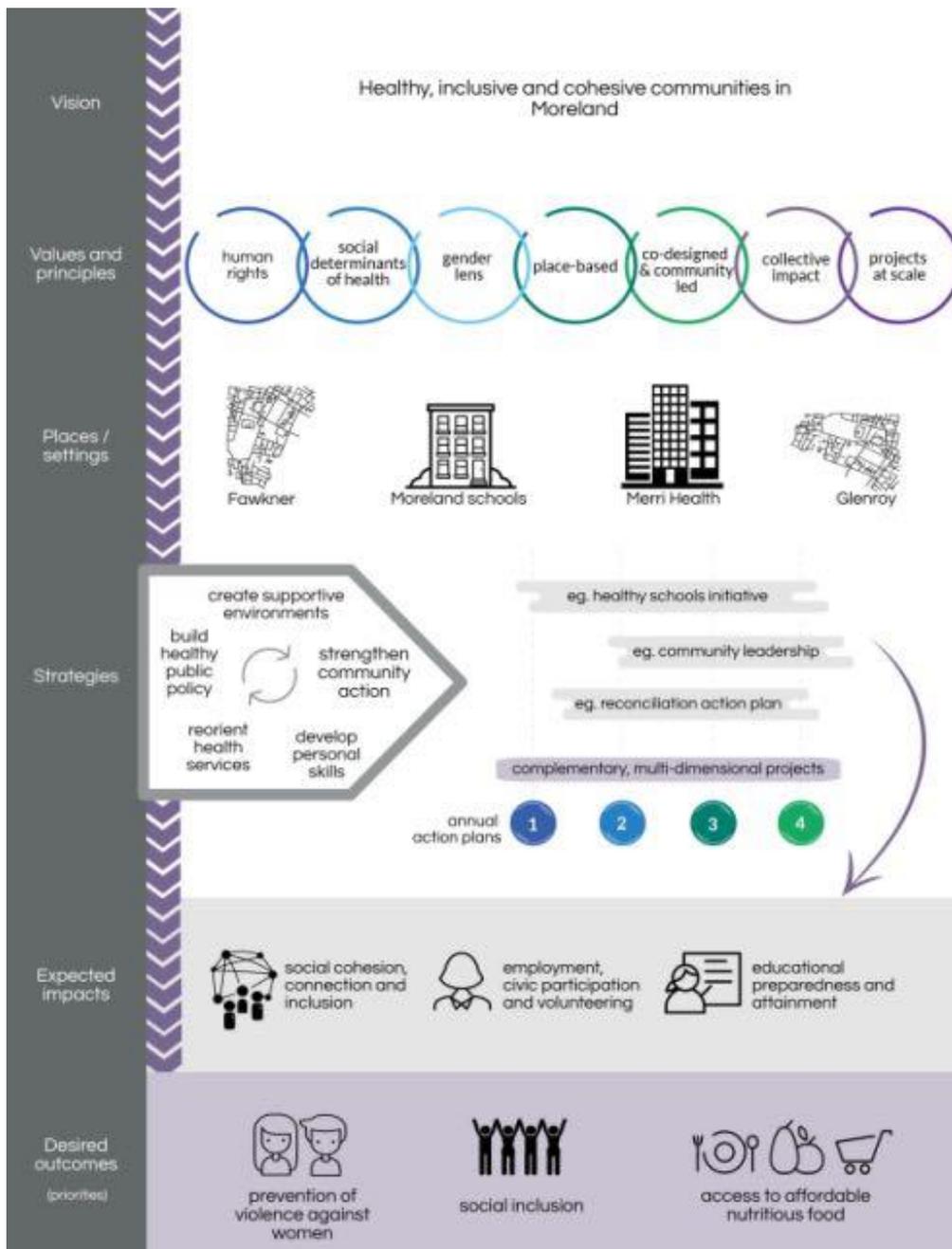
# Introduction

This narrative report forms part of Merri Health’s annual report for activities implemented in 2018-2019 under the *Integrated Health Promotion Strategic Plan 2017-2021*.

It sits alongside the *Integrated Health Promotion Progress Report 2018-2019*, but aims to provide more detail of the stories behind the projects implemented this year.

Merri Health’s *Integrated Health Promotion Strategic Plan* and associated annual action plans are implemented by the community wellbeing team, which includes the:

- community health promotion team
- youth health promotion team



# Overview of initiatives



# Fawkner

## Ready Set Prep

*Ready Set Prep* is a four-year, collective impact approach to improving school readiness, family engagement and transition processes in schools and early childhood services in Fawkner.

All five Fawkner primary schools are engaged in this project, along with all five kindergarten programs in Fawkner, playgroups, maternal and child health, the local library and other early years services.

Over the past 12 months, *Ready Set Prep* has seen all school partners make changes to their transition processes, and identify new strategies that will help little people settle into school more quickly. For more information, check out the detailed case study below along with the story of Moomba Park Primary School's *Steps to Prep* program.

We also piloted an innovative project with Fawkner Library called *Word Play*, which focused on English literacy learning for the whole family. Check out the evaluation of the project below, which showed positive impacts on for children and parents who participated. *Word Play* is now part of the library's regular schedule and is run without ongoing support from Merri Health.

## Hello, Fawkner!

Partially funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services, this project is a place-based approach to improving social cohesion in Fawkner.

*Hello, Fawkner!* focuses on building leadership capacity of local residents to develop and implement initiatives that bring community members together.

Key activities include:

- The Great Idea Program (leadership training)
- community-led Harmony Day activities
- a community newspaper
- a monthly e-newsletter



Attendees at a Harmony Day event

This year saw the first round of microgrants delivered to community members, who hosted Harmony Day activities in their local neighbourhoods. See a detailed case study about these events below.

We also engaged the first group of participants for The Great Idea Program. After receiving 12 expressions of interest, a panel of community members, stakeholders and Merri Health staff chose three teams who would have the opportunity to take their ideas and turn them into a reality.

The projects include:

1. Cook, Dine and Shine: a regular community event that brings women together to share and learn how to cook new dishes from different cultural backgrounds.
2. A new local wholefoods store that offers affordable goods in bulk.
3. A project that digitises and shares the recipes of older migrant residents, passed down from generation to generation.

Hello, Fawkner! also launched its first community newspaper, with 2,500 copies delivered to households, businesses and community venues across the suburb.

In the past 12 months, we estimate we've reached approximately 900 Fawkner residents through this the leadership program and community-led Harmony Day activities, plus a further 2,500 households and businesses through the community newspaper.

## Urdu Women's Group

The Urdu women's group is a weekly social gathering at the Fawkner community house. It's a central point for women who are newly arrived in Melbourne to connect with each other and with local services.

Over the past three years, we've also focused on building leadership capacity within the group.

In the past 12 months, the group established a volunteer committee of management. The aim was to support this group to run the weekly social groups independently from Merri Health. This process has encountered a number of challenges, which have been highlighted in the case study below.

The group continues to provide an important platform for women who are newly arrived to Australia to connect with others. Although the grant funding supporting this project has now ceased, Merri Health continues to provide support to the management committee as needed.

## Count Me In

*Count Me In* is a sports participation program that supports children and young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds to participate in mainstream sport clubs.

Delivered in partnership with the University of Melbourne and a range of community partners, *Count Me In* reached almost 300 young people and their families during its three years of implementation. Evaluation findings also show positive impacts for participants' social connections and resilience.

Although grant funding for this project ceased in December 2019, Merri Health is now working with its partners on an adaptation of this project that focuses on girls and women from culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse backgrounds. This new project is called *Count Me In 2* (see below).

See below for a detailed case study on *Count Me In*.

## Count Me In 2

*Count Me In 2* is a sports participation program that supports girls and women from culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse backgrounds to participate in sport.

It is a partnership project with Moreland City Council, funded through the Free from Violence Local Government Project Grants.

The project aims to better understand the barriers experienced by girls and women from culturally diverse backgrounds when engaging with sport, and work with local clubs from Fawkner, Glenroy and Hadfield to be more inclusive and accessible to these groups.

To date, *Count Me In 2* has already engaged more than 100 girls and women through a range of

strategies. Below is a detailed case study on one successful engagement strategy trialled in 2019.

## The Community Grocer

*The Community Grocer Fawkner* aims to foster community cohesion, skills development, employment pathways and local leadership through a weekly community market.

In the past 12 months, *The Community Grocer Fawkner* has undergone significant changes. Merri Health worked with its partners to transition the operational management of the market to parent-company, The Community Grocer.

Although Merri Health is no longer involved in the day-to-day operations of the market, we still provide partnership support to the initiative, particularly in terms of supplying the venue for *The Community Grocer Fawkner*.

Over its 3 years of operation under Merri Health management, *The Community Grocer Fawkner* made more than 12,000 transactions with community members, engaged 62 volunteers and provided a new physical space for social connections for residents.

Importantly, it has also contributed to a growing momentum around food as a way of creating and connecting community in Fawkner.

See the case study below for a detailed account of this project.

# Youth Settings

## YGLAM queer youth theatre

Operating for more than 20 years, YGLAM queer youth theatre and performing arts ensemble combines weekly peer support and skill development workshops, with large-scale public art.

This year, YGLAM has been preparing for a Melbourne Fringe Festival performance called 'Self-Care: The Anti-Musical'. Scheduled for September 2019, the performance draws on the stories of queer young people's experiences of discrimination and exclusion, and also the self-care strategies they use to keep going.

Funding from HEY Grants and Moreland Council has also supported Merri Health to employ a young person from the LGBTIAQ+ community as a Community Arts and Development Assistant to support YGLAM projects. This part-time role has been created as a development opportunity and pathway into future work.

The outcomes of this project will be reported in the next annual report.

## The Domino Effect

Working with students from schools across Moreland, Victoria Police and other community partners, the Domino Effect aims to show the power of the bystander.

Starting with one small action, a bystander (or 'upstander') can start a chain of events – much like the falling of dominoes – that can have a real impact on the experiences of those affected by discrimination.

Planning is currently underway for a large-scale event, where students from three schools will help create a film that shows how standing up to discrimination can make a difference. Creating shapes on their school ovals, they will be filmed from the sky by a police helicopter.

The outcomes of this project will be reported in the next annual report.

## The Alliance

Delivered in partnership with Moreland Council's youth services team, The Alliance focused on building the leadership capacity of secondary school students to take action against LGBTIAQ+ discrimination, race-based discrimination and gender inequality.

Students led awareness-raising activities like the Week Without Violence (pictured below) as a means of engaging the whole school community around key issues of concern.

Results showed that after participating, more student leaders felt confident to take action and also to effect change within their school community.



*Week Without Violence activities at Glenroy College*

## Gender equity

This year, Merri Health has delivered bystander or 'upstander' training to 95 students and staff from 3 primary and secondary schools across Moreland.

Upstander training focuses building knowledge, skills and confidence of participants to safely and appropriately intervene in situations where they feel uncomfortable, or where they disagree with what is happening.

This work has been delivered in partnership with the Victorian Department of Education and Training's respectful relationships team and the Rainbow Network.

## Speak Up, Speak Out

*Speak Up, Speak Out* is a pilot project delivered in partnership with The Long Walk Trust. Funded through the Victorian Government's Free from Violence grants, this project aims to trial a new approach to preventing violence within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

To date, *Speak Up, Speak Out* has engaged 15 Aboriginal young people aged 10-12 years from the Moreland and Hume local government areas.

Key activities include:

- fortnightly yarning circles
- a family day, where participants can share what they have learnt with their family
- the employment of an Aboriginal project officer, and building their knowledge, skills and confidence in the primary prevention of violence against women and gender equality initiatives

The Long Walk Trust and Merri Health have been funded to deliver *Speak Up Speak Out* to a second cohort of participants in Term 4. A detailed case study will be included in next year's annual report.



*Kellie Hunter invites Speak Up Speak Out participants to take part in a smoking ceremony to commence the program*

## Youth-led resilience project

In partnership with Moreland Council, this project worked with the Oxygen Youth Committee to develop a resource around anti-bullying. This project was informed by the results of the Youth Resilience Survey, which collected data across a range of key wellbeing domains for hundreds of young people in the Moreland municipality.

Led by the Oxygen Youth Committee, a short film and a series of memes were produced to deliver messages of inclusion.

## Glenroy

Within the *Integrated Health Promotion Strategic Plan 2017-2021*, Merri Health identified that it would aim to begin a place-based approach in Glenroy before the completion of the plan. However, over the course of this year, resources have been reallocated to projects in Fawkner to consolidate existing efforts.

Two projects implemented this year engaged community members and stakeholders from Glenroy:

1. Count Me In 2
2. The Alliance

Merri Health has also received funding to deliver a new project called Young Change Makers in 2020. This project will work with a primary school in Glenroy on student-led social cohesion initiatives.

## Merri Health

### Reconciliation Action Plan

With Merri Health's existing Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) due for completion in July 2019, the RAP Committee is currently developing its new plan.

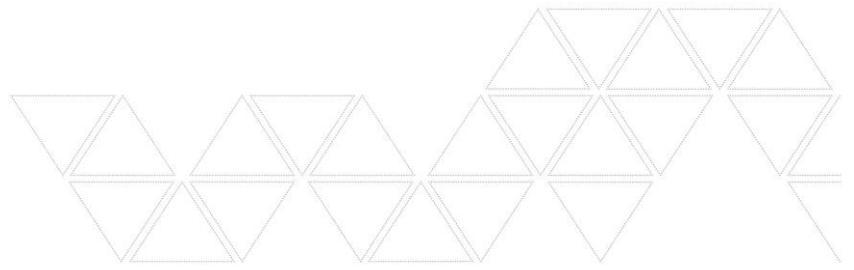
A key priority of the RAP is building the capacity of Merri Health staff to provide an inclusive, accessible and welcoming environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members and employees. We do this through different forms of cultural learning.

A detailed case study on this strategy of the RAP is below.

### Gender equity

In 2019, Merri Health was awarded the Workplace Gender Equality Agency citation as an Employer of Choice for Gender Equality. One of only seven health services with this citation, this achievement is a true credit many years of work laying the foundations for change.

Over the last 12 months, the health promotion team at Merri Health has been working collaboratively with the human resources team to apply for this citation. Future actions will be led by the human resources team, with support from the Community Wellbeing manager.



# Partnerships

## Working together

Our work is firmly embedded in partnerships and collaboration, and this is evident across the projects detailed within this report.

Over this past year, we have engaged with more than 100 different partners, 25+ networks or committees, 10 teams across our organisation, and 10 different funders.



Merri Health CEO, Nigel Fidgeon, speaks at WHIN's Building a Respectful Community Leadership Breakfast

## Local government

Moreland City Council is a critical partner for this action plan. Our work directly meets with the municipal public health and wellbeing plan and its Victorian counterpart, creating a transparent line-of-sight from state policy through to local action.

Our collaboration spans about 60% per cent of all projects delivered under this strategy in 2018-19, with different roles played by Council for each initiative.

We have strong, productive relationships with six departments across Moreland Council, and are committed to continuing to strengthen these over the coming years.

## Regional partnerships

As part of our *Integrated Health Promotion Strategic Plan 2017-2021*, we have continued our commitment to working with regional partners on shared priorities.

In 2017, we recommitted our participation in the [Building a Respectful Community](#) partnership led by Women's Health in the North (WHIN). We are proud to work alongside WHIN, community health organisations, local government and other organisations in the northern metropolitan region to prevent violence against women in our community.

Merri Health has also continued its commitment to working with the Inner North West Primary Care Partnership (INWPCP) on our shared priority around social inclusion. We are an active member of the INWPCP's governance group, prevention alliance, access and equity alliance, and Koolin Balit partnership.

We are also involved in the INWPCP's initiatives to develop shared measurement tools to strengthen monitoring and evaluation practice for preventing violence against women and social inclusion initiatives.

Merri Health also participated in a new pilot project with the INWPCP to evaluate the [From Symbols to Systems framework](#); a toolkit to improve cultural security for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff working in mainstream organisation. Learnings from this pilot will be integrated into Merri Health's new Reconciliation Action Plan.

We have also worked with the Department of Health and Human Services' Hume Moreland team in 2018-19 to explore opportunities for collaborative projects around social inclusion.

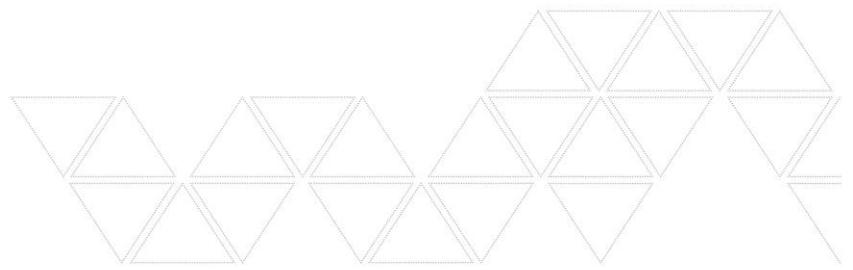
## Resourcing prevention

We firmly believe that increasing funding and resources for primary prevention initiatives should be a key focus of our work.

In the past year, we've secured an additional \$200,000 for our partnership projects over the next 12 months.



# Case studies



# Ready Set Prep

## A collective impact approach to improving school readiness and family engagement in Fawkner

### Introduction

Ready Set Prep is a place-based, collective impact initiative aimed at improving school readiness in Fawkner.

Funded by the William Buckland Foundation philanthropic trust, this initiative aligns with Merri Health's 2017-2021 Integrated Health Promotion Strategic Plan. Most notably, objectives aim to increase social inclusion, cohesion and educational preparedness and attainment in Fawkner. This case study outlines the success of the Ready Set Prep initiative to date and highlights some of the early impacts that have been noted.

### Project overview

In 2015, results from the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) indicated that many Fawkner children starting school were assessed as developmentally vulnerable or at-risk. Fawkner schools highlighted that many Foundation students start school with significantly low language acquisition, putting them at a disadvantage for subsequent language growth, cognitive development, and literacy and academic achievement.

Ready Set Prep was therefore established with aims to:

- Improve school readiness for Fawkner pre-school children and their families.
- Increase family engagement in Fawkner primary schools.
- Extend/improve transition processes and communication between early learning settings and primary schools in order to improve educational outcomes for Fawkner children.

Ready Set Prep works closely with the five schools and five kindergarten providers in Fawkner, as well as other stakeholders from early years and community services.

### Project activities

The timeline in Attachment 1 outlines the various activities and highlights the key achievements of Ready Set Prep to date.

### Quick Facts

#### Years implemented

January 2017 – ongoing

#### What is it?

- Whole community approach to build and strengthen links and relationships between schools and early childhood services.
- Improve early years to foundation transition processes.
- Increase family engagement as a means of addressing educational outcomes.
- Provide direct support to families to help them become school ready (2017-2018).

#### Reach

- 5 Primary Schools and 5 Kindergartens
- Moreland Libraries - Fawkner
- HIPPY Moreland
- Maternal and Child Health
- Department of Education and Training
- Fawkner Service Provider's Network
- Melbourne City Mission

Family Engagement Role, May 2017-

December 2018, direct support provided to:

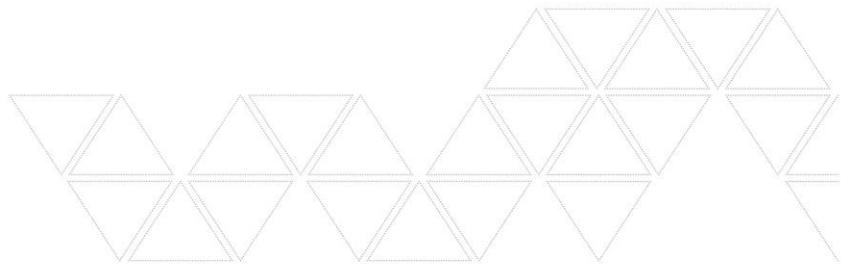
- 85 families (with 100+ children)
- 99 referrals and service details provided

#### Key achievements

- All schools received \$10,000 to support transition processes and family engagement.
- All schools made changes to their early years to Foundation transition processes.

#### Challenges

- Maintaining project momentum over time and across all partner schools when competing demands exist.
- Developing relationships with partners despite staff turnover (schools and project workers).



All activities within the Ready Set Prep initiative aim to support children to develop social, emotional, physical, language, communication and independence skills to support their start to primary school.

School readiness encompasses a holistic view of children within the broader context of their families' socio-economic, cultural and environmental conditions. Therefore, activities also aim to support families' transition to primary school by increasing parents/ carer knowledge and understanding of available early childhood and family services and the Victorian education system, whilst also considering each families' individual life experiences, resources and capacity.

### **Transition processes**

Starting school is an important milestone for a child and their family. Schools recognise that periods of transition are critically important times in a child's life. Positive transition experiences support children and their families to establish relationships with their new school environment. This supports a strong foundation which promotes long-term benefits for family engagement and future learning. Therefore, all five Ready Set Prep schools committed to modifying, extending and improving their transition processes to provide additional support to the incoming cohort of children and their families.

### **Small grants**

The project budget allowed schools to receive grants of \$10,000 each to support transition processes and family engagement. Each school was required to complete an application form and meet the guidelines set by Merri Health.

### **Schools meetings**

A regular meeting with the schools was established to increase collaboration and sharing of experiences around transition and parent engagement. This meeting is held twice per term, with schools sharing the hosting on a rotating schedule. Time is also allocated for guest speakers to present on events, activities, programs or services that support early childhood development and family engagement in the community of Fawkner.

### **Family Engagement Officer**

Ready Set Prep acknowledges the role of parents and carers as a child's first educator, and the importance of family involvement to support and promote early childhood development and learning. To this end, the role of the Family Engagement Officer was established to work alongside the Health Promotion Officer role dedicated to the initiative. The Family Engagement Officer was positioned at the

schools one day per week and also attended playgroups, school transition sessions and other family events in Fawkner.

This provided an opportunity for families to access advice, resources and referral support regarding:

- advice on choosing schools and supporting the enrolment process
- resources about playgroups and other social and learning events and activities
- referrals to services (e.g. health, dental, counselling, financial support, housing, food relief, migrant and refugee support).

In 2019, resource allocation was re-assessed, resulting in the removal of the Family Engagement Officer role and the addition of another Health Promotion Officer to the project. This was to ensure sustainability of expected outcomes; moving away from unsustainable direct service delivery to a capacity building model.

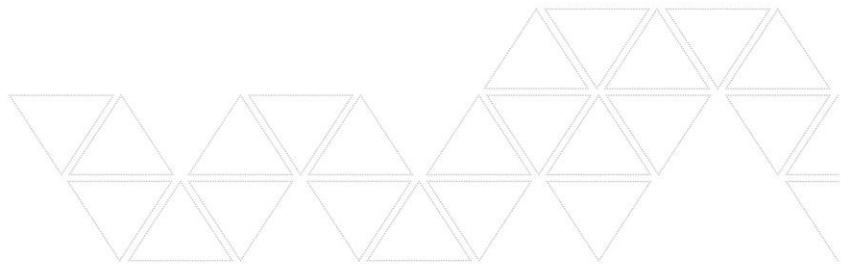


*Transition session at local primary school*

### **Word Play**

The Word Play program was developed to address the objectives of Ready Set Prep in a community setting. This unique program aims to improve English literacy levels of both parents and children, to support the whole family for their first year of school.

The program is underpinned by the Abecedarian Approach, which places priority on children's language acquisition and improving quality interactions between children and their families, particularly for young children living in disadvantaged



circumstances, including poverty and social marginalisation.

Word Play was developed in partnership with Merri Health and Moreland Libraries, funded by Public Libraries Victoria Network and State Library Victoria. A pilot of Word Play was successfully run at Fawkner library during Terms 2 and 3 in 2018.



Word Play video (Click image to view video)

### Video Transition Series

The Ready Set Prep ‘Transition Video Series’ project will contribute to the aims and objectives of the Ready Set Prep program, by providing a visual resource to Fawkner families, which answers some of the common questions that Fawkner families have about starting school.

The videos will feature local Fawkner schools and early-years settings, local families including children, local teachers, and early childhood educators. The series of up to six, short (less than 3 minutes) videos will present simple, accessible, and clear messages about starting school in an Australian context, co-designed with community.

In total, 110 people contributed to the development of the video series, through participation in:

- Survey and key messages development
- Focus groups
- Community surveys
- Stakeholder interviews

Following extensive consultation from January – June 2019, key messages and themes have been identified for the video series. Filming will commence during the second half of 2019, with support from Youthworx productions.

### Strategic Direction

Stakeholder and community consultation during the video series process, along with the introduction of a new health promotion officer, initiated the

redevelopment of project strategies and outcomes. A one page infographic may be viewed in Attachment 2.

Moving forward, all activities within the project will focus on a capacity building model, which will promote sustainability of the initiative and its key messages beyond the life of the project.

## Evaluation

### Transition processes

All five schools made changes to their orientation and transition processes, resulting in increased frequency or duration of transition sessions in all five schools. A detailed documentation of changes made from 2016 processes (pre-Ready Set Prep) is available in Attachment 3.

A thorough evaluation was conducted in Term 1, 2019 of the 2018 transition programs (2019 Foundation students). This included creating shared data collection tools to survey families, teachers, and students regarding their thoughts on the transition process. Each school was provided with an overview of their school results, to highlight the most successful aspects of their programs, along with recommendations about where further improvements can be made. This can be viewed in Attachment 4.

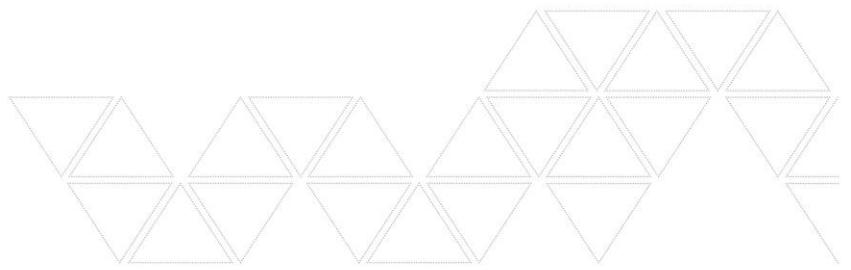
Overall data indicated that of the families attending transition sessions in Fawkner:

- 81% of families were very satisfied with the school’s transition program
- 86% of families felt very welcomed by their school
- 85% of families felt moderately confident to very confident about their child’s readiness to start school
- 90% of children felt moderately confident to very confident about their readiness to start school
- 53% of families attended four or more transition sessions

Qualitative data was also collected from teachers, families and students. Some feedback included:

*‘Without transition these skills would have taken longer to achieve and led to less learning time in other areas’.*

*Foundation teacher*



*'It seemed the parents were more welcomed and encouraged to stay/get involved/ask questions rather than just drop off, which was great.'*

Parent

*'Students showed greater confidence moving around the school, e.g. Going to the toilet, playing at recess/lunch times. Less separation anxiety in the morning. Picked up simple routines faster e.g. Sitting on the mat, packing up.'*

Foundation Teacher

*'It was very informative, helpful and made me feel at ease with my child starting Prep.'*

Parent

*'I liked meeting my class'.*

Foundation Student

A Steps to Prep case study has also been created specifically for Moomba Park Primary School (see below). This outlines the key achievements and activities of their extended transition program, of which supported the initial concept of Ready Set Prep.

### Small grants and schools meetings

Providing small grants assisted schools to make changes to their transition processes that may have been unable to be achieved otherwise. This is highlighted as all schools made extensive changes in the year they received their grants, however smaller (low-cost or free) changes were also facilitated and made by schools sharing their ideas.

Furthermore, offering grants allowed schools to see the value of this work and supported their engagement with Ready Set Prep. Attendance at school meetings has therefore been fairly consistent, with at least three of the five schools attending each meeting. Kindergarten representatives and other stakeholders also attend to provide their expertise. This meeting of schools is unique in that government, Catholic and independent schools are all working in partnership.

### Family Engagement Officer

During the time that the Family Engagement Officer was employed on the initiative (May 2017-December 2018), direct support was provided to 104 families, of which 75 referrals and service details were provided.

### Word Play

90% of respondents surveyed the pilot project agreed that Word Play has:

- Helped parent's or child's confidence to read or speak English.
- Changed how they read books to their children.
- Helped improve their family's social connections.
- Helped their family to become more school-ready.

Following evaluation, Word Play was deemed to be successful and is now being run as part of normal programming in Fawkner by Moreland Libraries. Further details are available in the Word Play case study (see below).

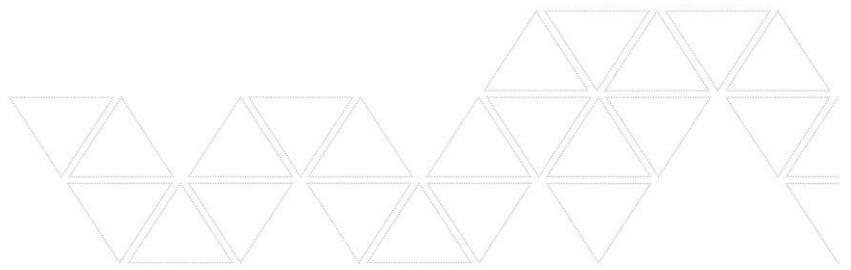


Word Play session at Fawkner Library

### AEDC

The AEDC data for 2018 has now been released and shows that there has been a significant decrease, and therefore improvement, in the number of children that are starting school developmentally vulnerable in Fawkner. While there has been improvement in all but one domain the number of children that are developmentally vulnerable is still at a higher level than the Moreland, and Victorian, average.

It is acknowledged that Ready Set Prep cannot show a causal impact on these results; however, it is proposed that Ready Set Prep would have partially contributed to these results. Further contribution analysis is to be undertaken.



## Alignment with Public Health and Wellbeing Plan

Ready Set Prep aligns with outcomes within the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, particularly 'Outcome 3.1: Victorians participate in learning and education', where the AEDC is used as a measure.

## Future activities

The current focus of Ready Set Prep is to establish sustainable processes to allow for outcomes to continue beyond the life of the current funding. It is hoped that schools will continue to review their transition programs and make changes where appropriate to continue supporting children and their families to be school ready. Ready Set Prep will support this by:

- Piloting resources (e.g. data dashboards) which schools can utilise to collect their own data regarding satisfaction with transition processes.
- Providing capacity building opportunities for schools, especially around family engagement and cultural competency, to support schools to also be ready for families.
- Increasing support to kindergartens with a view to support their transition processes. Kindergartens will be engaged in Ready Set Prep by being provided with small grants (up to \$3,000 each) to assist with school readiness in their settings.
- Creating a series of short videos that explain school readiness and the related components.
- Hosting a Family Information Session morning tea, aimed at the parents of 3 year olds. This will assist with the dissemination of messages.
- Conducting a needs assessment around early starting age, with recommendations compiled and disseminated.

Evaluation will continue throughout the lifespan of the project, to determine whether Ready Set Prep has contributed to improving school readiness. Ultimately resources and processes will be developed which are able to be used without input from Merri Health staff. This would also facilitate a process for the project to be replicated in other areas, with relevant conversations commencing with Moreland City Council.

## Key supporters

Ready Set Prep has been funded by the William Buckland Foundation. Ready Set Prep has been made possible from the continued contribution of the following partners:

### Community and government partners:

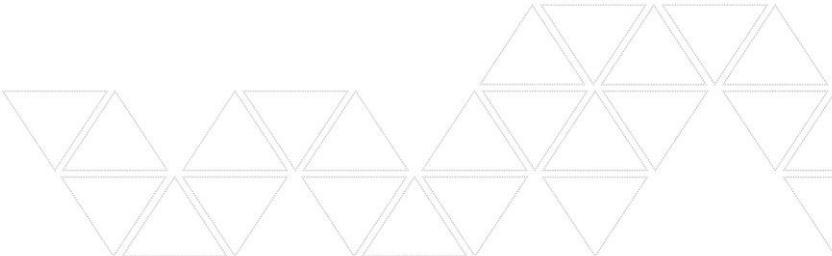
- Child Health Team - Merri Health
- Department of Education and Training
- Fawkner Service Provider's Network
- HIPPY Moreland
- Moreland City Council
  - o Children's Services Unit
  - o Maternal and Child Health
  - o Moreland City Libraries

### Partner schools:

- Darul Ulum College of Victoria
- Fawkner Primary School
- Moomba Park Primary School
- St Mark's Catholic Parish Primary School
- St Matthew's Catholic Primary School

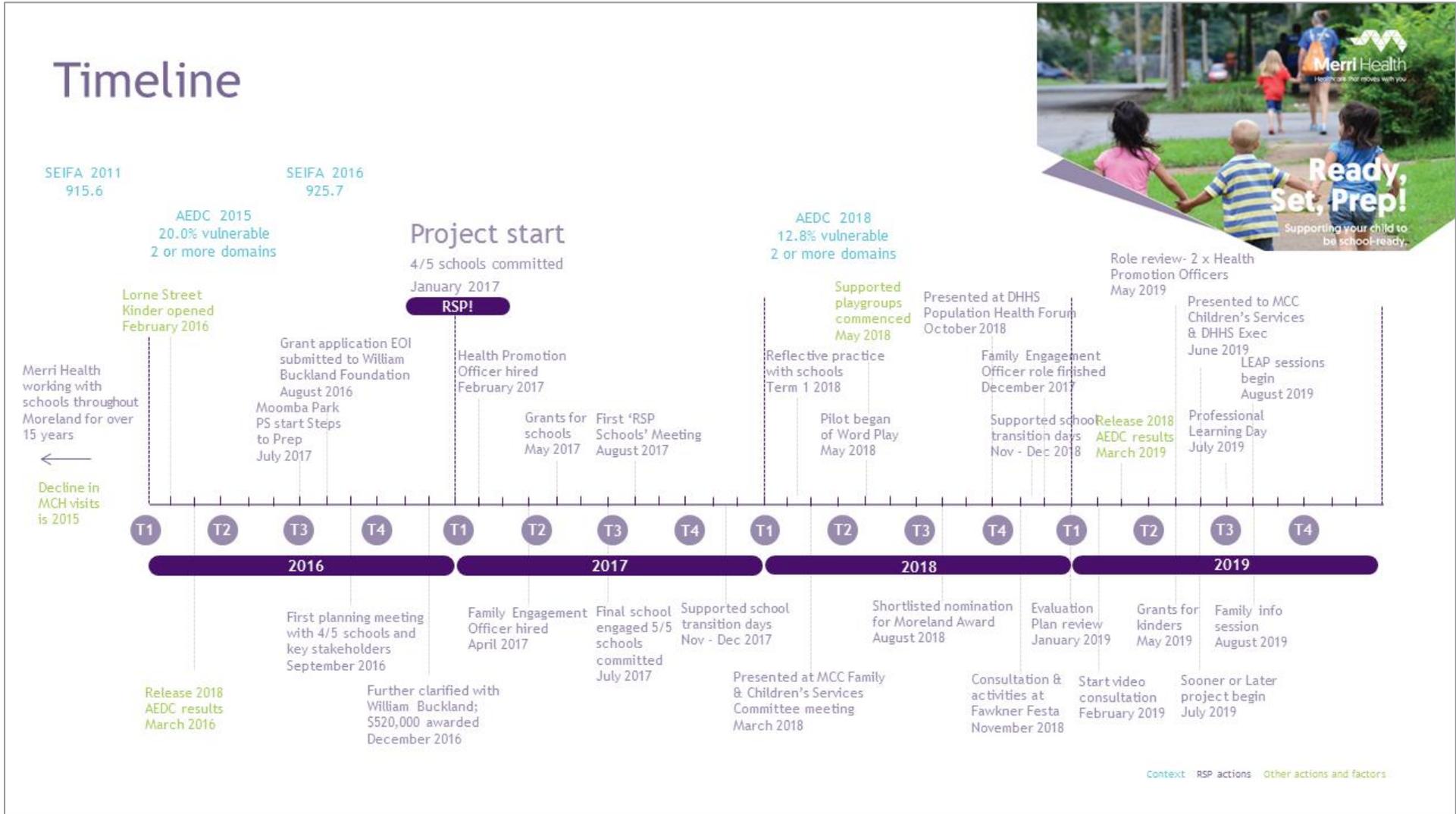
### Partner Kindergartens:

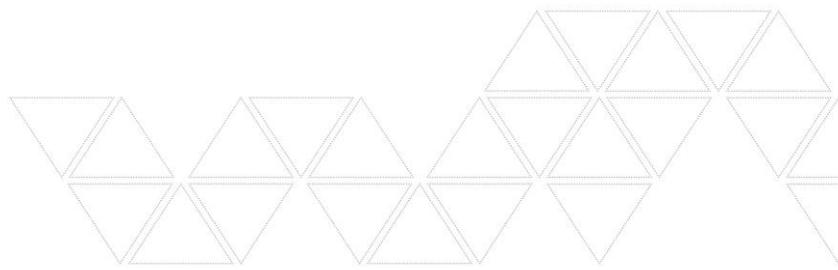
- Fawkner Kindergarten
- Joybelle Childcare Centre and Kindergarten
- Lorne Street Kindergarten
- Matrix Early Learning
- Moomba Park Kindergarten



# Attachment 1: Timeline

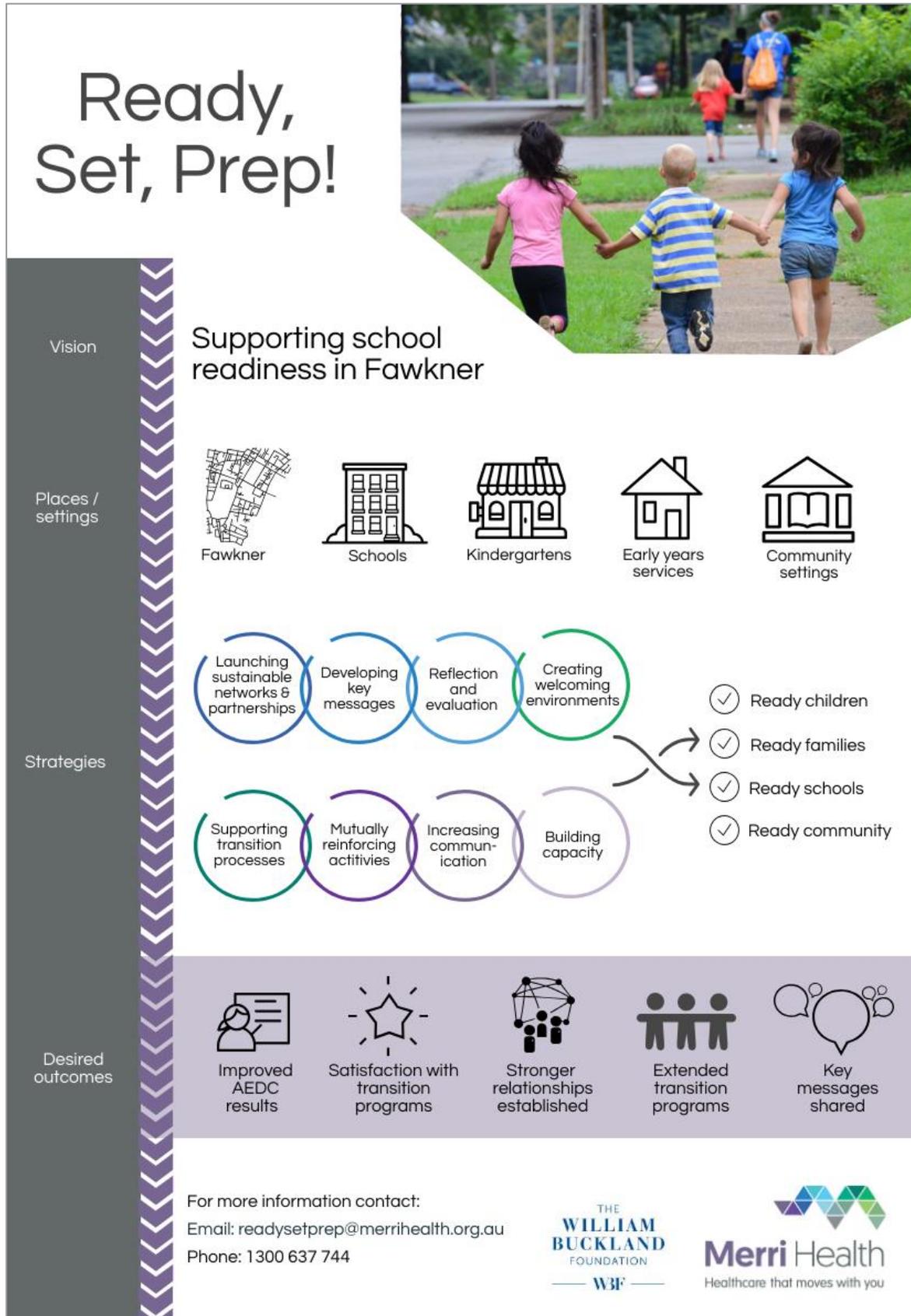
Key achievements and activities of the Ready Set Prep initiative, and the related context.





## Attachment 2: Ready Set Prep Strategic Direction

From June 2019, all activities within the Ready Set Prep initiative will aim to support ready children, families, schools, and the broader community through a collective impact approach.



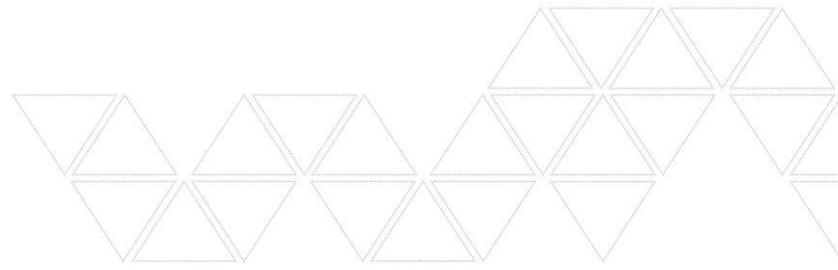
### Attachment 3: Changes to School Transition Programs

Since commencing the Ready Set Prep initiative, each school has increased the duration and number of transition sessions offered to support children and their families transition to primary school.

School	Transition program 2016	Transition program 2017	Transition program 2018
School 1	3 Orientation sessions. Students did activities in a separate room while parents received information about school.	✓	
		Bright Starts to Foundation 8 x 90 minute sessions with a focus on literacy, numeracy, oral language and play. 18 students attended.	✓ 4 x sessions with parents involved in interactive activities with students, 4 x sessions with students only Approximately 85-90% attendance.
School 2	Steps to Prep (first year of program) 2 x 3 hours sessions, twice per week in Terms 3 and 4. Approximately 50% attendance.	✓ Purpose built room. 90% attendance.	✓ 2 x dedicated staff, teacher and education support staff. 90% attendance.
	3 x 1 hour information sessions for parents.	✓	1 x information session for parents.
	3 x 1 hour transition sessions in a Prep room for students. Approximately 25% attendance.	✓ Approximately 10% attendance.	✓ Approximately 10% attendance.
School 3	2 x orientation sessions, students can go into grade.	✓	
		Enrolment interviews. 5 x Ready Set Prep sessions with a focus, with parents participating in activities with their students.	✓ ✓ + extra session for total of 6 x 1 hour sessions. All but 4 students attended.
School 4	Enrolment interviews. 1 x 2 hour session for students in Foundation room. 90% attendance.	5 x sessions with parent and student in a Foundation class hearing literacy & numeracy session. 90% attendance.	✓ 3 x 2 hours sessions with parent and student information session in classroom, and getting to know you session.
	1 x 2 hours Parents session (concurrent with session for students).	Parent partnerships session, where current Foundation parents get to meet with following year's parents over a morning tea to meet and greet. Parent access to school library for an opportunity to read from collection of beginning school picture books.	
	Pre-foundations program for selected students with concerning Brigance scores. Students participate in 8 x 4 hours sessions	✓ 8 week program, 4 x per week.	
School 5*	Orientation interviews.	Each child visited by Kindergarten to Prep Co-ordinator in their pre-school setting.	
	Letter sent to each student during school holidays by the class teacher.	✓	
	3 x 2 hour orientation sessions for students and families. Parents given information, kinder students with year 6 buddies and meet prep teachers to do activities.	✓ 83% attendance.	6 x 50 mins Ready Set Prep sessions, with different theme each week. Families stay as leaders are available to chat. 98% attendance.
		2 x 90 minute orientation sessions for families. Open day morning and evening session.	

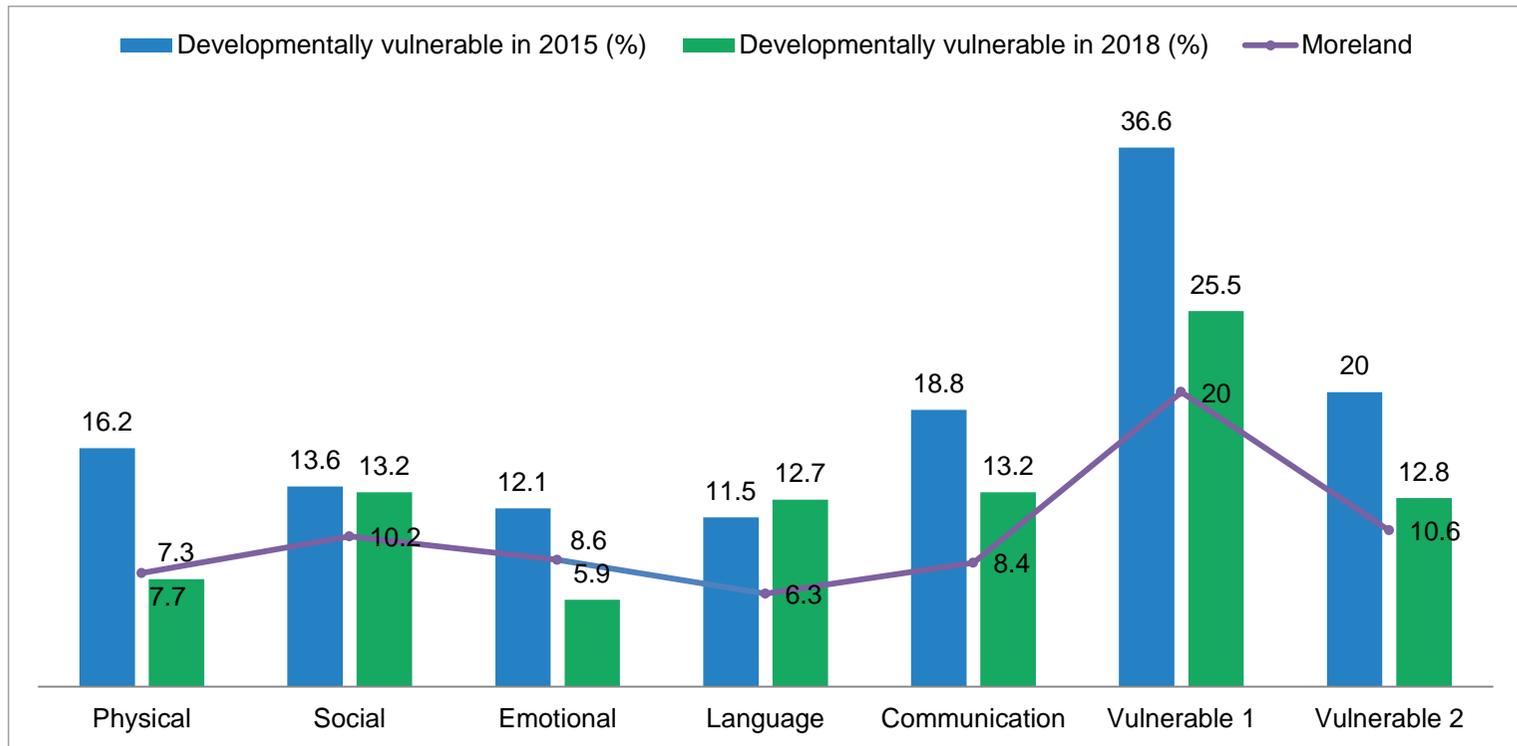
✓ indicates processes continued as previously, unless changes noted.

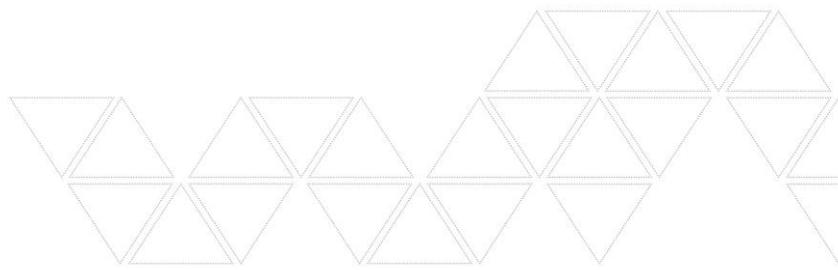
\*Note: School 5 received grant in 2018, so substantial changes to transition made later.



#### Attachment 4: Australian Early Development Census in Fawkner and Moreland, 2015-2018

AEDC data for 2018 shows that there has been a significant decrease, and therefore improvement, in the number of children that are starting school developmentally vulnerable in Fawkner since the commencement of the Ready Set Prep initiative in January of 2017. However, there is still a greater rate of children who are developmentally vulnerable as opposed to the Moreland LGA.





# Steps to Prep

## Moomba Park Primary School

### Introduction

This report provides an overview of the first three years of Steps to Prep at Moomba Park Primary School. Steps to Prep is an extended Prep transition program which aims to ensure children are ready to start school.

### Background

Moomba Park Primary School is a public primary school located in Fawkner, Melbourne.

### Fawkner

- high cultural diversity
- high proportion of newly arrived families
- 28th most disadvantaged suburb in Victoria (SEIFA score: 901.7)
- 68.8% of households are parents with children
- 66.7% of residents speak a language at home other than English

### Moomba Park

- 76% students speak languages other than English at home (2018)
- Index of Community Socio- Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value is 946, below the average value of 1000 (2018)
- 41 students (15% of the student population) receive additional funding support under the Program for Students with Disabilities and an additional 54 have individual learning plans as they are below the expected level including three Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (2019)



### Quick Facts

#### Years implemented

- Term 3 and 4, 2016
- Term 3 and 4, 2017
- Term 3 and 4, 2018

#### What is it?

- An extended Prep transition program
- Operates every year in Terms 3 and 4 for preschool children in the year before attending school
- Engages students in activities that are similar to kinder while introducing them to the environment of school
- Provides an opportunity to get to know new students and their families before they are placed into a Foundation classroom in the following year

#### Reach

120 children and families reached in 3 years

#### Key partners

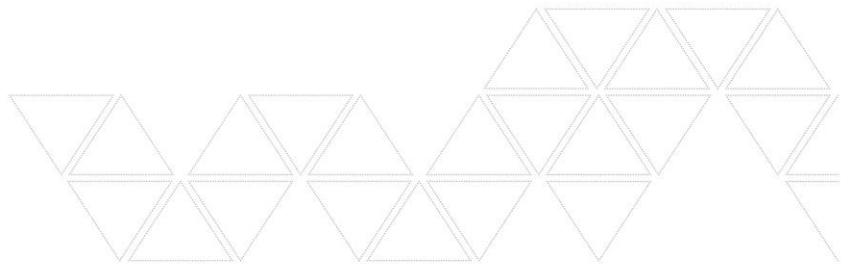
- Merri Health
- Australian Schools Plus
- Local Fawkner kindergartens and service providers

#### Key achievements

- Children feel safer in the school environment and are more familiar with school grounds
- Children starting school more confident
- Children more socially and emotionally prepared to start school
- Children have built relationships with teachers and peers before starting school
- Significant improvements in proportion of children who are developmentally vulnerable according to AEDC

#### Ongoing focus

- Continue building relationships with kindergartens
- Continue building on family engagement opportunities
- Highlight importance of attending school every day to reduce absenteeism in the Foundation year



## Project overview

In 2015, the need for a stronger focus on primary school preparation and readiness was identified by Moomba Park Primary School. Data in 2015 showed childhood is critical as it supports a child's ability to communicate, and express and understand feelings. It also supports thinking and problem-solving, as well as developing and maintaining relationships. Learning to understand, use and enjoy language is the critical first step in literacy and the basis for learning to read and write.

Australian Early Development Census (2015) data from Moomba Park highlighted that:

- 44.4% of children were developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain (Vic average 19.9%)
- 18.2% of children were developmentally vulnerable on two more domains (Vic average 9.9%)

It was therefore identified that there was a need for a project to improve transition processes and school readiness at Moomba Park Primary School.

## What is Steps to Prep?

Steps to Prep is an extended Prep transition program unique to Moomba Park Primary School, but informed by similar initiatives such as the Ready, Set, Go program developed by Bass Valley Primary School in Corinella, VIC.

The program commences every year in terms 3 and 4 for preschool children in the year before attending school. Children are invited to attend up to two, three-hour sessions per week, in a dedicated classroom, with the support of carefully trained staff. Each session is facilitated by a dedicated Early Years teacher and supported by an Education Support staff member. Together they run a series of structured and semi-structured activities around specific learning outcomes created using the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework. Students are involved in engaging activities that are similar to kinder but introduce them to the environment of school.

Steps to Prep gives Moomba Park Primary School an extensive opportunity to get to know new students and their families before they are placed into a Foundation classroom in the following year. In turn, this ensures that their individual learning needs are met and appropriate supports can be organised where needed.

To support the establishment of the program initially, with the assistance of a partnership with Merri Health, Moomba Park Primary School was awarded a grant

there were a high proportion of students entering their Foundation year with significantly low language acquisition. Language acquisition during early of \$23,125.00 through Australian Schools Plus. Since the program was established in 2016, Moomba Park has worked tirelessly to ensure the program is sustainable and strongly integrated into the school. In 2017, with the assistance of a \$10,000 grant through Ready Set Prep, the school funded the redevelopment of an unused space to create a dedicated Steps to Prep classroom and has continued to purchase resources such as 'Talk and Play' bags that support learning.

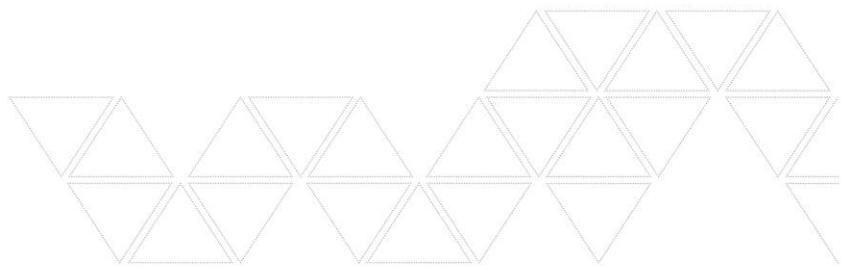


*Children participating in an activity at Steps to Prep*

## A typical session

- children arrive, sign in
- put bags away
- group mat activity time (singing the hello song, taking the attendance roll, doing a stretch and wriggle, day of the week, date, weather and reading a book)
- fruit time break
- 'Investigations'

Investigations is a play-based curriculum pedagogy based on the work of Kathy Walker. Students are involved in creatively and independently investigating a wide range of skills and experiences in rich learning areas around the classroom. Investigations help students build oral language, vocabulary and social skills through their interactions with learning areas and each other. Investigations is an ongoing program that students participate in throughout Steps to Prep into their Foundation year and up until grade 2.



Students take on three different roles during Investigations. 'Focus' children choose their area first and work with the teacher. The 'Photographer' documents the learning on a tablet and the 'Reporter' reports on the learning during the session. The students share their learning during reflection at the end of the session before packing up and having lunch.



Activities at Steps to Prep

### Family engagement

Family engagement has been a cornerstone of Steps to Prep since the establishment of the project in 2016; families can have many opportunities to interact with the school, ask questions, attend education information sessions and begin the very important partnership with the school.

### Talk and Play Bags

To build links between school and home learning, a series of Talk and Play bags were developed:

- Bags are based on a particular theme
- They contain books, games, toys, puzzles or activities that families can read and play with their child
- Parents are invited to attend information sessions about using the resources at home
- Students are invited to borrow the bags to take home
- Bags available for borrowing during Steps to Prep and into Foundation



Example Talk and Play Bag

## Evaluation

Year	2017	2018	2019
<b>Steps to Prep enrolments</b>	<b>38</b> 14 male 24 female	<b>44</b> 26 male 18 female	<b>38</b> 12 male 26 female
% Foundation students who participated in Steps to Prep	73%	91%	72%
% Steps to Prep students where English as a second language	65%	81%	63%
% Steps to Prep students born overseas	13%	12%	18%

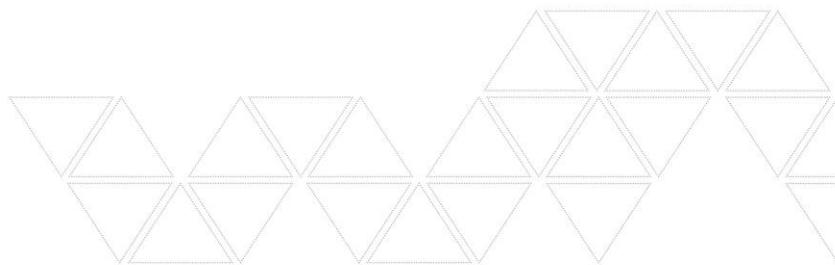
Note: the years listed above are the years the program was held, with children entering Foundation the following year.

Table 1: Demographics of children attending Steps to Prep over time

## Key successes

Moomba Park Primary School has been extremely happy with the number of children who participate in the Steps to Prep program. The aim for the pilot was to engage 20 children in the first year, with numbers increasing over time; enrolment numbers have been exceeded every year. Families are introduced to the Steps to Prep program during a face to face meeting at enrolment and encouraged to participate. The program has been so successful it has replaced the schools transition program. All students enrolling at the school now participate in a minimum of 3 sessions, conducted by a classroom teacher, regardless of whether they participated in the full program during Term 3 and 4 of the previous year. Qualitative and quantitative evaluation has revealed the following key successes:

- Children with additional needs identified early, and additional supports sought
- Children feel safer in the school environment and are more familiar with school grounds
- Children starting school more confident
- Children more socially and emotionally prepared to start school
- Children have built relationships with teachers and peers before starting school
- Less children upset on first day of school
- More parents feeling confident about their child starting school



- Stronger relationships between school and kindergarten
- Talk and Play bags successful in bridging school and home learning opportunities
- Significant improvements in proportion of children who are developmentally vulnerable according to AEDC

While the academic measures of school-based testing data have not shown any significant change since the introduction of Steps to Prep, there have been significant improvements in relation to the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) school readiness data.

### Australian Early Development Census

The Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) is a nationwide data collection of early childhood development at the time children commence their first year of full-time school. The AEDC domains have been shown to predict later health, wellbeing, and academic success.

These results show there has been a significant decrease in the percentage of children who are developmentally vulnerable at Moomba Park between 2015 and 2018. This is across each of the five domains as well as the percentage of children developmentally vulnerable on one, or two or more domains.

Steps to Prep is one of many programs and community based interventions that may have contributed to the reduction in developmental vulnerability, alongside other factors such as local gentrification. The improvements observed between 2015 and 2018 are also consistent with improvements seen across Fawkner.

### Early Intervention Success

Identification of students requiring early intervention support has been a very significant success of the Steps to Prep program. Children’s participation in the program has provided increased opportunities for school staff to identify issues earlier (before they commence their Foundation year).

Early identification is beneficial for the school as it provides opportunities to complete early screening tools, hold meetings with families and kindergartens to discuss identified issues, seek expert support (with the consent of families) and apply for funding to commence when the child starts school. Early intervention helps with classroom planning and supports the school to fund education support staff, reducing the pressure on the classroom teacher.

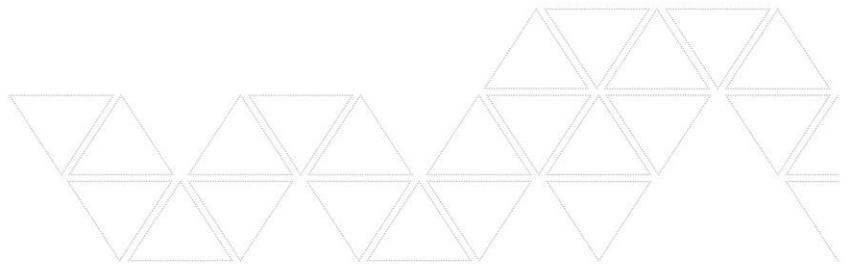
### What teachers say about Steps to Prep

Over the past three years of the program, qualitative evaluation has been collected from Foundation staff at Moomba Park. Staff have reported that Steps to Prep has had a significant positive impact on social and emotional readiness and children’s overall preparedness for school. Over that time, staff have reported that children starting their Foundation year feel safe in the school space. Participation in Steps to Prep has allowed children time to become familiar with the school, the playground, and the toilets, and teachers report that they see more children who feel comfortable and confident when starting school. Staff have also witnessed children building friendships and relationships with their peers and teachers which has all helped to create a sense of safety and security around starting school.

*‘Without STP these skills would have taken longer to achieve and led to less learning time in other areas.’*

Domain	Physical	Social	Emotional	Language	Comm	Vulnerable 1	Vulnerable 2
2015	22.2	8.9	11.4	22.2	15.6	44.4	18.2
VIC	7.9	8.7	8.0	6.3	7.6	19.9	9.9
2018	4.3	2.2	4.3	6.5	6.5	13.0	6.5
VIC	8.2	8.8	8.1	6.4	7.4	19.9	10.1

Table 2: Percentage of children developmentally vulnerable at Moomba Park on each AEDC domain



Teacher feedback also shows that Steps to Prep has significantly helped the Moomba Park Primary School plan for classroom management. It has provided teaching staff an opportunity to get to know children and their interests and how they learn. It has also provided opportunities for staff to gain more understanding and insight into children's behaviours and identify where additional support may be required to ensure a child can thrive in the classroom. Steps to Prep has helped plan class lists and place children with peer groups where they are more likely to succeed and learn better.

Furthermore, teachers report that Steps to Prep has provided an opportunity to build stronger relationships with the local kindergartens so that information can be shared in relation to children's learning and needs.

## What parents say about Steps to Prep

Parent feedback further shows the benefits that an extended transition program provides:



*Steps to Prep supports all areas of children's development.*

*'Steps to Prep was so helpful, it make the first day of Prep so easy. My child knew all the prep teachers and all friends she made during Steps to Prep.'*

*'A wonderful program that helped my child develop self-confidence and communicate with her peers. A great introduction into Foundation/room setting.'*

*'Steps to Prep has really helped my child transition into Prep. It gave them the opportunity to be familiar with the school environment and procedures; for example lining up, listening out for the bell. It also gave an opportunity to become familiar with the teachers and make some friends. Overall I was very pleased with the experience and look forward to having my second child attend.'*

*'Steps to Prep has helped my child meet new children they are going to go to school with. This has been so valuable because we have just moved here.'*

*'Steps to Prep has been the best thing ever. My child now can't wait to start school and wants to come here every time we drive past.'*

## What children say about Steps to Prep

Central to the program, and of most importance, children's feedback illustrates how children are able to build a connection with their new setting and learn new routines that will benefit both the child and family to support a positive introduction to school:

*'I liked painting at Steps to Prep.'*

*'Talk and Play bags were great, I liked taking things home to do activities with my family.'*

*'I liked going to the library and getting books to read.'*

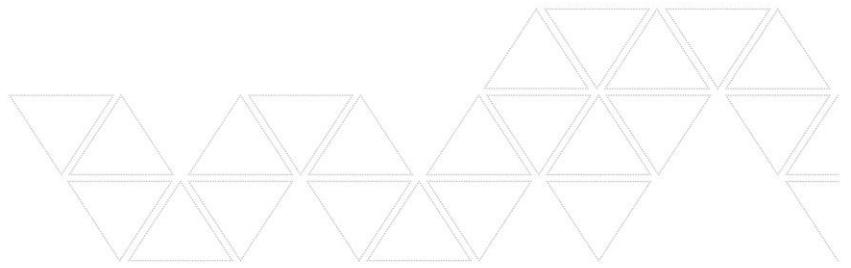
## Individual student case studies

### M (2017)

When M enrolled in Steps to Prep, their family informed the school that they were a selective mute. M would only speak at home. M was attending kindergarten and completing a second year to help better prepare them to start school.

When M started, staff could not encourage them to speak any words. Staff were told that after 1 ½ years of kindergarten, M had only just started speaking a few words. M attended sessions each week throughout Term 3 and 4 and was receiving extra support through external agencies. For M's first few sessions at Steps to Prep, the educators worked with them one on one and tried to engage them in play and conversations about topics their family said they were most interested in. After a number of weeks of encouragement, M started to say 'good morning' when arriving for class. As each week progressed, M would say more. M was still very uncomfortable in group settings but this eventually changed by the end of Term 3. By Term 4 M had started playing with the children one-on-one and had started calling out and contributing to discussions. M started to learn by mimicking what other children do and is more confident. The educators are so happy to see how much M's confidence has grown over the two terms.

The educators feel that M's regular attendance and the high rate at which they borrowed the Talk and Play bags has really helped engage them in the program and made them feel comfortable. When M's family were told they were talking at Steps to Prep they were extremely happy and surprised.



### **H (2017)**

H was extremely anxious at the beginning of Steps to Prep and did not want to leave their mum. H kept telling their mum that they did not want to come to school. After a number of weeks of attending Steps to Prep, H was much more comfortable in class.

When H started, they needed a special place for their bag that no one else could see. The staff accommodated this to help H feel more comfortable. Now H hangs their bag on the hook with all the other children. There were a few sessions while H was transitioning that they cried in the middle of the session as they felt anxious that their mum was not there; once H realised the routine of the day and that their mum would come back after lunch they were happy.

### **FIS (2019)**

FIS is a sibling of a current student and is therefore, already familiar with the school grounds. FIS however did not know any other children the same age at Moomba Park Primary School.

FIS lives between two family homes and has a newborn sibling. Due to changed family circumstances, FIS did not attend any regular childcare, or kindergarten program. One parent expressed that they did not want them to be in a formal early learning setting as they did not feel it was beneficial.

FIS presented as a quietly confident child, who loved to explore the different sensory activity areas of the Steps to Prep room. When the group transitioned to a teacher led activity on the mat, FIS was reluctant to join the group. When sitting for even short periods (5 minutes) FIS would become distracted and wandered around the room. Over the 2 terms of Steps to Prep and with the encouragement of staff, FIS was able to focus for longer periods. FIS made strong connections with other children in the group and was able to be placed in a Foundation classroom with positive role models.

The Steps to Prep program was an important stepping stone towards starting Foundation in 2019 for FIS. While still occasionally distracted during learning, FIS has shown great improvement in their stamina and makes valuable contributions during share time.

### **MAA (2019)**

Teaching staff met with MAA's kindergarten teacher and mother separately prior to starting the Steps to Prep program. The kindergarten teacher informed staff that they were receiving early intervention for behavioural issues that were more prevalent at home than at kinder. MAA's mum had sought behavioural support as there was concern about rough play with their baby sibling.

MAA is a very active and exuberant child, who enjoys all types of play, especially construction and role playing. On occasions, MAA would become too physical during play, but would moderate behaviour when spoken to by a staff member. MAA has the oral language skills to express their feelings and was encouraged to express themselves by staff.

Staff discussed MAA's behaviour and enjoyment of the program with their mum following most sessions; she was very reassured and confident that they were ready to start school in 2019.

Careful consideration was given to MAA's placement within a class group, as their behaviour often escalated when playing with particular children. Their transition to Foundation has been very successful.

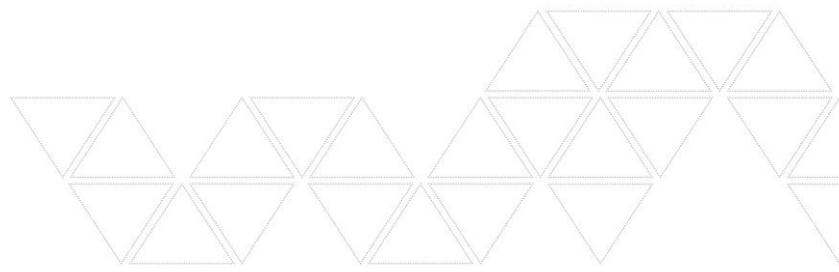
### **Future Activities**

Since commencing in 2016, the Steps to Prep program has supported 120 children and their families' transition to primary school.

The extended transition program provides extensive opportunity for teaching staff to identify the learning needs of students, and creates a safe and welcoming environment for families to engage with the school and their child's learning, both at the school and through 'Talk and Play' bags.

Quantitative data has shown the program is contributing to significant improvements in proportion of children who are developmentally vulnerable according to AEDC. Further to this, qualitative feedback has identified that students participating in the program are more socially and emotionally ready to begin school and feel safer and more confident when they commence primary school.

The program continues to adapt and evolve; supporting students, teachers and families to coordinate a positive and successful start to school.



# Word Play

## Literacy learning for the whole family



### ● ● ● ● ● CASE STUDY ● ● ● ● ●

A dynamic literacy learning model that provides a cross-cultural and place-based approach to English language learning for adults and preschool children

#### INTRODUCTION

Word Play is a literacy program aimed at families of preschool aged children with low English literacy.

The program was developed as a partnership between Merri Health and Moreland Libraries, taking a co-designed, place-based approach in Fawkner.

From the perspective of Moreland Libraries, the program increases numbers of library membership, improves community members' understanding and use of services, as well as improving early childhood and adult literacy.

For Merri Health, Word Play aligns with priorities outlined in their 2017-2021 Integrated Health Promotion Strategy to improve educational preparedness and increase social cohesion in Fawkner.

In particular, Word Play is complementary to 'Ready, Set, Prep'; a place-based project by Merri Health which aims to improve school readiness for Fawkner preschool children and their families. By improving both parents' and children's English literacy levels, Word Play contributes to the aims and objectives of Ready, Set, Prep; preparing families for their first year of school.

Word Play impacts upon children and adults by influencing:

- educational preparedness and school readiness
- social cohesion, connection and inclusion
- improved English literacy
- improved health and wellbeing for children and families

#### QUICK FACTS

##### Months implemented for the pilot

May - December 2018

##### What is it?

- A dynamic literacy learning model aimed at newly-arrived migrant families with low English literacy
- Carried out weekly during school terms at Fawkner Library, before library opening hours
- Families learning together

##### Reach

- 23 Word Play sessions delivered from Term 2 to Term 4 2018 during the pilot
- 35 families attended, from 13 different countries
- Average children's age: 3

##### Key partners

- Merri Health
- Moreland City Council (Moreland Libraries)
- State Library Victoria and Public Libraries Victoria Network (funding body)

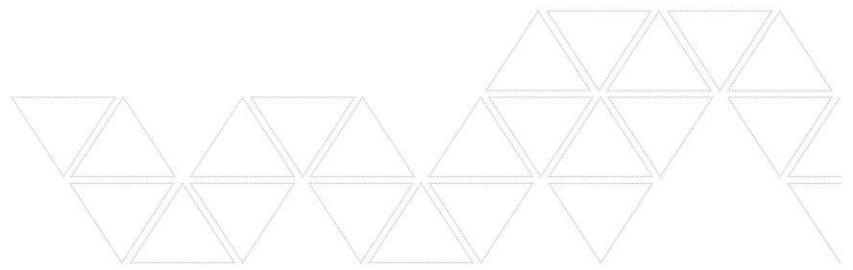
##### Key achievements

- New families became library members and started borrowing library books
- Parents felt more confident about their children starting school
- Parents felt more comfortable speaking and reading in English with their children
- Intercultural social connections developed
- Volunteers from the local community were involved

##### Challenges

- Initial issues with volunteer recruitment and retention
- Varied levels of English literacy between the participants and pitching the program accordingly
- Encouraging families to take part in the imaginative play





## ●●●●● PROJECT OVERVIEW ●●●●●

### AIM

To provide a cross-cultural and intergenerational approach to English language learning for newly arrived migrant families in Fawkner, through a dynamic literacy learning model in a library setting.

### OBJECTIVES

1. Word Play successfully engages families from migrant and refugee backgrounds in Fawkner with low English literacy
2. Children and parents are more familiar with the library services and are frequenting the library more often than they did before
3. Increased social connection (decreased social isolation) for newly arrived families and volunteers
4. Improved social cohesion in Fawkner resulting from meaningful interactions between people from different cultures, faiths and generations
5. Improved mental health and wellbeing for volunteers as a result of their volunteering experience
6. Higher levels of literacy among young families in Fawkner (parents and children)
7. Children and their parents will become more school-ready
8. Improvements to mental health and wellbeing for children and families from participation in fun, interactive and creative weekly activities at the library

**"My daughter likes the songs, poems, and enjoys the activities and meeting people."**

- Parent



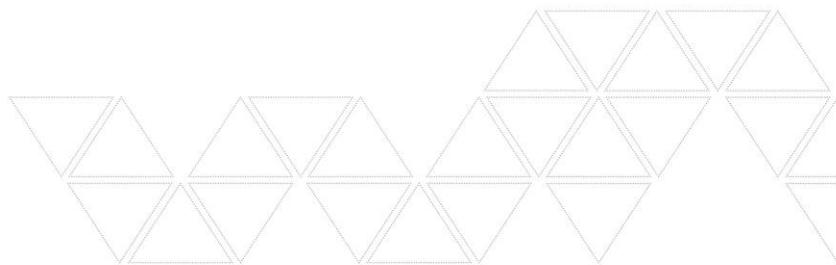
[Click here](#) to view "Word Play at Fawkner Library" YouTube video

### PILOT PROGRAM DELIVERY

Sessions were held each Tuesday morning during school terms, prior to the library opening. The Fawkner Youth Librarian and Merri Health Community Arts and Development Officer planned and facilitated the sessions to follow a different theme each week.

Sessions began with an Acknowledgement to Country, reading a book, singing a welcoming song, and engaging in an exploration activity that encouraged active play. The parents were then taken aside to work with a literacy librarian and reading buddy volunteers on reading exercises. Parents then rejoined children to read a book, and the session finished with the sharing of fresh fruit, and library borrowing time.





## PILOT PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The pilot program took place along the following 9 month timeline in 2018:

- January-March** -Planning and promotion begins
- April** -Pre-evaluation data collected
- May** -Project launch during National Families Week
  - Program delivery (more detail above)
  - Project consolidation- strengthened partnership, refined activity planning, edited materials
- July-September** -Final evaluation data collected
- October-December** -Project partners meet and plan for ongoing sustainability of project
- 2019** -Program continues as part of normal programming

### VOLUNTEERS

The initial aim in recruiting more established migrants as volunteer reading buddies was unsuccessful. Upon consultation with the Greek and Italian seniors groups, most reported that they didn't feel their English skills were strong enough to assist. However, upon further investigation some existing bilingual Merri Health volunteers came forward to assist in the program. This was ultimately a blessing as they helped in translating for Urdu and Arabic speaking participants. The use of bilingual volunteers who spoke Urdu and Arabic was particularly helpful as they were able to assist with translating instructions and written texts.

**"The best part was to meet up with so many new people from different faiths and cultures."**

- Volunteer

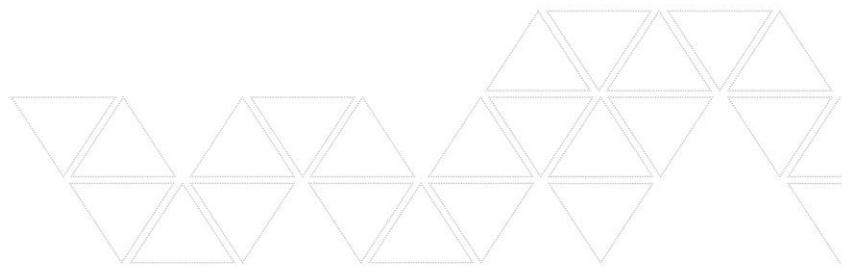


**"It helps with comprehension because as we were reading we were giving examples and explaining what certain words meant."**

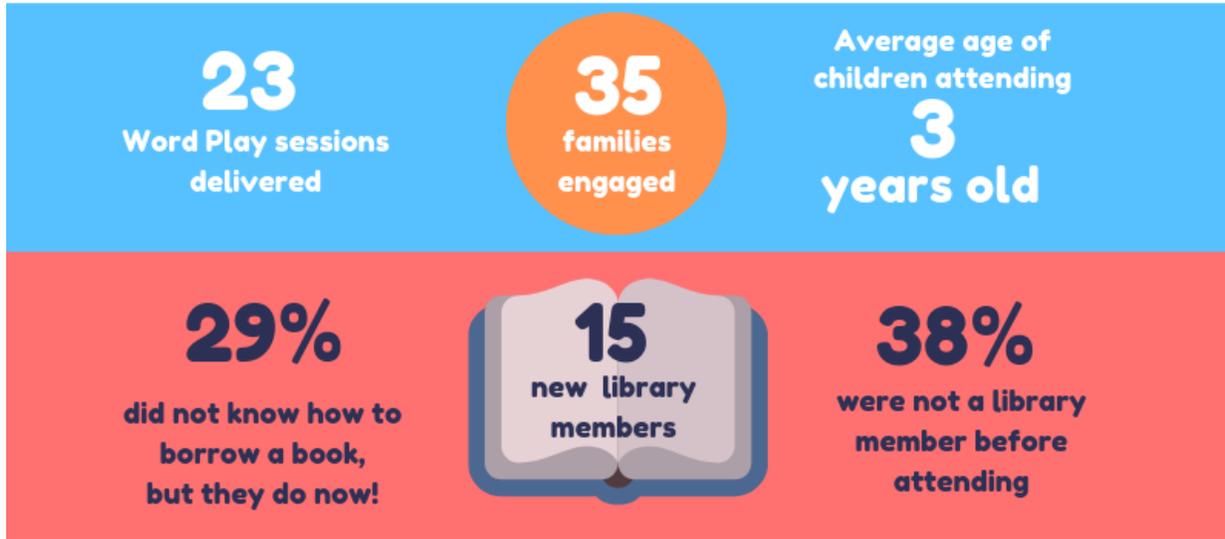
- Volunteer

**"My kids consider library as a school. Every Tuesday they get up early, they pack their library bags and get ready to go to the library."**

- Parent



## ●●●●● EVALUATION ●●●●●

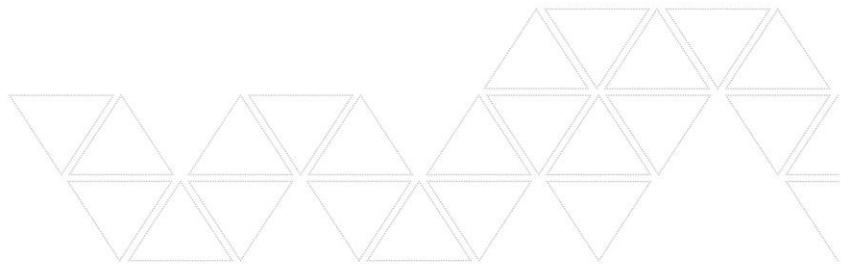


## FAMILY STATISTICS



## ●●●●● SUSTAINABILITY ●●●●●

Following evaluation, the program was deemed to be successful. Word Play is now being run as part of normal programming by Moreland Libraries in Fawkner and continues into 2019!



# Hello, Fawkner!

## Harmony Day grants program

### Introduction

The Harmony Day grants program is part of Hello Fawkner!; a three year project that builds community cohesion, connection and respect for diversity in Fawkner.

This case study provides an overview of the Harmony Day events and activities undertaken between January and March 2019.

### Project overview

The Harmony Day grants provided Fawkner residents and community groups with \$100 to run a Harmony Day event in their local community. Project aimed to promote:

- community leadership
- social connection and networks
- community cohesion respect and celebration of cultural diversity

Harmony Day is all about meeting your neighbours, making new friends, and celebrating cultural diversity in Fawkner.

*"It turned out great. The weather was perfect and everyone felt so relaxed and calm. We had Arabic, Pakistani and Australian friends all enjoy HARMONY DAY together which was lovely and fantastic 🍀😊"*

Event organiser



### Quick Facts

#### Months implemented

January – March 2019

#### What is it?

- A very small grants program to support community-led Harmony Day events for Fawkner residents
- \$100 credit cards provided following EOI process
- Participants organised events at various locations in Fawkner
- Highlights and pictures shared through various media outlets

#### Reach

- 34 expressions of interest
- 18 event organisers
- 17 events hosted
- 906 attendees
- 3 schools engaged

#### Key partners

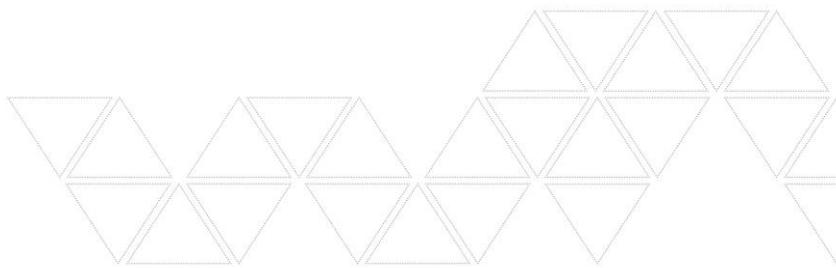
- Fawkner residents
- Fawkner Community House
- Urdu-speaking women's group
- Good Life Education
- Fawkner Primary School
- Darul Ulum College
- St. Mark's Catholic Parish Primary School
- Fawkner Food Bowls

#### Key achievements

- First time event organisers felt empowered as community leaders
- Strengthened connections between neighbours and acquaintances from different backgrounds
- Hosts and guests inspired to have more gatherings in the future

#### Challenges

- Tight timeframe for promotion
- Clarifying level of support for event organisers



## Project activities

### Expressions of interest

From January to March 2019, promotion of the program was shared through the following channels:

- Hello, Fawkner! e-newsletter
- Be Merri Festival Fawkner
- Community outreach by the Hello, Fawkner! Team members at different community groups and Merri Health programs
- Social media posts on the Merri Health Facebook page, and local Viber and WhatsApp groups
- Fawkner Service Providers Network meetings

### Allocation of credit cards

Grants were allocated to community members on a first-come, first-served basis, and given in the form of pre-loaded \$100 credit cards.

Organisers could use these credit cards to buy event supplies such as decorations, catering, and activity materials, as well as cover any costs for promotion, i.e. printing of flyers or invitations.

### Harmony Day events held

While Harmony Day falls on 21 March, events were held anytime during the month of March. Activities included:

- BBQs, picnics and gathering in parks, homes and local community settings
- Presentations, special assemblies and outdoor activities at Fawkner schools
- Passata and gnocchi making day with dinner at the Fawkner Food bowls
- Some guests wore traditional costume and brought objects, games and foods from their cultures

Depending on the hosts, guests included:

- friends and family
- neighbours and acquaintances
- people from the general public



### Sharing of event photos and highlights

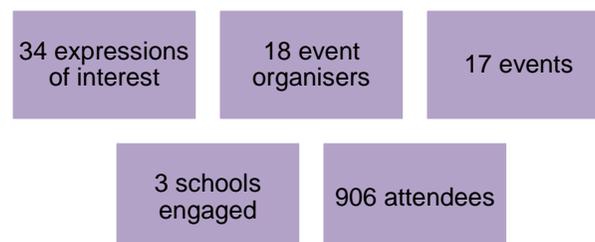
Hosts provided details and reflections about their events. Some also shared photos and videos which were shared in the Hello Fawkner e-newsletter as well as on the [Merri Health Facebook page](#).

*"To have something like this with your friends is important you become more appreciate to diversity around you, to get to know for all different cultures and ideas. I feel so bless that I came to Australia and experience these through a variety of foods, languages, believes and perspectives. Thank you to give me opportunity to set up this event."*

Event organiser

## Evaluation

### What happened

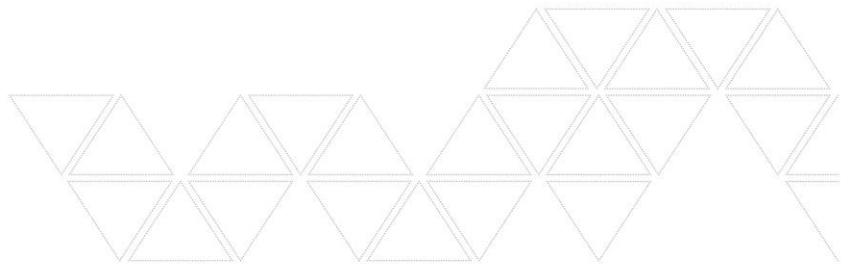


### What we learnt

The Hello Fawkner team followed up with event organisers about their experiences. Their insights provided valuable suggestions for how to plan for next year's grants.

The following common themes were identified:

- For many people, this was their first opportunity to organise a community event, which was an empowering experience for them.
- Community members had the chance to meet new people from diverse backgrounds and establish relationships with their neighbours for the first time.
- In many examples, hosts and guests are inspired to have more regular catchups and events in future.



## Challenges and learnings

### *Selection of event organisers*

Promotion of Harmony Day grants was delayed due to staff leave over the holiday period. Grants were initially allocated on a first-come first-served basis. Uptake was slow to begin with; however, many EOIs were submitted shortly before the closing date. The following changes will be made for 2020:

- Promotion will begin earlier with face-to-face contact with a wider range of community groups
- Development of brief criteria to assist in the selection process

### *Support for event organisers*

The team received many enquiries from event organisers about different aspects of their events, including:

- Background information about the meaning of Harmony Day
- Who to invite and how to promote their event
- Ideas for venues, activities and catering to a limited budget

In order to provide better support and inspiration for next year's event organisers, the Hello, Fawkner! team will provide an induction pack to all event organisers addressing the above.



## Alignment with Public Health and Wellbeing Plans

This project aligns with the following priorities of the [Moreland Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan](#):

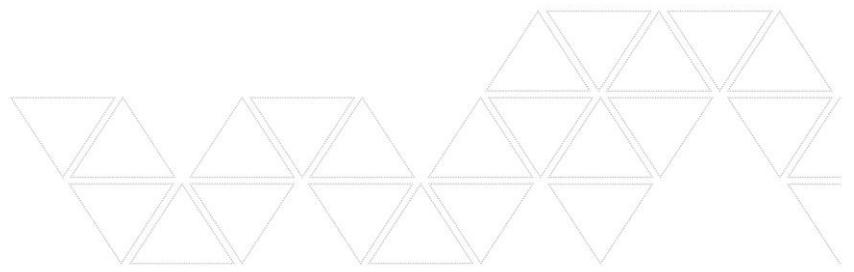
- Moreland residents participate in community life, are socially connected and connected to culture
- Moreland residents are safe and part of a resilient community

## Future activities

The Harmony Day grants program will continue in 2020, with learnings from 2019 implemented.

## Key supporters

- Department of Social Services (funding body)
- People & Communications team, Merri Health
- Finance team, Merri Health



# Fawkner Urdu Women's Group

## Building social connections, leadership capacity and service responsiveness for Urdu-speaking women in Melbourne's North

### Introduction

This case study outlines project activities and evaluation of the Fawkner Urdu Women's Group from July 2016 to June 2019.

The Fawkner Urdu Women's Group (the project) aimed to increase the capacity of Urdu-speaking women to fully participate in community life by increasing social connections, leadership capacity and service responsiveness.

This project is aligned with Merri Health's Integrated Health Promotion 2017-2021 priority of increasing social inclusion. This project also aligns with the priority of prevention of violence against women, social determinants focus and place-based approach.

### Project overview

The Fawkner Urdu Women's Group was formed in 2014 in response to an identified need and opportunity for Merri Health to promote social connections for newly arrived Muslim women living in Fawkner. For more information about previous activities see the 2016 IHP case study.

In the 2016-2019 period, the focus of the project shifted towards sustainability and strengthened co-design and community-led approaches.

The 2016-2019 phase of this project aimed to:

- Increase social connections for Urdu-speaking Muslim Women in Fawkner
- Increase leadership capacity within the Urdu-speaking women's group
- Increase service capacity to be culturally responsive to Urdu-speaking Muslim women

### Quick Facts

#### Years implemented

Project start: 2014

Activities report here: July 2016- June 2019

#### What is the Fawkner Urdu Women's Group?

- A social connections, leadership and service responsiveness project for Urdu-speaking women in Fawkner
- Initially peer facilitated, then community self-managed

#### Reach

- 1230 direct participants (274 social group attendees, 956 social media subscribers)
- 1513 indirect participants (1500 Meena Bazaar attendees, 75 clothesline project participants, 38 Vox Pop participants)
- 25 committee members engaged

#### Key partners

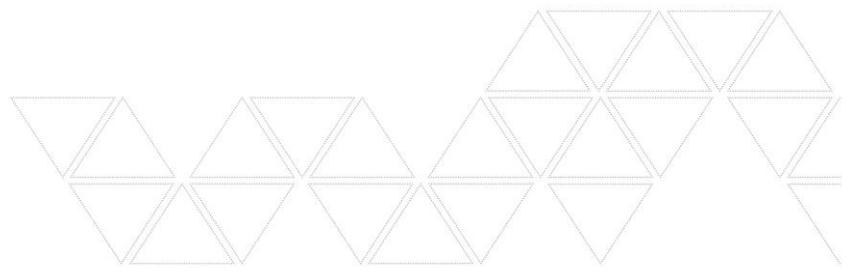
- Fawkner Community House
- Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights
- Multicultural Centre for Women's Health
- Moreland City Council
- Merri Health services

#### Key achievements

- Formation of leadership and management committees
- Continued self-management by 2019 management committee

#### Challenges

- Transition to self-management



## Project activities

The Fawkner Urdu Women's Group (the project) aimed to increase the capacity of Urdu-speaking women to fully participate in community life by increasing social connections, leadership capacity and service responsiveness.

Key activities delivered from July 2016 – June 2019 included:

- Peer facilitation
- Social group sessions
- Social media platforms
- Leadership committees
- Management committees
- Referral and service access
- Monitoring and evaluation

### Peer facilitation

Four Urdu-speaking women community members were employed as peer facilitators, including:

- Training in Diversity, Equal Opportunity, Bullying and Harassment, Manual Handling, Identifying and Responding to Family Violence.
- Supervision by Team Leader, Community Health Promotion, and a Merri Health Social Worker.
- 2 peer facilitators have continued their employment with Merri Health via other projects.
- 1 peer facilitator was supported to complete a Certificate IV in Community Services.

### Social group sessions

Eighty social group sessions were delivered between July 2016 and December 2018 (when data collection ceased) including:

- Information sessions by various guest presenters including Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights, Women's Health in the North, other health services and a range of Moreland City Council and Merri Health services.
- Social sessions such as one dish parties, scarf swaps, excursions, and gardening sessions.
- Work skills training sessions delivered by Glenroy Neighbourhood and Learning Centre and Drummond St's iHeal program.
- Formal consultations by external services on projects including the Moreland City Council Transport Strategy and Statement of Commitment to Women, and VicHealth's This Girl Can campaign.

- Engagement of new women in the group through participation in community events and other promotions such as printed flyers, project staff attendance at relevant network meetings.

### Social media platforms

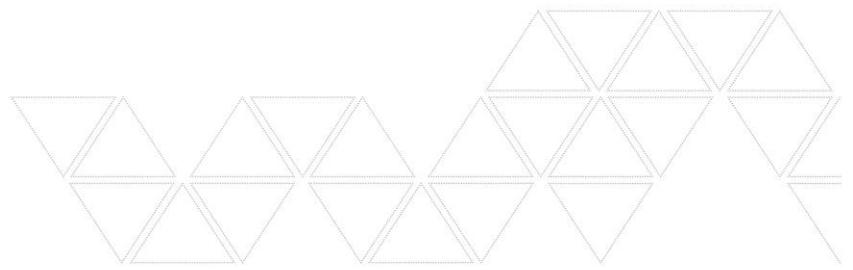
Two social media platforms were moderated and maintained, including:

- Viber group with 227 members, averaging 6 posts per day in December 2018.
- Facebook page with 729 members, averaging 3 posts per week in December 2018.

### Leadership committees

Two leadership committees were formed (2016 and 2017), including:

- Recruitment of 14 participants.
- 12 leadership committee meetings for program planning, discussion of challenges and identification of opportunities.
- 5 leadership training sessions delivered by the Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights.
- Delivery of 6 community-led projects including:
  - a. 3 x *Meena Bazaar* community festivals with over 500 estimated attendees and 30 stallholders at each event (please see Attachment B for images of the 2018 Meena Bazaar).
  - b. 1 Week Without Violence Clothesline project collaboration with 2 Moreland Secondary Schools.
  - c. 1 vox-pop video project at Fawkner Festa with 4 participants and 34 interviews.
  - d. 1 leader-facilitated focus group on Moreland City Council's review of their Statement of Commitment to Women.
  - e. 1 collaboration with Merri Health's Community Engagement project.
  - f. Mentoring of leaders by Bilingual Peer Facilitators and Health Promotion Officer.
  - g. 1 graduation event for leadership committee members from both committees (please see Attachment B for images from this event).



### **Management committee**

Two committees of management were formed (2018 and 2019) including:

- Election of 11 community members to committee positions
- Management committee meetings for program planning, discussion of challenges and identification of opportunities
- Training programs on governance and public speaking
- Developed a Memorandum of Understanding with Fawkner Community House for ongoing support of the group

### **Referral and service access support**

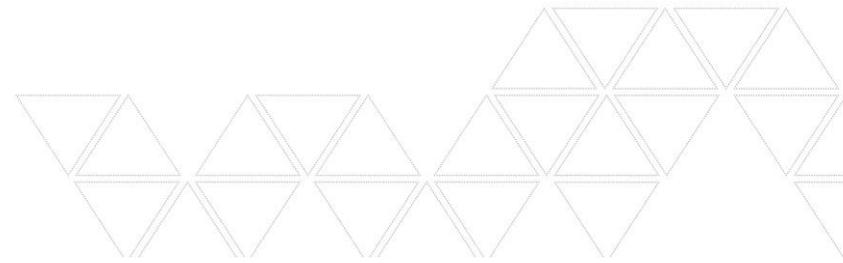
Peer facilitators provided 50+ referrals and support for community members to access services including:

- Merri Health clinical services
- Family Violence services
- Other health services
- Moreland City Council services
- Education services
- Employment services
- Partner projects

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

Process and impact evaluation was conducted throughout the project, including:

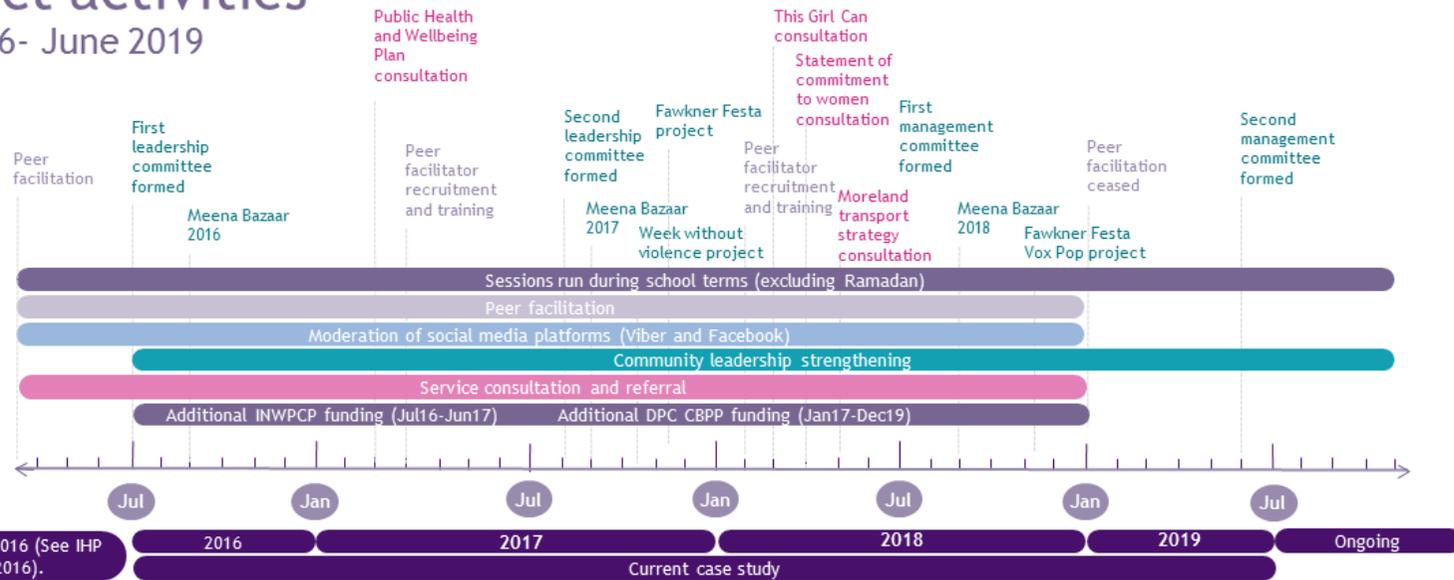
- Attendance records were kept for each session
- Registration forms were collected from new members
- Participant focus groups were held
- Participant surveys were distributed
- Stakeholders were interviewed from key partner services
- A project logbook was kept



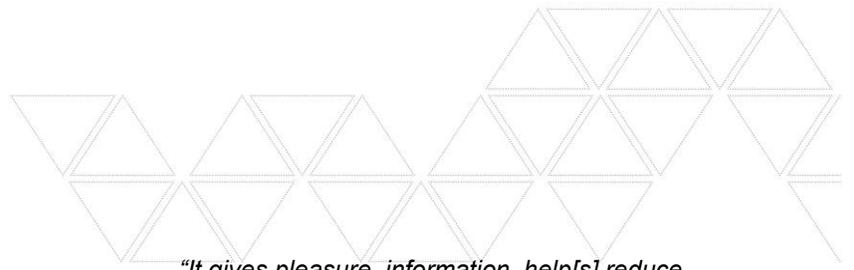
# Fawkner Urdu Women's Group

## Project activities

July 2016- June 2019



- Pre-existing and continuing:
- ✍ Fawkner Service Provider's Network
  - ✍ Fawkner Community House
  - ✍ Fawkner Library community engagement
  - ✍ HIPPY
  - ✍ Moreland Multicultural and Settlement Services Network



## Evaluation

### Aim 1: Increase social connections

The peer-facilitated social group, social media platform and events delivered by the leadership committee have increased social connections for Urdu-speaking women in Fawkner. This project had significant reach, with outcomes in relation to social support and sense of wellbeing for this community.

See also Attachment A: Case Study, Sana 2018.

Reach:

- 274 individual women attended the social group sessions between July 2016 and December 2018 (when data collection ceased). 129 were repeat attendees, with an average of 7.4 attendances each (range 2-36). Eighty social group sessions were held over this period, averaging 15 attendees per session.
- 85% of participants surveyed in 2018 reported that they use the Viber social media group.
- 75% of attendees lived in Fawkner and 7% lived in neighbouring Glenroy. Some participants travelled long distances to attend, including from Craigieburn (n=4), Greenvale (n=2), Mernda (n=2) and Rowville (n=2).
- 60% of attendees were newly arrived, having lived in Australia less than 5 years. 23% had lived in Australia less than 1 year.
- Attendees were largely aged 18-44, had children, and were permanent residents or citizens.
- With an estimated population of fewer than 350 Pakistani-born women living in Fawkner at the last ABS Census (2016), this represents a significant reach into this community.

In relation to social support and wellbeing, participants reported that:

- The social group increased their friends and social networks (61% “Yes, a lot” and “Yes, moderately”).
- Participation in the social group resulted in changes to self-confidence and mental wellbeing:

*“We have made more friends. We are more confident in expressing ourselves. More confident in going out & moving around in our community... it's has a positive impact on our personalities cause we know we have few listening ears where we can pour in all our depression & feel light later. Friends on whom we can rely on in our difficult times.”* – Participant 1

*“It gives pleasure, information, help[s] reduce social anxiety and depression”* – Participant 2

*“Because it is very helpful for every women either they are established n settled here in Australia or are in the process of settlement.... This group help us to solve our daily routine problems n also help us to face the social issues. Last but not the least this group is a reason to have a good get together...”* – Participant 3

### Aim 2: Increase leadership capacity

The formation, training and mentoring of Urdu-speaking women within the leadership and management committees increased leadership knowledge and confidence within this community.

This was a valuable experience for the participants both personally and professionally. In addition, the success of the resulting community-led projects represented community building opportunities that otherwise would not have been available.

Leadership committee participants reported that:

- Being on the Leadership Committee was valuable or very valuable (100% “agree”).
- They learnt new things and the training built knowledge and skills around leadership in their community (100% “agree” or “strongly agree”).
- Skills and confidence to be a community leader increased (from 54% to 76%).
- Awareness of opportunities for leadership in their community increased (from 34% to 46%)

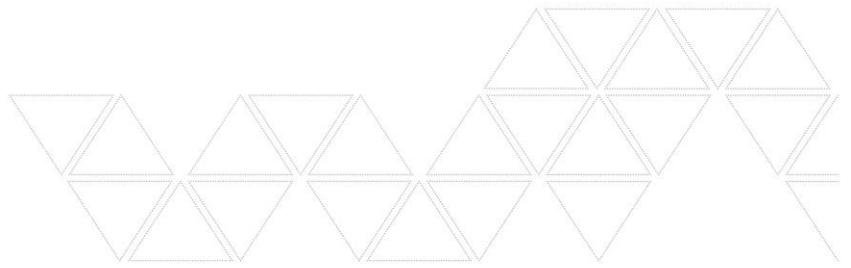
*“I came to know about my own strengths/weaknesses”* – Leadership committee member 1

*“This experience built on my self confidence, networking and communication skills and increased awareness of community issues.”* - Leadership committee member 2

*“Leadership committee not only polished my leadership skills but also groomed me to be a better professional.”* – Leadership committee member 3

Management committee participants reported increased confidence to:

- Gather feedback and evaluation
- Send professional emails
- Maintain confidentiality
- Speak publicly/represent the group



*“Volunteering was a good opportunity for us” – Management committee member 1*

*“Gained experience working together as a team” - Management committee member 2*

However, the transition from Merri-supported leadership committee to self-management committee encountered some challenges, including lack of resources, reduced responsiveness from Merri staff, and inter-personal difficulties.

*“to facilitate any group we need a good budget...without money you cannot entertain anyone.” – Management committee member 1*

*“Could have been made better if Merri health responded prompt” – Management committee member 2*

*“Improper bonding between team mates” – Management committee member 2*

As a result, group activities have reduced, with sessions in 2019 running fortnightly instead of weekly, no moderation of social media platforms, maintenance of members register or financial reporting and limited feedback gathering conducted.

Significantly, since transition to self-management questions of inclusivity of both the management committee and group attendees have been raised:

*“Cultural racism, discrimination on ethnic backgrounds” – Management committee member 2 in answer to question “What were the worst parts of your experience on the management committee?”*

*“I wasn’t comfortable... other language group they did not welcome them... they support their people, they are not supporting other people if they are from different country” – social group participant 1.*

At April 2019 3 of the 4 committee members had resigned from their positions.

Merri attempted to address these challenges during the transition from Merri-supported to self-managed committee via:

- Participation in management committee meetings and email/phone communications
- Delivery of capacity building activities including vision-setting, role definition and group procedure development
- Delivery of formal training by the Australian Muslim Women’s Centre for Human Rights and Glenroy Neighbourhood and Learning Centre

- Assistance to prepare one grant application
- Introduction of management committee members to potential partners including Fawkner Community House and Australian Muslim Women’s Centre for Human Rights

While this case study is not able to explain these experiences conclusively, some potential reasons for these challenges include:

- Ineffective communication and understanding of the transition from Merri-supported to self-managed committee between Merri Health and the first management committee.

*“Very high bar of expectations with the designated positions of the committee” – Management committee member 2 and “No support from Merri or funds” – Management committee member 3 in answer to question “Why do you think committee members did not stay on the committee?”*

- Individual and interpersonal characteristics of management committee members

*“Improper bonding between team mates” – Management committee member 2 in answer to question “Why do you think committee members did not stay on the committee?”*

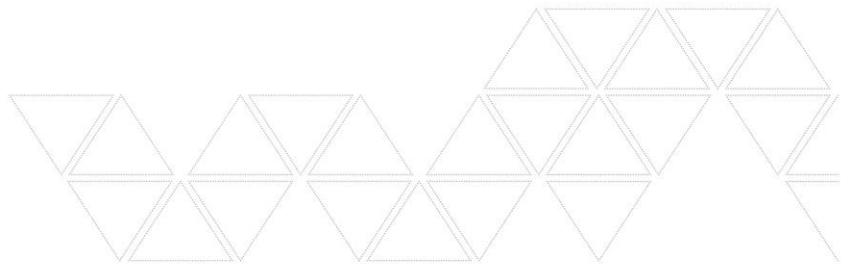
- Expectations of personal gain from volunteer management committee members due to the previous model of paid peer-facilitator staff attached to this project:

*“They take time out for managing the group but they didn’t earn any money” – Management committee member 1*

Despite these challenges, the remaining management committee member, with support from Merri Health and other community members, decided to continue with the committee of management model and successfully recruited a further 5 committee members to the second management committee in June 2019. As the time of this case study (August 2019), this second management committee has successfully coordinated sessions and established communication processes for the group. The longevity of this model is yet to be ascertained.

### **Aim 3: Increase service capacity**

This project enabled services to access Urdu-speaking women via presentations, formal and informal consultations, and training and support of the leadership and management committees.



In addition, the peer facilitators formed a significant referral pathway, particularly for sensitive issues such as family violence. This resulted in increased service access by project participants, increased understanding of the needs of Urdu-speaking women by services, and changes to service delivery to better meet the needs of Urdu-speaking women.

Participants reported that:

- The social group increased their knowledge of local services and groups (69% “Yes, a lot” and “Yes, moderately”).
- They have joined new groups or accessed services, because of the social group (57% agreed).

Service providers reported increased service access because of the social group:

*“It was huge to have that group, not only for us... but for the whole of Fawkner area”. “At some stage 80% of my family violence clients were from the Urdu-speaking group” – Stakeholder 1*

*“It has certainly increased access for us in terms of linking that community to some of our programs” – Stakeholder 2*

*“I’d say 30-40% of my clients were from the Urdu group” – Stakeholder 4*

Service providers also reported changes to the ways that their services were delivered because of their contact with social group:

*“It made us as service providers to change the way we think about service delivery, to make it more appropriate to clients, for better outcome... Now they can access us.” – Stakeholder 1*

*“[We had] a lot of referral [from the peer facilitators] for post-natal depression, but mostly they never attended a [counselling] session. So, let us do it in a different way...what we did is I used to do a lot of sessions over the phone and they were really happy to do that” – Stakeholder 1*

*“[Staff visited the group] looking at need and feeding that into how we do social and economic inclusion work” – Stakeholder 2*

*“I think it has definitely opened up an opportunity to get to know what are some of the other issues that are happening, where does anyone need support” – Stakeholder 3*

*“[The peer facilitator] is a very good advocate for the community, she comes to see me as well when she identifies things that we could be addressing” – Stakeholder 2*

## Unexpected outcomes

A key unexpected outcome from this project has been the alignment of this social connections project with gender equity and prevention of violence against women activities. This group provided a setting for prevention of violence against women consultation and intervention delivery via partner organisations, as well as a referral and support pathway for women experiencing family violence.

## Future activities

A Health Promotion Officer continues to provide support to the committee of management as needed. Networks generated via the project continue to be utilised for other Merri Health work, including Hello Fawkner, Count Me In, Ready Set Prep and HIPPY. Two peer facilitators from the project continue employment with Merri Health on other projects.

## Alignment with Public Health and Wellbeing Plan

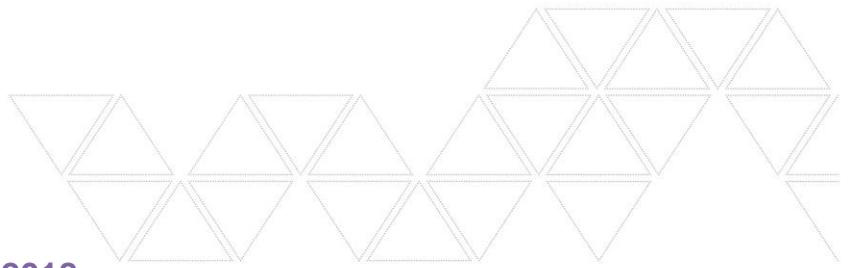
This project aligns with the following parts of the Moreland Public Health and Wellbeing Plan:

- Moreland residents participate in community life, are socially connected and connected to culture
- Moreland residents are safe and part of a resilient community
- Moreland residents live in communities that support their mental wellbeing

## Key supporters

We would like to acknowledge the contribution of Fawkner Community House, Australian Muslim Women’s Centre for Human Rights and Moreland City Council to the success of this project.

This project was also funded by a grant from the Department of Premier and Cabinet and through Integrated Health Promotion funding from the Department of Health and Human Services.



## Attachment A: Case Study: Sana, 2018

The Fawkner Urdu Women's Group has had significant population outcomes as described above. However, the outcomes for individuals such as Sana (not her real name) reflect the scope and personal impact of these activities.

### Case study: Sana, 2018

Sana (not her real name) had lived in Australia for 6 years before joining the Fawkner Urdu Women's Group. Despite this, Sana did not have any social networks in Australia.

*"There was absolutely no one that I knew". "I had literally no one in my contact list. If I scrolled my list down there was no one in Australia."*

Sana was dependent on government support and struggled financially, living on less than \$370 dollars per week. As a result, Sana and her children lived in unstable and inadequate shared housing, including living in a garage and workshop of a business.

*"It was very expensive... we could not have a leased home of our own..." "We were in a big debt." "My kids were really isolated. I didn't have the resources to go places, I was not driving, I didn't have the car, it was very tough."*

Sana found out about the Fawkner Urdu Women's Group through a community newsletter and began attending regularly. The Urdu group provided a more appropriate environment than other community activities Sana had tried.

*"I tried a few things before this [group]... it wasn't suitable." "[The group] was very nice experience. They always welcome everyone."*

Through participation in the Urdu group, Sana gained self confidence.

*"I was very reserved. It was about my beliefs... that I'm not good enough to offer anything or I cannot provide." "I remember looking at other women and just say how fabulous do they look. I will never be able to be like that." "I just pretend to be busy, so no one thinks that no one is talking to her. It took me a few months to realise that I can actually talk to someone, that's acceptable."*

Through participation in the Urdu group, Sana gained social networks. These networks increased Sana's access to social capital and support through ongoing challenges.

*"I had a car accident... I had to borrow money to pay the insurance money and I was under debt again." "I was officially homeless. [The landlord] let me go and I had no place to go... I had no connections, except the Urdu group. They were my only people that I know in the whole continent. I went back to them and they helped me a lot"*

*"I liked the connections I make there. I couldn't have been here without that network I received." "I had a friend who was teaching me driving, she was a contact from the Urdu group". "Now, if I need to find a day care educator, if I need to ask about a school review... I actually call people, talk to them and they are 100% from the Urdu group."*

Through participation in the Urdu group, Sana and her children gained access to services.

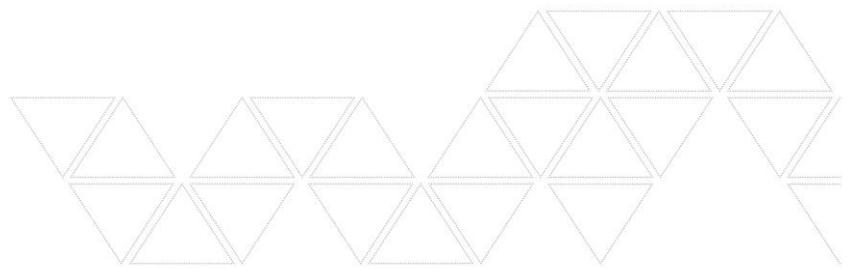
*"[The peer facilitators] were always there... filling a gap". "They did a lot for me... at that time I couldn't do anything for myself." "They brought me to the housing people." "I got financial support, like vouchers and furniture." "I was being referenced to counselling... because I was struggling financially, because of that I had depression."*

Through participation in the Urdu group, Sana gained volunteer and employment opportunities.

*"One day I was sitting [in the group] and a woman came and she says "we are looking for three people to help..." "Then they did a whole project in Fawkner... and that was my first job". "Even this job that I have now, I got the reference from the Urdu group."*

Sana is now in stable housing, has fulfilling part-time employment and has enrolled in further education for 2019.

*"My journey was not only about finding employment, making connections, about other people; it was about myself. It was about my blood, my beliefs and my training. And I had to fight myself." "I am always looking for tomorrow, that's a skill. I didn't give up."*



## Attachment B: Leaders Graduation Celebration 2018

On 26 June 2018, a graduation event was held to celebrate the two leadership committees that operated over the previous 2 years.

Eleven leaders were in attendance (of a total 13). Each leader took turns to speak about their experience of being part of the leadership committee and the Urdu group more broadly, and also spoke to the impact this participation had on them.

All leadership committee members were presented with certificates to acknowledge their contribution. Representatives from different partner organisations were invited to attend, including Moreland Council.

Image 1:

Merri Health staff welcome the leaders and guests to the graduation.  
(From left: Clara Adams, Health Promotion Officer; Sarwat Nauman, Community Development Worker / Peer Facilitator; Nazish Khan, Community Development Worker / Peer Facilitator)

Image 2:

Leaders share their experiences of being part of the Urdu group and leadership committee.

Image 3:

Leaders are presented with certificates of appreciation and acknowledgement.

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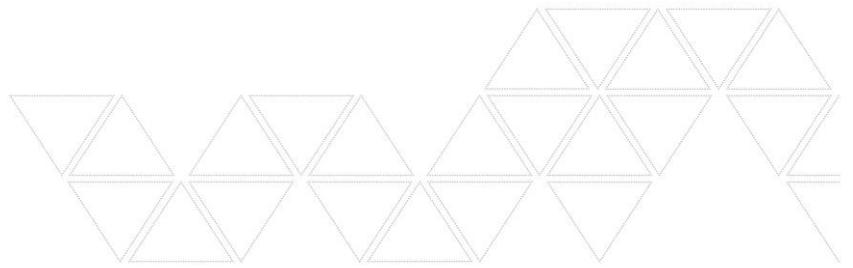


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## Attachment C: Meena Bazaar 2018

On 18 August 2018, the leadership committee hosted its second Meena Bazaar, a community event that promotes cultural foods and wares run by local community members.

Similar to the event held in 2017, Meena Bazaar was held at a community hall in Fawkner. Twenty-three stallholders attended the event, with more than 500 community members braving the cold and wet weather. Stallholders included small businesses run by local community members (predominately from the Urdu-speaking community), as well as local community organisations such as the Fawkner Community House and Urdu language school.

Image 1:

Merri Health staff, volunteers and community members

Image 2:

Merri Health staff, Fawkner Community House representatives, and local Councillor from Moreland Council

Image 3:

Community members attending Meena Bazaar

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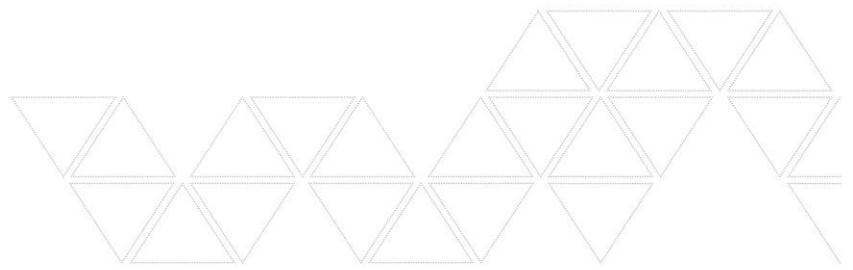


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# Count Me In

## Fostering community cohesion through sport

### Introduction

Count Me In is a sports participation program targeting children and young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds.

Although sport is the vehicle for change, at its core, CMI aims to improve social inclusion and wellbeing for refugee and migrant families, and strengthen community cohesion. It does this by supporting families to engage with mainstream sporting clubs.

This case study provides an overview of the project and activities undertaken between July 2016 – December 2018.

### Project overview

Count Me In is a sports participation program that supports children and young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds to join mainstream sports clubs.

Count Me In's objectives aim to create change across the socio-ecological model:

#### Individuals

- Increase mental and physical health, resilience, sense of belonging and community connection
- Broaden social networks
- Improve access to community resources

#### Families

- Broaden community networks and sense of community connection
- Improve access to community resources

#### Organisations (sports clubs)

- Increase participation rates and cultural diversity
- Increase cultural competence and capacity to accommodate different needs

#### Community

- Increased community connectedness
- Increased social cohesion

#### Policy

- Improved evidence base to inform policy
- Guidelines for sports governing bodies, local and state governments

### Quick Facts

#### Years implemented

July 2016 to December 2018

#### What is it?

- A sports participation program targeting families from migrant and refugee backgrounds
- Children and young people are supported to join mainstream sporting clubs

#### Reach

298 child and youth participants  
45% of participants are female  
175 families  
33 sports clubs and their participants

#### Key partners

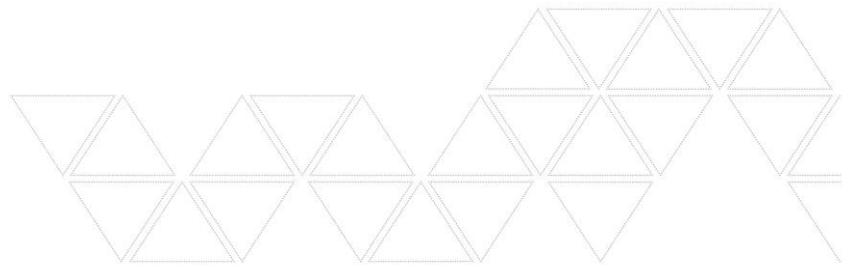
- University of Melbourne
- Moreland Council
- Arabic Welfare
- Hume City Council
- Centre for Multicultural Youth
- Fawkner Primary School
- Badminton Victoria
- VicHealth
- Sporting clubs

#### Key achievements

- 2017 VicHealth award recipient for Building Health through Sports
- Badminton program for women and girls established as an additional activity based on the interests of the local community

#### Challenges

- Maintaining communication with families and ensuring they remain engaged with the clubs



## Project activities

### Project team

Count Me In employs bicultural/bilingual Community Support Coordinators representing the main language groups in Moreland and Hume.

The role is to promote the benefits of sports to families, assist with registration, facilitate communication between clubs and families, and 'troubleshoot' transport issues by helping to organise carpooling.

### Partnership development

Partnerships were established with sports clubs in Moreland and Hume. These clubs were supported with resources, training and ongoing communication to increase their capacity to provide a culturally welcoming and appropriate environment and experience to refugee and migrant children and their families. At times, sports clubs made changes or adaptations to make their programs more accessible, including providing fee subsidies when needed.

Partnerships were also established with local community-based organisations to support project planning and implementation. This includes a Steering Committee, which meets quarterly.

### Family engagement

More than 175 families were engaged in Count Me In between July 2016-December 2018.

Community Support Coordinators work with families to identify their sports interests and capacity, and are then linked with sporting clubs that meet their needs in the local area.

### Badminton

Alongside support for children, a badminton program was established for women and girls to provide a culturally safe space for those who did not feel comfortable playing sport in a mixed gender environment.

More than 90 participants have participated in this initiative:

- 32 girls (Fawkner)
- 43 women (Fawkner and Oak Park)
- 15 women (Craigieburn)

This initiative was a partnership with Badminton Victoria.



Click image to play short film from student, Iman Balla

### Volunteering

Four volunteers have been engaged to support the project, with all of them being mothers of Count Me In participants.

These volunteers have been supported to access training through Merri Health and two attended the Diversity in Sport conference in 2017.

### Funding

One grant application was submitted to support 'Count Me In Too' under the Victorian Government's Free from Violence funding (local government stream). This application proposed to trial an adaptation to Count Me In that solely focuses on initiatives to increase participation of refugee and migrant girls in mainstream sporting clubs.

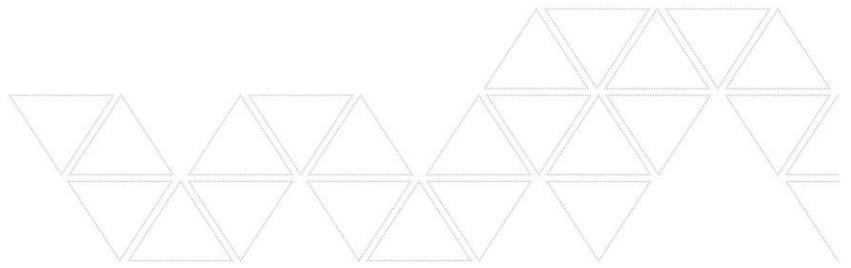
### Evaluation

Key achievements since July 2016 include:

- 298 children/young people (175 families) participating, from 9 cultural backgrounds and 46 schools
- 33 sporting clubs engaged
- partnerships with over 30 community-based organisations
- 298 children and 24 parents participated in the evaluation

Program evaluation demonstrates CMI can be a catalyst for change, improving both individual and community health and wellbeing. Results showed CMI participation significantly increased physical activity for children aged 3-16 years ( $p=0.012$ ) and resilience ( $p=0.029$ ), with a moderate positive correlation between resilience and wellbeing.

A social network mapping exercise also showed a significant difference in reports of people the children felt they could talk to across categories like 'kids in the community' and 'adults at school'. This demonstrates CMI was able to improve the social network of participants, and that children felt they had more people they could seek support from outside the home.



*“Me and my son...we made many friends here. We met new people from sport”  
(parent)*

A key learning was to improve communication between clubs and families, which is an ongoing focus. We also listened to feedback to overcome participation barriers by establishing a badminton program exclusively for females, providing a culturally-safe space for those uncomfortable in a mixed-gender environment. With almost all CMI participants joining a sports club for the first time, the program successfully targets young people at a key life stage for setting up behaviours around physical activity, while also engaging their most important role models – parents and families.

*“[I want my daughter to play sport] to show her, because in my country ladies shouldn’t play this game, even my husband is saying, “Why is she going to cricket?” I want to show that even girls can do it. Girls can play anything and be active.” (Parent)*

### Promotions

- 4 x Count Me In Newsletter Editions (Dec 2016 – Aug 2018) – 240 subscribers
- 2 x features in the Merri Health Research and Innovation Newsletter
- 8 presentations at seminars, workshops, committee meetings and conferences
- Community Engagement Officer was a member of the Aussie Rules Panel Discussion Event
- Community Engagement Officer organised CMI participants to contribute to This Girl Can Victorian Equity Focussed Health Impact Assessment
- 2 videos:
  - o <https://vimeo.com/192753561>
  - o <https://vimeo.com/246892521>
- Social media channels:
  - o <https://www.facebook.com/CountMeInProject/>
  - o [twitter.com/@CountMeIn\\_Melb](https://twitter.com/@CountMeIn_Melb)

### Future activities

Moreland Council and Merri Health sought additional funding to broaden the scope of CMI to develop further culturally sensitive, community-led strategies targeting girls and young women. In 2018, Moreland Council successfully received funding for ‘Count Me In Too’, which is funded through the Victorian Government’s Free from Violence grants targeting local government.

### Key supporters

This project is a partnership between the University of Melbourne, Merri Health and other local partners. In 2018, this project received funding from:

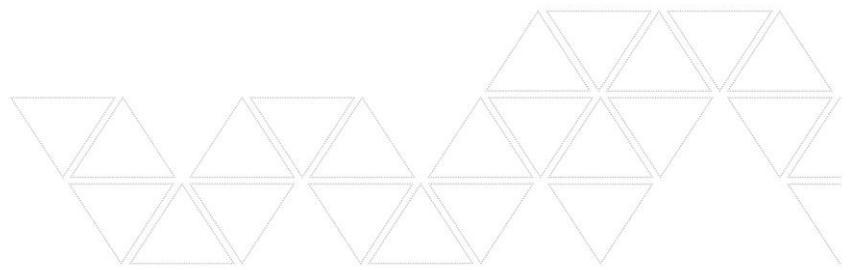
- VicHealth Research Innovation Fund
- Moreland City Council

This project also received in-kind support from:

- University of Melbourne
- Moreland City Council
- Arabic Welfare
- Hume City Council
- Centre for Multicultural Youth
- Fawkner Primary School
- Badminton Victoria

The following sports clubs have been engaged in the project:

- Haig Fawkner Cricket Club
- Northern Saints Football Club
- Hadfield Football Club
- Pascoe Vale Hadfield Cricket Club
- Preston YWC District Cricket Club
- Hadfield Netball Club
- Soccer Rising Stars
- Futsal Oz
- Meadow Park Eagles Soccer Club – Gladstone Park
- Coburg Basketball Association
- Fawkner Netball Club
- Craigieburn Football Club
- Northern Wolves Soccer Club- Glenroy
- Upfield Soccer Club
- Fawkner Soccer Club
- Coburg Little Athletics
- Craigieburn Little Athletics
- Broadmeadows Basketball Association
- Craigieburn Eagles Basketball Club
- Craigieburn Cricket Club
- Roxburgh Park United Soccer Club
- Hume City Soccer Club



# Count Me In 2

## Ladies only lawn bowling

### Introduction

Count Me in 2 (CMI2) is a sports participation program targeting women and girls from culturally diverse backgrounds.

It is a partnership project with Moreland City Council funded through the Free from Violence Local Government Project Grants.

This case study will highlight one component of CMI2 – the ladies only lawn bowling sessions.

### Project overview

CMI2 aims to:

- Support girls and women from diverse communities to engage with mainstream sporting clubs as participants, volunteers, board/committee members and coaches/referees
- Support clubs to strengthen their cultural competency and inclusive practice to create equitable, safe and welcoming environments for girls and young women from all backgrounds
- Collaborate with clubs to design and offer multicultural women and girls tailored sports programs

An example of a successful collaboration is the ladies only lawn bowling sessions. Working with Fawkner Bowling Club, CMI2 offered low impact, indoor, child friendly try out sessions to multicultural women.



### Quick Facts

#### Years implemented

March 2019 - ongoing

#### What is it?

- Women's only lawn bowling session where participants can engage in a low impact sport suitable for all skill levels

#### Reach

- 4 sessions in total (3 free, 1 paid)
- 42 women attended 63 Times
- 14 ladies attended paid lawn bowling session

#### Key partners

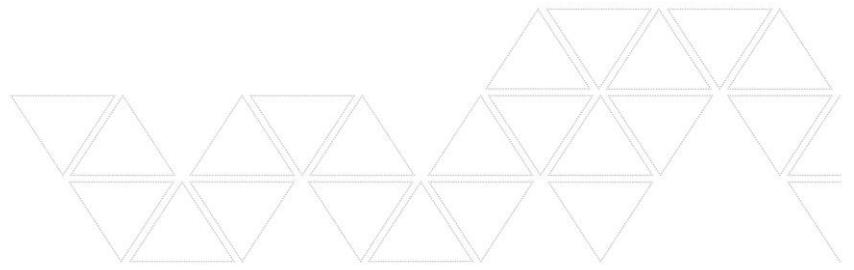
- Fawkner Bowls Club
- YMCA

#### Key achievements

- After seeing the great response from the participants Fawkner Bowls Club has now allocated the first Friday of each month as a women only day and promotes it on the Count Me In Too

#### Challenges

- Weather can still be a challenge (even when indoor options are available). People often don't want to go out in the cold
- Attendance is often lower during school holidays as many participants are mothers of school aged children and have additional caring responsibilities during this time



## Project activities

### Consultation

At the beginning of the project, the Community Engagement Officer gathered feedback from women about what type of sport/physical activity they wanted to participate in. Most women showed no interest in sports initially. Some women shared that they “don’t think they would be good at sports”. Other feedback included:

- “I am physically not able to participate in sports”
- “I am not interested in intense sports”
- “I like low impact sport”
- “I prefer female only or indoor options”
- “Is there an option to bring children?”

Based on this feedback, the Community Engagement Officer consulted with Fawkner clubs to determine which clubs would be most suitable. The Fawkner Bowling Club was very interested in engaging more females. The club had great facilities that were appropriate for all weather conditions and they were willing to offer free women’s only come and try sessions.

The club president and other volunteers were very friendly and welcoming

### What was offered? Who attended?

- Fawkner Bowling Club offered 4 women’s only bowling sessions (3 free come and try and 1 paid)
- 42 women attended in total
- The club president attended each session to show the women how to play and assisted with scoring
- Sessions were child friendly and suitable for all skill levels
- Indoor sessions were offered when the weather was poor
- YMCA also delivered a Mother’s Day fitness session during VicHealth’s *This Girl Can* week



*Women enjoying the lawn bowls - Fawkner Bowling Club*

## Feedback from participants

When the Community Engagement officer first introduced lawn bowling, it was initially difficult to convince the women to come for a try out. Only one of the women who attended the session had tried it before. Others weren’t aware of the sport or that there was a club in their area; *“I always go past here but never realised there was such a club here”*.

Feedback from the try out participants was very positive and they valued the opportunity to participate in women’s only sessions:

*“I thought Lawn bowling was for old people, I now realise its actually fun and does require a bit of skill and technique”*

Participant

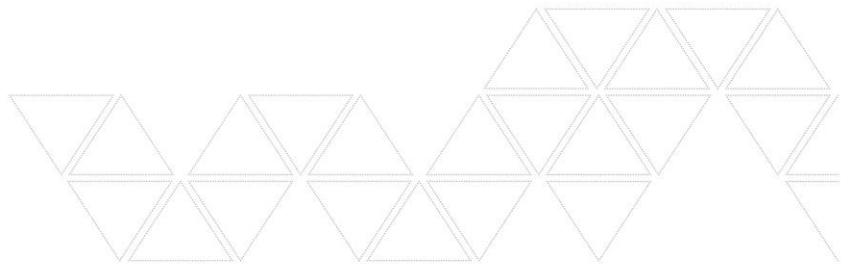
*“I never go out; I had so much fun today. I asked my husband and he allowed me to go because its women only and indoor”*.

Women have said *“the club is spacious and is safe for kids to play around in”*.

They also feel that they are role modelling behavior to their children: *“I think it is very beneficial for her to see her mum exercising.”*

Some women attended try out sessions purely because their friends were attending: *“I only came because my friend forced me to.”*

Others look forward to the monthly sessions now, *“When is the next one?”*, *“I had so much fun getting to know other women”*.



## Challenges

- Some women who attended the bowling sessions couldn't join in because their preschool children kept them engaged. To address this issue the Community Engagement Officer organised a fitness session for women where there was a separate activity for children to participate in.
- Weather can have a significant impact on the number of participants at the sessions. The numbers are low on colder days.
- Participant numbers are low during school holidays. As many participants are mothers of school aged children and have additional caring responsibility during school holidays.

## Unexpected outcomes

Since the start of the project, those who have attended on multiple occasions have contacted the club to enquire about hiring the venue for private functions and events.

*"This is a great place to organise my cooking classes", "I will book this hall for my daughter's next birthday party"* This feedback indicates that the community is more aware of the facility and will be using the facility more now.

Many women who have attended the bowling sessions have pre-school children. They have found the club facility to be *"safe and suitable because they could participate in the bowling activity while keeping an eye on their children"*.

## Alignment with Public Health and Wellbeing Plan

This project aligns with the following outcomes identified in the [Moreland Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan](#):

- Moreland residents are physically active at all stages of life.
- Moreland residents participate in community life, are socially connected and connected to culture
- Moreland residents live in communities that support their mental wellbeing
- Moreland residents have access to well designed and well located community facilities
- Moreland residents have access to open spaces close to where they live

## Future activities

Participants are now enquiring about future sessions. More paid sessions will follow. The bowling club has allocated the 1<sup>st</sup> Friday of the month for women only sessions and will charge participants a \$5 fee.

These sessions will be promoted through the CMI2 Facebook page, WhatsApp group and wider community networks.

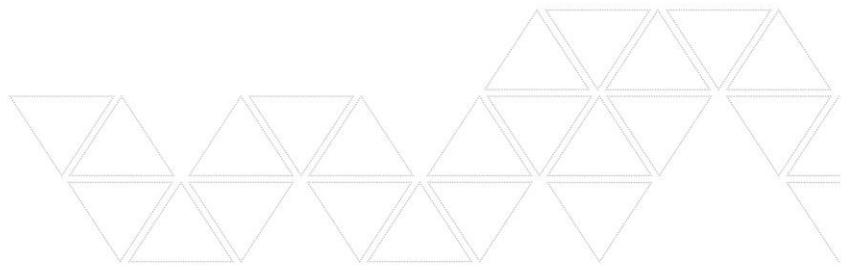
The Bowling Club is also keen to host other women's only physical activity sessions such as yoga. The community engagement Officer is assisting them to find an appropriate facilitator for these sessions.

## Key supporters

CMI2 is partially funded by the Victorian Government Free from Violence Grants – Local Government.

We would like to acknowledge the contribution of the following partners:

- Moreland City Council
- Fawkner Bowling Club
- YMCA
- University of Melbourne



# The Community Grocer Fawkner

## Addressing food security in Moreland's north by improving access to fresh foods

### Introduction

Merri Health acknowledges food security and food access as significant determinants influencing people's capacity to eat healthy and nutritious food. Food security refers to the ability of all people to regularly access healthy, affordable, culturally appropriate and safe food without the use of emergency food relief (Merri Health, 2015).

A key goal of Merri Health's *Integrated Health Promotion (IHP) Plan 2013-2017* was to strengthen the local food system and improve food security in Moreland, specifically for communities that experience higher health inequity.

This case study provides an overview of The Community Grocer Fawkner project; a weekly community run fresh fruit and vegetable market offering affordable, high quality produce in Fawkner to improve accessibility to fresh, healthy food and increase diversity in the local food system.

### Project overview

The Community Grocer Fawkner (TCGF) is a weekly low cost, high quality fruit and vegetable market that runs at a community venue in Fawkner.

TCGF aims to:

- improve access to fresh fruit and vegetables in Fawkner
- provide affordable, high quality fruit and vegetables to Fawkner residents
- provide volunteering opportunities



### Quick Facts

#### Years implemented

Nov 2015 – November 2018  
November 2018 – ongoing (managed by TCG)

#### What is it?

- A weekly low cost fruit and vegetable market providing fresh, high quality, affordable produce to the Fawkner community
- Provides volunteering opportunities for locals

#### Reach

- 62 volunteers
- 12,049 transactions including 353 deliveries

#### Key stakeholders and partners

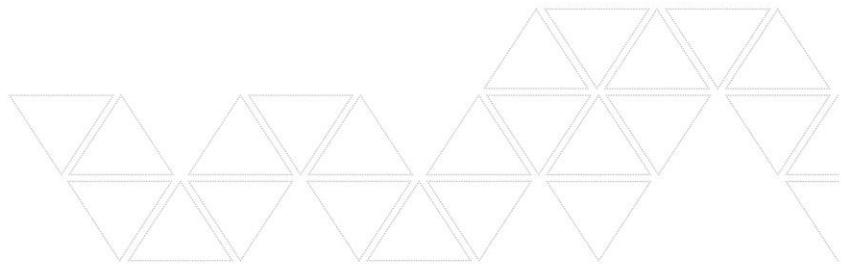
- The Community Grocer
- Moreland City Council
- Merri Health service providers
- Fawkner Community House
- Fawkner Leisure Centre
- Fawkner Service Providers Network

#### Key achievements

- 142 markets held
- \$202,599.79 worth of produce sold
- Recruitment of market manager and market assistant
- 2016 finalist for Minister of Health Volunteer Awards

#### Challenges

- Volunteer retention; many volunteers are university students aiming to gain skills in public health/health promotion through TCGF
- Customer demand is often unpredictable with school holidays and weather often impacting sales
- Staff turnover has made it difficult for the project to gain momentum over time and has resulted in additional time being spent orienting new staff to the project
- Introduction of a plastic free market divided customers, with some choosing not to return



## Project activities

### Phase 1: July 2014 – June 2015 Needs assessment and planning

Merri Health undertook a needs assessment in 2015, which highlighted that food security and food access continue to be significant issues within the suburb of Fawkner. From 2011 to 2013, the percentage of people who ran out of food in the last 12 months and could not afford to buy more greatly increased in Fawkner, from 5.6% in 2011 to 11.4% in 2013 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012).

Emergency food relief centres within Fawkner were at capacity and only able to operate on a weekly basis due to funding constraints.

The food supply was centred around major shopping strips, which makes it difficult for the 12% of residents who did not have a motor vehicle to walk to the shops (Merri Health, 2015).

Literature and stakeholder consultation found that Fawkner is one of the most disadvantaged suburbs in Melbourne (Merri Health, 2015).

Fawkner was chosen as a key setting within Moreland to implement a food security project.

### Phase 2: July 2015 – February 2016 Project planning and pilot

#### *Project planning: July 2015 – October 2015*

A literature scan was undertaken to look at settings based food security projects that could be replicated in Fawkner with a focus on food access.

The Community Grocer Carlton was identified as a potential model that could be replicated in Fawkner. Merri Health saw the model as an innovative and exciting way to help improve food security and social connections in Fawkner.

A strong working relationship was formed and Fawkner was chosen as the second Community Grocer site. This relationship was solidified with a formal partnership agreement between the Community Grocer and Merri Health.



Led by a health promotion officer, planning commenced to set up the Fawkner site with guidance from Merri Health staff around facilities, finances, volunteers and communications. Local stakeholders were also consulted, including Moreland Council, Fawkner Leisure Centre, Fawkner Community House and the Fawkner Service Providers Network.

#### *Pilot: November 2015 – February 2016*

The first TCGF market ran in November 2015. Markets were regularly staffed by the health promotion officer and a team of volunteers, with support from other Merri Health staff when required.

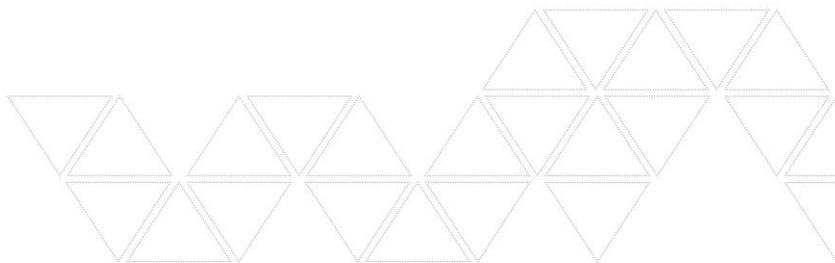
Over the pilot period, TCGF was received exceptionally well by the Fawkner community with an average of 100 customers attending each week during the pilot period.

Initially, unsold produce was brought back to Merri Health offices for sale to staff, until partnerships were established with local food relief agencies who were happy to receive donations.

TCGF received wide media coverage on SBS World News and RRR community radio.

A customer survey was completed in December 2015, with all 29 customers reporting that the market has made buying fresh fruit and vegetables easier for them and that they would recommend the market to their family and friends. Of the 29 customers surveyed, 28 reported that they were happy with the prices and everyone said that they were happy with the quality of the produce.

A decision was made to extend the project beyond the pilot period.



### Phase 3: March 2016 – June 2017 Consolidation

In March 2016, a market manager was hired to manage the day-to-day market operations. This enabled the health promotion officer to shift their involvement in the project from ordering and pricing, towards promotion, partnerships and evaluation. With new staff on-board, the post-pilot period represented a time of consolidation and adaptation of the market model to best suit the context.

However, during this period the initiative experienced significant staffing changes in the health promotion officer, market manager and team leader roles due to a range of unforeseen circumstances. The market, its staff and volunteers responded exceptionally well, despite the disruptions.

The Community Grocer model relies heavily on volunteer support. Seen as an opportunity to build the skills and confidence of local people, market sites are encouraged to engage residents from the local area in these roles. TCGF has successfully engaged more than 60 volunteers since commencement. However, maintaining a consistent number of volunteers each week was a key challenge. Positively, many volunteers move onto paid employment opportunities and this is seen as a key achievement of TCGF.

To better support the market manager, a paid market assistant role was established in December 2016. This role solely supports market-day operations. The role was promoted amongst existing TCGF volunteers, with the role successfully appointed to a volunteer.

TCGF also trialed a few initiatives with a local primary school, including two pop-up markets during school pick-up in late 2016 and a staff mystery box program. These trials were of mixed success, with engagement from school staff identified as a barrier. Further, TCGF volunteers were finalists for the Minister of Health Volunteer Awards 2016.



Click image to see film.

### Phase 4: June 2017 – June 2018 Towards financial sustainability

In the second half of 2017, TCGF trialed different initiatives with the aim of improving the market's financial sustainability.

Key strategies include:

- reducing leftover, unsold produce by on-selling to local organisations and Merri Health staff
- seeking grant funding to support expansion

Inspired by the market assistant at Fawkner, the introduction of a plastic free Fawkner market was presented gradually over 6 months, and implemented on 1st January 2018 using the following initiatives:

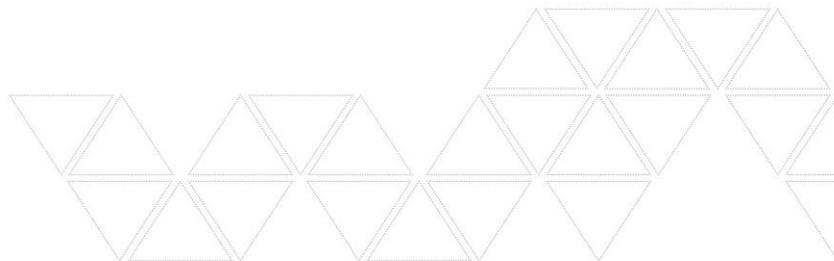
- educational posters and signs encouraging customers to bring their own bags
- offering free boomerang bags
- cardboard boxes and sustainably sourced brown paper bags
- limiting the amount of produce ordered that is wrapped in plastic

TCGF was a leader in the plastic free movement, and prompted other Community Grocer sites at Carlton, Fitzroy and Flemington to replicate this initiative. The implementation of a plastic free market received mixed reviews. Anecdotal evidence included:

- 'I will no longer shop at the market due to the plastic bags not being available'
- 'It's too hard to carry in one large box'

This correlates to a decrease in customer numbers, from an average of 95 in June 2017 to 85 in June 2018. Of interest to note, in July 2018, two major Australian supermarkets – Coles and Woolworths – chose to ban single use lightweight plastic bags, with many smaller chain supermarkets and food stores following suit. The Community Grocer will continue to seek feedback and track customer trends, as the banning of single use plastic bags and reusable bags becomes normalised.

Following a successful trial period from July 2017 to October 2017, TCGF implemented a home delivery service to increase access to the markets high quality, affordable produce for members of the community that may be socially isolated, living with mobility issues or unable to attend the market due to work or other commitments. Each week, a survey monkey questionnaire reaches 132 community members, and on average, 5 customers living in Fawkner, Pascoe Vale, Coburg and Coburg North receive deliveries to their door weekly. The delivery service has provided 353 mystery fruit and vegetable boxes.



**Phase 5: June 2018 – November 2018  
Transition**

TCGF has proven an important asset to Fawkner community life, providing a space that supports community inclusion, volunteering opportunities and healthy eating.

To ensure this initiative continues to benefit the Moreland community, Merri Health and The Community Grocer made a joint decision to transition the market management to The Community Grocer. This would support the growth of The Community Grocer and allow TCGF to benefit from new systems and processes that support the efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of all markets run by The Community Grocer across Melbourne.

It was agreed that Merri Health would remain an active partner, providing in-kind support via the use of existing facilities and storage space, equipment, and initial coverage of existing permit costs.

The Community Grocer would continue to provide Fawkner customers with a plastic free market, and aims to extend its focus on sustainability with the implementation of a “Pedal Powered Produce” delivery system. A mystery box pick-up point was also established for customers who are unable to attend the market during running hours, and did not live in the delivery zone.

Led by the team leader of community health promotion team, the transition of the grocer commenced in August and was guided by a health promotion officer, the market manager, market assistant, volunteers and support from internal facilities and finance teams.

Customers, community members receiving mystery boxes and local stakeholders such as Moreland Council, Fawkner Leisure Centre, Fawkner Community House and the Fawkner Service Providers Network were informed of the transition.

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between Merri Health and The Community Grocer.

**Phase 6: November 2018 – ongoing  
Under new management**

Following a successful transition in late 2018, The Community Grocer continues to support Fawkner residents and customers more broadly in Moreland with fresh, high quality fruits and vegetables at affordable prices. This includes adapting the home delivery service to pick up points at neighbourhood houses within Moreland to support residents who may have restricted mobility or transport barriers.

A strong focus on sustainability and sense of community also remains. The new market manager has strengthened existing relationships with customers and stakeholders to ensure the longevity of the market in Fawkner. They have also brokered a new partnership with Fawkner Food Bowls to sell some of their seasonal produce at the market, and also supply leftover polystyrene produce containers to be upcycled as planters and worm farms.

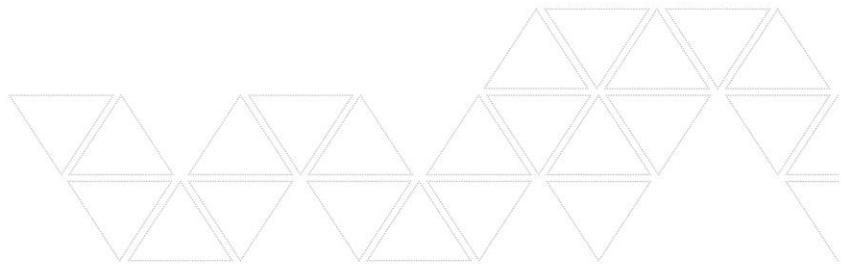
TCGF continues to provide a space for individuals and services to engage with the community of Fawkner. Two Merri volunteers have continued their roles with TCGF along with nine new volunteers.

Merri Health will continue to support TCGF under the current MOU into 2020.

**Market highlights 2015 – 2018**

Indicator	Result	Period
Average number of customers/week	85	2017-18 financial year
<i>For comparison:</i>		
– 2016-2017	97	
– 2015-2016	69	
Customers that attend the market weekly	48%	March 2018*
Customers who live less than 1km from the market	73%	March 2018*
Customers who travelled less than 10 minutes to get to market	72%	April 2017
Customers identifying as low income	56%	March 2018*
Percentage of produce at TCGF that was the cheapest available in Fawkner	71%	March 2018*
Customers feeling a sense of community and inclusion	90%	March 2018*
Amount of leftover produce donated to local food relief agencies	\$4,948	2017-18 financial year

*\*These highlights are taken from the Monash University student evaluation (see Attachment A) and the weekly market log.*



## IT'S MORE THAN JUST A MARKET...



good the area has been identified so we can promote healthy eating and affordable food to this community

- I've gained confidence from marketing, managing a team of volunteers, computer skills, learning about different produce, what benefits the produce has, formed new relationships with the supplier, I'm more confident and happy to be challenged
- Being a part of the grocer gets me out and involved, I get to meet other volunteers and other people with the same interests as me
- My family are eating a lot healthier
- I've had customers bring me food they have cooked
- I enjoy chatting with the regular customers and being a part of the community

## Alignment with Public health and Wellbeing Plan

This project aligns with the following outcomes identified in the [Moreland Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan](#):

- Nutritious food is socially and economically accessible and residents are eating nutritious foods
- Moreland residents participate in community life, are socially connected and connected to culture
- Moreland residents live in communities that support their mental wellbeing
- Moreland residents have walkable access to everyday needs

## Key supporters

Integral to the success of the project has been the partnership between Merri Health and The Community Grocer, whom have provided branding, social media platforms, the franchise model and evaluations as completed by Monash University students. This key partnership has produced a strong foundation for the Fawkner franchise, and will ensure continued progression and success after the transition of management to The Community Grocer.

Support from the following teams within Merri Health: finance, facilities, communications, volunteering, reception and allied health have also been instrumental in the set up and continual success of the project.

We would like to acknowledge the support of the Fawkner Leisure Centre for assisting with storage and promotion for the grocer and Fawkner Community House, Fawkner Primary School, John Fawkner College, Fawkner Service Providers Network and the Fawkner Library for promoting the grocer. Local business The Fork Shop and Fawkner

## Feedback

### Customer feedback

Students from Monash University completed evaluations of the Fawkner and Carlton sites in April and May of 2017 (see Attachment A) and of Fawkner, Flemington, Carlton and Fitzroy sites in March 2018.

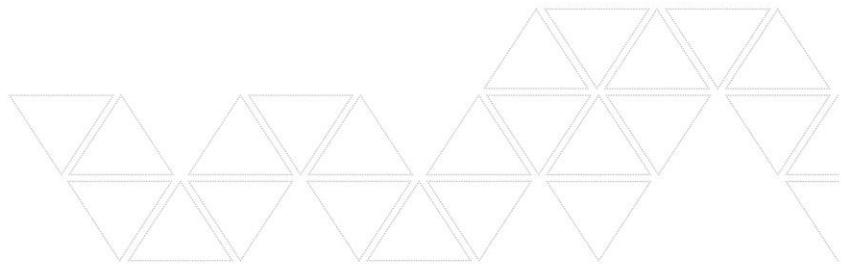
Focus group participants – staff and volunteers from Merri Health and partner organisations – reported seeing a range of social, health and career benefits related to TCGF, including:

- The market has grown, the comments you hear about the quality of the produce, 'oh it's this cheap!' 'is that all this costs me? That's great!
- In Fawkner there's lots of different cultures and I think people respect each other.
- Most customers have mentioned how good the quality it is, how cheap it is. They are in the morning waiting in queues showing they are eager to eat the food.
- The market is about access to fresh healthy produce. And the type of produce, for example, lots of Pakistani families use okra, and they provide that because it is a common food used. Being responsive to the community needs, and the location provides good access and affordability.
- I don't drive so the convenience of the market is quite essential.

### Staff and volunteer feedback

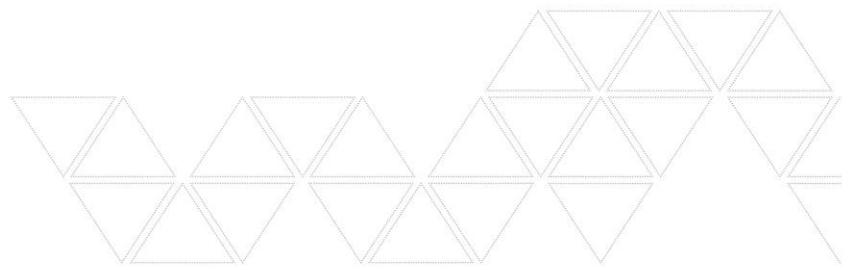
A questionnaire was provided to the Market Manager, Market Assistant and volunteers at the Fawkner site in July 2018. Below is a summary of their feedback:

- Volunteering here really makes me happy, its



Kebab House for their purchase of produce and the Hope Café that ensures the donation of surplus stock is utilised to feed those in need. The following stall holders have also provided a positive contribution the Fawkner market; Beeswax Eco food wraps, StoryCycle, Second Stitch and Sustainable Fawkner for providing reusable boomerang bags.

Lastly, TCGF would like to acknowledge the residents of Fawkner and the Moreland community, for whom inspired the project and for whom continually motivate the TCGF to progress and strengthen the local food system, build community connection and foster local enterprise and social empowerment.

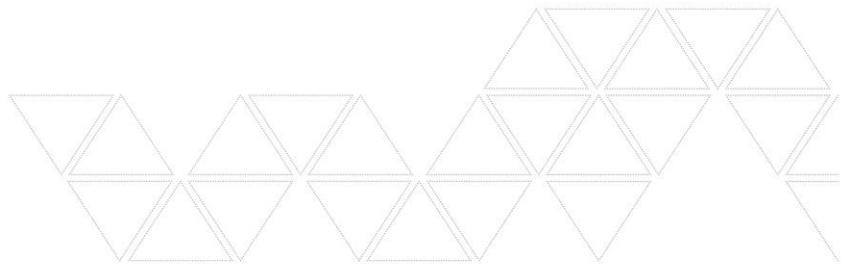


## Attachment A: Monash University impact evaluation infographic

In 2017, April and May 2017, four students from Monash University undertook an impact evaluation of the two first sites of The Community Grocer: Carlton and Fawkner.

Below is a summary of the evaluation findings.





# AVAILABILITY

58 different fruits and vegetables are available at the Fitzroy & Carlton markets



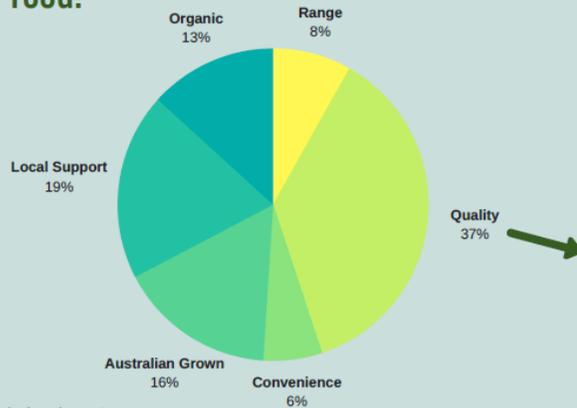
85% felt the variety of produce available allows them to purchase the produce they want



66% less expensive than supermarkets  
71% less expensive than all retailers within 1km

"You just literally get your money's worth and it's good quality"  
- Carlton Market Customer

## Most important aspect when buying food:\*



95% of customers described the quality of produce as **GOOD** or **VERY GOOD**

\*other than price

# UTILISATION

Since attending the market, 63% of customers saw an increase in their fruit and vegetable intake

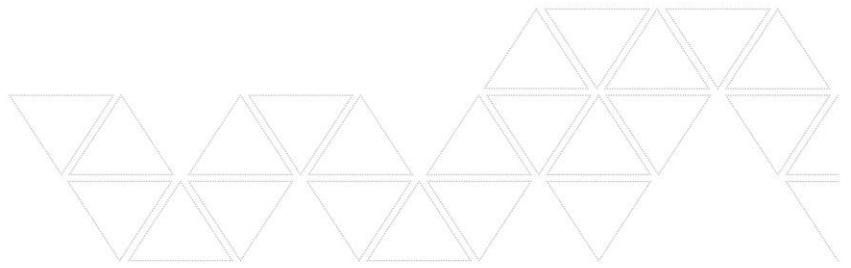


"It made cooking more exciting"  
- Carlton Market Customer

"People tell you how they cook it ... you give it a shot and you really just, like you taste it, the other cultures ... it's really amazing to be able to bring that home with you"  
- Flemington Market Customer



9 in 10 customers felt the selection of produce available allowed them to cook culturally appropriate meals



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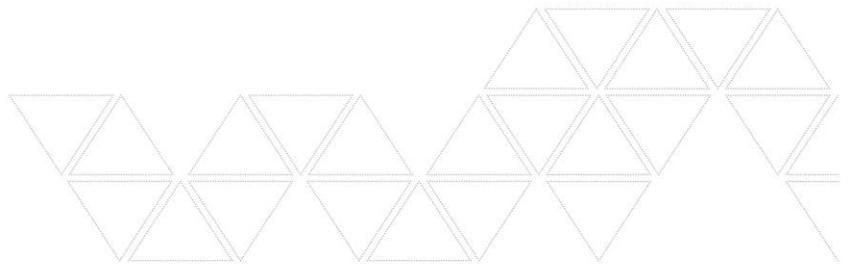
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# Reconciliation Action Plan

## Cultural learning and capacity building

### Introduction

Merri Health's [Reconciliation Action Plan](#) (RAP) sets out our plan for working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to ensure we honour our organisations commitment to close the gap in health and social inequities experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Merri Health's reconciliation journey started in 2014. Since then, we have produced two RAPs which have been endorsed by Reconciliation Australia. Our current RAP is due for completion in July 2019.

This case study details the work undertaken in the last 12 months under one key strategy within Merri Health's RAP: cultural learning and capacity building of staff.

### Project overview

Activities in the RAP aim to create a safer, more inclusive and equitable environment within Merri Health for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, staff volunteers and students.

Employees play a critical role in creating a welcoming and accessible environment for community members, and for other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees. Given this, Merri Health has prioritised this work through a multifaceted cultural learning strategy.

Key aims include:

- provide opportunities to learn more about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories
- build the capacity of staff to provide a culturally safe, welcoming and inclusive service and workplace



### Quick Facts

#### Years implemented

- Reconciliation journey began in 2014
- Innovate RAP 2015 – 2017
- Innovate RAP 2017 – 2019

#### What is it?

- A RAP is an important way for Merri Health to show commitment to closing the gap in health outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.
- Cultural learning and capacity building for staff is a key strategy within Merri Health's Reconciliation Action Plan

#### Reach

- 137 participants
- Social media reach: 2,500+ followers

#### Key partners

- Human Resources team
- Communications team
- Reconciliation Australia
- Girraway Ganyi Consultancy

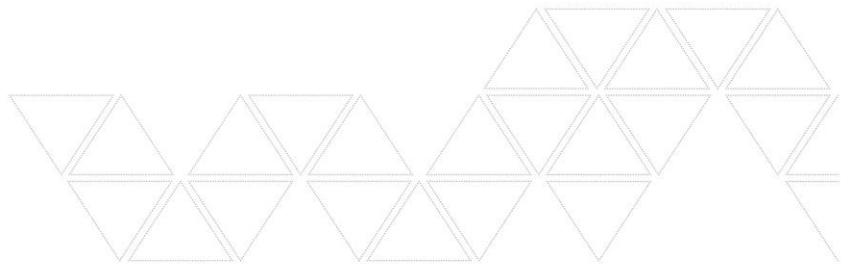
#### Key achievements

- Integration of cultural learning into organisational training calendar
- Consistently positive feedback on formal and informal training options

### Project activities

#### Cultural appreciation training

Each year, AJ Williams Chen of Girraway Ganyi Consultancy facilitates four cultural appreciation training sessions entitled 'Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients'. This workshop is formally structured, and is integrated into the human resources training calendar as optional training for all staff.



The training aims to assist attendees to:

- identify factors that affect contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients and families
- discuss the impact of history on current Aboriginal social and emotional wellbeing
- provide strategies to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients and families

Participants are given a thorough historical background to broaden their knowledge and understanding around health and other issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The facilitator – AJ – also shares his own personal story, providing the opportunity for attendees to connect with history in a different way.

This year, 32 Merri Health employees, students and volunteers have participated in this training. Since it began, more than 350 people have participated.

### **Koorie Conversations**

Merri Health hosted four Koorie Conversations this year. Koorie Conversations are informal cultural incursions held over lunch time at a Merri Health site. The informality, small numbers and cosy setting aims to create a safe, intimate space for sharing and asking questions.

These occasions provide staff the opportunity to hear diverse life stories and experiences of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, who may choose to speak about their work, passions and life journeys.

Aboriginal guest speakers included Bev Murray, Annette Sax and Trevor Mitchell and a Torres Strait Islander guest, Maria Dugan.

Approximately 40 staff members participated in Koorie Conversations this year.

### **Cultural immersion programs**

Cultural immersion provides a different opportunity for learning and reflection for employees. This year, Merri Health offered two cultural immersion opportunities to teams. Both had a focus on connecting with Country and the natural environment.

In March 2019, 21 employees from the community wellbeing team at Merri Health participated in cultural immersion program as part of a team building activity. The program included a walk along the Spiritual Healing Trail in Darebin, guided by Uncle Trevor Gallagher. They learnt about the ways Aboriginal people used the land for food and shelter and how today it is being used for promoting reconciliation.

The trail offered many opportunities to reflect on our personal journeys, and the experiences of Aboriginal communities.

In December 2018, approximately 30 staff from the healthy communities division also took part in making bush bouquets at a half-day team building forum. Led by the Koorie Community Engagement Officer, this is a creative learning activity that also offers a space for yarning.



*Staff walking the Darebin Spiritual Healing Trail*

### **Cultural celebrations**

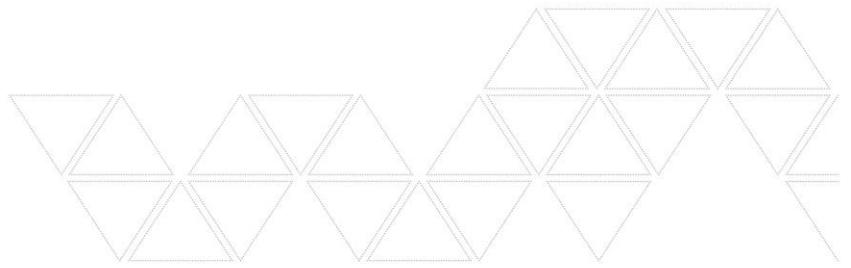
A key component of a RAP is honouring some of the key days/events of significance in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities' calendars.

This year, Merri Health board, staff and community members celebrated NAIDOC and National Reconciliation Week by attending three events: the Victorian NAIDOC Ball; The Long Lunch; and the launch of the Possum Skin Pedagogy toolkit by RAP Committee member, Sue Lopez-Atkinson.

### **Social media**

The communications team at Merri Health also regularly promotes national days/weeks of significance or celebration in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander calendar.

We also engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and the broader community, in conversation online promoting local events and engaging with current topics of interest such as Treaty.



## Evaluation

Across all activities in the past 12 months, we have reached approximately 137 Merri Health employees directly through their participation in training or cultural learning. We have reached another 2,500+ staff, community members and stakeholders through our social media channels.

Attendees at the cultural appreciation training and Koorie Conversations are asked for feedback on their experience of the sessions. Since commencement, we have received overwhelmingly positive feedback.

*“This training was absolutely fantastic, heart moving, informative, educational and provided great practical strategies to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and be culturally sensitive”*

*Participant,  
Cultural appreciation training 2019*

Over the past 12 months, we have seen a drop in participation rates for cultural appreciation training. We understand some staff experience barriers to participating in training (eg. training location is located further from some sites), and we are currently looking at ways to overcome these.

Cultural immersion offers such a different way of learning about local Aboriginal cultures and histories. Feedback indicates that staff don't just find it enjoyable, but it is also an effective way to engage people who have different levels of knowledge/understanding about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures at the same time. At this stage, cultural immersion activities are limited to those teams who actively seek out opportunities. Over the coming years, we will look to promote these opportunities to other teams across the organisation.

As part of our RAP commitment, we are asked to report annually on our progress to Reconciliation Australia. Merri Health's efforts were highlighted in Reconciliation Australia's [2018 RAP Impact Measurement Report](#).

## Alignment

This project aligns with the following priority from the [Moreland Public Health and Wellbeing Plan](#):

- Moreland residents participate in community life, are socially connected and connected to culture

## 2018 RAP IMPACT MEASUREMENT REPORT



See pages 10-11 for case study on *The Little Long Walk*

## Future activities

Merri Health is currently developing its new Reconciliation Action Plan for the next three years.

We are currently exploring options for a new mandatory training module for all staff, volunteers and students. We envisage this online training could offer introductory learning to Merri Health's commitment to closing the gap and reconciliation, and relevant organisational policies that support our efforts to create an inclusive, accessible environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members and staff.

We are also looking at options to for 'refresher' training for staff who have been at Merri Health for a long period of time, and completed cultural appreciation training more than 5 years ago.

## Key supporters

We would like to acknowledge and thank the contributions of:

- Merri Health's RAP Committee
- Merri Health's Human Resources team
- Merri Health's Communications team
- Merri Health's Executive Leadership Team
- Merri Health's Board
- Reconciliation Australia