

# Hello, Fawkner!

CELEBRATING FAWKNER

## Hello, Fawkner! Project

### Introduction

Hello Fawkner! is a three-year, place-based project that aims to improve social cohesion, connection and respect for diversity in the suburb of Fawkner, located in the north of Melbourne. The project was established in 2018 with funding from the Australian Government Department of Social Services, and supported with additional funding from the Victorian Government.

### Project Overview

Hello, Fawkner! has a strong focus on building community leadership and the capacity of local residents to develop, implement and share initiatives that strengthen their community. The project consists of four key initiatives:

1. The Great Idea Program
2. The Harmony Day Party Program
3. The Fawkner Times e-newsletter
4. The Fawkner Times newspaper

This case study provides an overview of these four Hello, Fawkner! initiatives spanning the past three years, including the activities delivered, the people involved, key achievements, and the impact they have had on Fawkner residents.

### THE FAWKNER TIMES

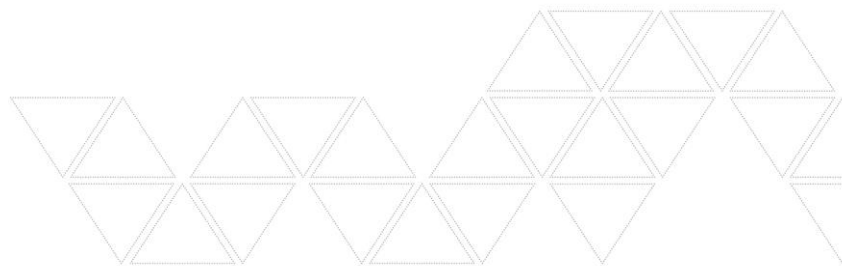
OVER  
**80%**  
of readers said  
the newspaper  
and e-newsletter  
had increased  
their feelings of  
connection.

MORE THAN  
**8500**  
PEOPLE  
REACHED



**81%**

of participants strongly agreed they *had the skills they needed* to run a project in their community.



## The Great Idea Program

The Great Idea Program aims to build community leadership, social connection, cross-cultural connection and respect for diversity in Fawkner. By supporting teams of Fawkner residents to undertake community-led projects, the program increases the agency and capability of participants, as well as their connection, mobility and support within the Fawkner community.

Since its establishment in 2019, the program has supported eight teams of Fawkner residents to develop and implement local projects across three separate implementation rounds.

### The program model

The Great Idea Program utilises a participatory, locally-led placemaking model, which was adapted from The Neighbourhood Project by CoDesign Studio. Through this model, project teams are provided with small grants as well as guidance and mentorship from the Merri Health Hello, Fawkner! team to bring their project ideas to life. This model was favoured over a more traditional 'service delivery' model, as we recognised its potential and value to generate more sustainable impacts on the wellbeing of local residents.

Each round of the program involves an application process, a selection process, planning and budgeting support for project teams, training and development support for project teams, and delivery of the projects by Fawkner residents.

### Application process

We engaged Fawkner-based providers to develop promotional materials for the program. In round one, we engaged a graphic designer to develop a flyer, which was circulated to the Fawkner community via social media (Facebook, Viber, WhatsApp), The Fawkner Times e-newsletter, and community events such as the Fawkner Festa and the Be Merri Festival. In round two, we engaged a filmmaker to develop a film for use on social media and in The Fawkner Times newsletter, which profiled the 'Cook Dine and Shine' project (from round one). Due to COVID-19 lockdowns, round three of the program was promoted largely via social media, as well as The Fawkner Times newspaper and e-newsletter.

In the first two rounds of the program, teams of two residents were eligible to apply for grants, while in round three we expanded the eligibility to include individuals and groups of two or more.

To apply for the program, applicants were required to write a brief summary of their idea (300 words) and describe why they thought their idea will make Fawkner and even better place to live (300 words).

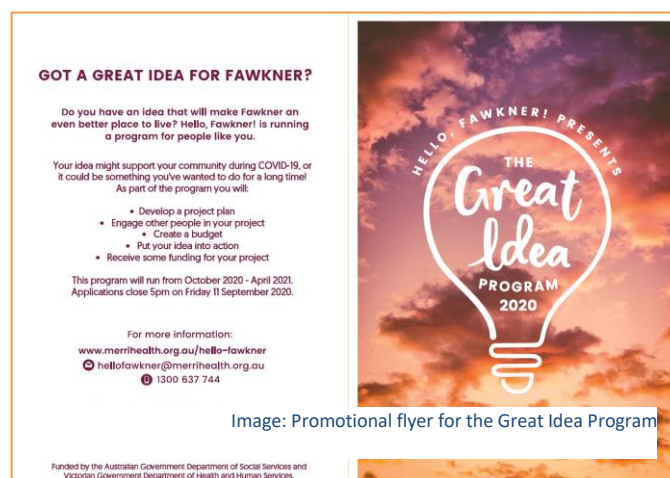
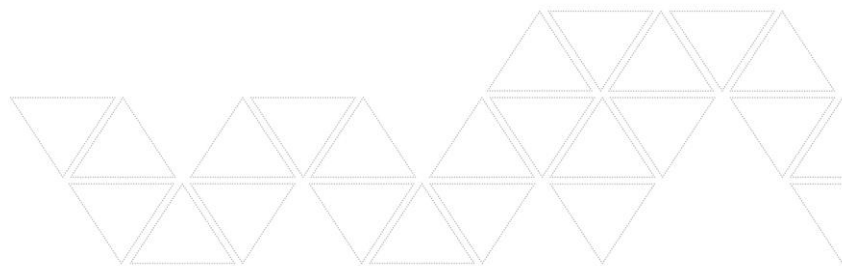


Image: Promotional flyer for the Great Idea Program

Funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services and Victorian Government Department of Health and Human Services.



### The selection process

In round one, we established a selection panel comprised of Fawkner residents and Merri Health staff. Each panelist reviewed the applications separately and were asked to outline:

- I. What they liked about the idea
- II. How they thought it would make Fawkner an even better place to live
- III. Anything they did not like about the idea

Panelists were then asked to rank the ideas based on what would most benefit the Fawkner community. The Hello, Fawkner! team then reviewed each panelist’s responses and rankings to determine a shortlist of projects. In round one, three projects were shortlisted and followed up with a phone call to confirm they were a ‘good fit’ for the program. All three teams were offered a place in the program.



A group meeting of The Great Idea Program Round 1

For round two and three of the program, a selection panel involving only Fawkner residents was established, including participants from previous rounds. Panel members represented diverse cultural backgrounds of people living in Fawkner. The intention of this was to increase the level of community control and agency over the program, and ensure projects appealed to culturally diverse members of the Fawkner community.

In round two, panel members worked individually to shortlist the preferred applicants using the same criteria as round one, from which two teams were invited to participate in the program. For round three, the panelists reviewed the applications online using Survey Monkey, and four teams were offered a place in the program.

Round	Applications	Projects selected	Project budget per team	Training budget per participant
1	12	3	\$5,000 (plus \$2,000 from Moreland City Council)	Unspecified / as requested
2	8	2	\$5,000	\$1,000
3	13	4#	\$2,500 or \$5,000	\$700

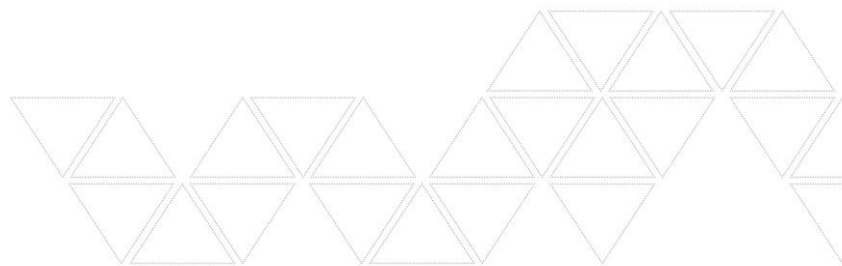
### Providing project support

As part of the program, each new cohort of teams were allocated a ‘support person’ from the Merri Health Hello, Fawkner! Team. The support person’s role was to support teams with project planning, budgeting, community/stakeholder engagement, and project promotion through The Fawkner Times e-newsletter and printed newspaper.

In the initial round of the program, the three project teams met together to ‘trouble-shoot’ and provide support to each other. However, during the second round, regular meetings involving the support person were prioritised to ensure teams had more structured support and guidance. A ‘Participant Agreement’ was also introduced to clarify key roles and responsibilities of program participants and Merri Health staff. Due to COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions in 2020, these meetings were conducted using online platforms.

### Managing project funds

# Due to unforeseen circumstances, one of these teams was not able to participate



Project teams were supported to develop a budget outlining how they intended to use their project funds. These budgets had to be presented to and approved by a Merri Health staff member, then project teams were required to sign a brief 'Funding Agreement' before they received their funding. In order to minimise the administration burden on program participants, teams were provided with their allocated funds in the form of pre-loaded credit cards\* or through Merri Health invoicing processes where possible. At the end of the program cycle, teams were required to provide a signed Statutory Declaration confirming they had spent their budget in line with the signed Funding Agreement.

### Training and development opportunities

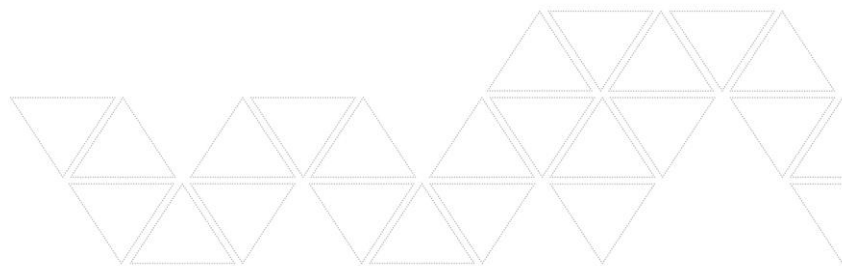
Participants were also provided with an individual training budget to spend on skills training and other development opportunities to support the successful delivery of their projects. Some of the training and development activities undertaken included smartphone photography, book-keeping, food handling, memberships to online learning platforms such as 'Masterclass' and 'The Social Difference', business, IT and towing.

*"Without the funding provided and the constant willingness to help from our project managers we really don't believe this project would have ran so well. The best part is this project was the first stepping stone for our project to continue, hopefully growing into something larger!"*

### The teams and projects

The Project	The ideas and achievements
<b>Cook Dine &amp; Shine</b> Zavi & Sana	Zavi and Sana aimed to bring women and girls from Fawkner together through food and cooking masterclasses. They believed that by bringing a group of culturally diverse people together to cook, eat and socialise, they would have greater opportunities to appreciate different lifestyles, traditions and a variety of food. It was hoped that these experiences would help to bridge cultural differences. The team have run five events and engaged over 350 women from diverse cultural backgrounds in their cooking classes. They also received a 'High Commendation' from Moreland City Council for the 'Honouring Women in Moreland' award
<b>Fawkner Wholefoods Collective</b> Sam & Katherine	Sam and Katherine's idea was to establish a business that sells local, ethically produced, pesticide-free products, with little to no packaging. Their philosophy was that customers could buy as little or as much as they wanted, using their own containers to avoid unnecessary packaging. The aim was to provide Fawkner with affordable food that is kind to their health and the planet. The team have developed a community-run committee of management, have 55 members, have run several events and stalls, have 20-25 people shopping with them each week and have attracted a large social media following.
<b>Of Fawkner</b> Domenica & Ben	Domenica and Ben aimed to create an online collective that explored the people, food and culture of Fawkner through storytelling. Their first project was a campaign for people in Fawkner to share recipes from different cultures. They have attended a local community festival where they collected over 50 community recipes, and engaged over 250 people in their online recipe sharing and community building platform.
<b>Mums, Dadz and Bubz</b> Claire & Alex	Claire and Alex's idea was to establish fun, affordable exercise and dance classes for new parents and babies in Fawkner. The classes aimed to give parents the chance to workout in ways that involved their little ones, with a focus on simply getting the body moving. During COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions the dance classes had to be discontinued, so the team instead provided a monthly social event with activities for parents and their children in Fawkner. The team have run two online and in-person events and engaged around 60 people in their community activities for families of Fawkner.
<b>STEM Catalyst</b> Faiza & Thasleem	Faiza and Thasleem set out to provide opportunities for families to learn and explore the wonders of science together in fun, creative and exciting ways. They provide online and face-to-face sessions on a range of science topics that are hands-on, activity-based and suitable for people of all ages. Since inception, the group has held 12 online and in-person events, engaged over 700 people in their science activities and secured additional grants and partnership opportunities to scale up and support their project activities.

\* Preloaded credit card suppliers included Universal Gift Cards and Australia Post pre-paid Mastercards



<b>Antfarm</b> Sofia & Alana	Sofia and Alana developed an interactive arts piece with a focus on ants. The team launched their artwork at a local community garden, which was attended by 150 community members and incorporated artwork by four other residents, as well as local live music. They have also engaged 130 people through their online platforms.
<b>Promoting Fawkner</b> Paige, Bailey & Monique	Paige, Bailey and Monique are passionate about supporting businesses in Fawkner with their online presence, advertising and promotion following the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown. The team has supported three businesses in Fawkner by developing videos and promotional activities, including fellow participants in The Great Idea Program, STEM Catalyst.
<b>Fawkner Chess Gathering</b> Stephan	Stephan will be holding an event to bring the Fawkner community together through enjoyment of the game of chess.

## Program participation and reach

Since its inception in early 2019, The Great Idea Program has had significant reach into the Fawkner community, which has included direct participation in the program participants, involvement of residents on the selection panel, and engagement of residents in the funded project activities. It is anticipated that many more residents will benefit from the program in future years, given a number of the projects have been scaled up and are continuing with the support of other fundings sources and structures.

Participation type	# Participants
Program participant	16
Selection panelist (residents)	20
Participant in project activities (residents)	2,400+



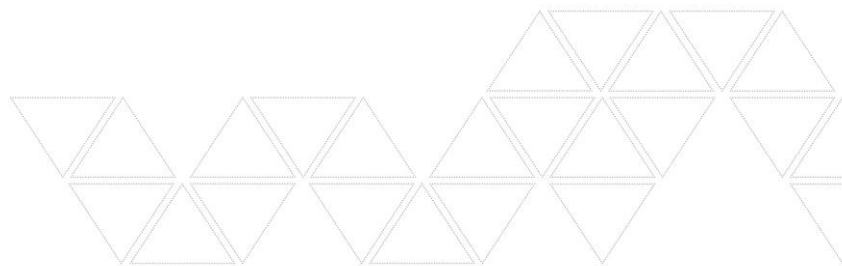
STEM Catalyst Team Members

## Program impacts and outcomes

To determine the effectiveness of the The Great Idea Program, regular evaluation activities were undertaken, including a survey of the participants (grant recipients) in each round of the program. The survey was administered at the start and end of the program to explore its impact across its three objectives: i) community leadership; ii) social connection; and iii) cross cultural connection and respect for diversity. The table below outlines the proportion of participants who strongly agreed with a particular statement at the start of the program compared to the end, indicating that the program had a positive impact across all key areas.

*"The thing I love about the Great Idea Program is how it really supports Fawkner and helps bring the community together from all social and cultural groups."*

Obj.	Statement	Start (%)	End (%)
i	I know of people / organisations / groups in my area that can help me deliver a project in Fawkner	19	50
i	I have all the resources I need to do a project in my community	6	31
i	I know how to get people involved in community projects	13	38
i	I am often involved in community projects	19	44
i	I feel confident I can start a project in my community	69	88
i	I have the skills I need to do a project in my community	69	81
i	There are ways I can contribute to community issues that are important to me	69	75



i	I feel community leadership is important for Fawkner	94	94
i	I know people at council I can talk to about implementing a project in my community	19	25
ii	I know a lot of people in Fawkner	25	31
iii	I find it easy to meet people in Fawkner who are from a different social or cultural group to mine	31	50



Zavi and Sana from Cook Dine & Shine at initial planning meeting

*"Some of them were scared as they never had the experience of speaking to a big group. We enabled them to become confident and outspoken as we believed they were already very talented people. They just needed a bit of push to rise and shine which Cook Dine & Shine provided them."*

The

*"We are trying to support emotional, financially, and sharing experiences"*

Harmony



## Day Party Program

The Harmony Day Party Program was developed as a way of empowering residents to celebrate Fawkner's cultural diversity with their friends and neighbours. Instead of organising one central Merri Health party, we developed a microgrants program to enable Fawkner residents to host their own parties in the their local neighbourhood, recognising this would reach a larger number of residents, create more sustainable outcomes, and provide leadership opportunities for interested community members.

### Application and selection

We delivered the Party Program over three rounds between 2019 and 2021. Community members were invited to apply via an expression of interest process, initially by phone or email (round 1) and subsequently via Survey Monkey (rounds 2 and 3). We selected party hosts on a 'first-come, first-served' basis, and as positions filled quickly, we created a waiting list of interested hosts for each round.

Image: Flyer for Harmony Day Party Program

### Microgrants

Party hosts were provided with \$100 in the first and second round, and \$200 in the third round. The funds were distributed to hosts in the form of pre-loaded credit cards, which they used to purchase event supplies such as decorations, food/catering, and activity materials, as well as to cover the costs of promoting the event, such as printing of flyers and invitations.

### The events and parties

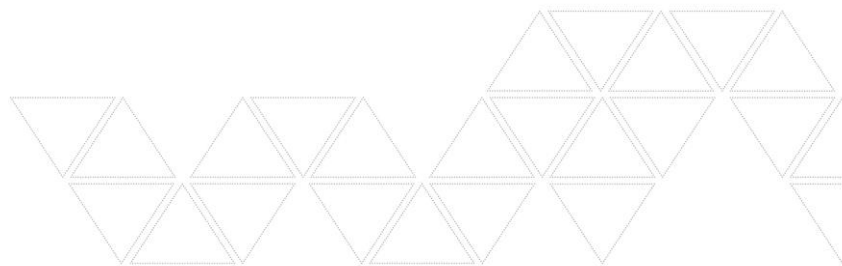
A total of 63 Harmony Day events were hosted by Fawkner residents in the month of March across the three years. Events included barbeques, picnics, school activities, passata-making, Ramadan celebrations, movie nights and more, which were held at Neighbourhood houses, parks, community gardens, schools, front yards and other locations across Fawkner. Some events were large, involving a whole street or community group, while others were small and involved only a few friends and family members. A total of 2,006 people attended Harmony Day parties across the three rounds.

Round	Time period	Amount	# of grants	# of parties
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*"I learned that having a friend from different country and different culture that gave you a chance to learn"*

**MERRI HEALTH**  
VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT

Funded by the [Australian Government Department of Social Services](#) and the [Victorian Government](#)



1	March 2019	\$100	17	17
2	March 2020	\$100	50	17
3	March 2021	\$200	25	29*

### Our approach to evaluation

We utilised the following methods to evaluate the implementation and impact of the Harmony Day Party Program:

- Participants shared a photo and story about their event
- Participants recorded the number of participants at their event
- The Hello, Fawkner! team conducted 17 interviews with event organisers from round one
- The Hello, Fawkner! Team conducted three group interviews with 18 participants from round one and two
- 25 participants from round three completed a survey

### Key outcomes

- 52% said it was the first time they had organised a party with their community
- 92% said they learnt new skills through planning and hosting their party
- 96% said they learned about new cultures and traditions

**HARMONY DAY  
PARTY PROGRAM**

**63 COMMUNITY-LED  
EVENTS**

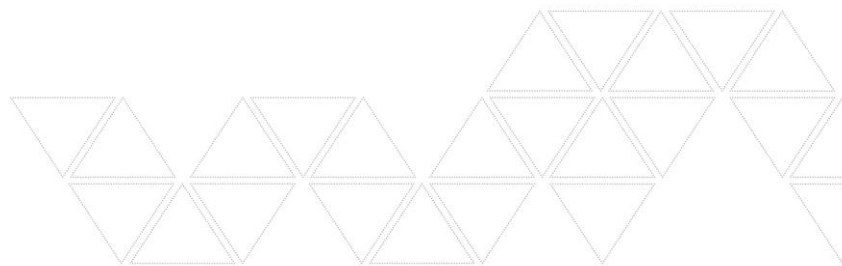


of participants said they **learned new skills** through planning and hosting their party.



of participants said they learned about new cultures and traditions.

\* Number of grants differs to the number of parties in round 2 and 3, due to COVID-19 restrictions. Four parties which were funded for Round 2 took place in March 2021.



## The Fawkner Times

### A community e-newsletter and newspaper

The Fawkner Times is a community publication comprised of two formats: a monthly e-newsletter and a printed newspaper. The purpose of the publications was to provide a mechanism for communicating with Fawkner residents about programs and opportunities, and promote messages relating to Merri Health's health promotion priorities. It also aimed to provide a mechanism for Fawkner community members to share their stories and experiences with each other, opportunities for community leadership and build community provide and social cohesion. Both forms of the publication included articles, interviews and information about Fawkner residents, community groups, events and activities.

### Distribution and reach

#### The e-newsletter

The e-newsletter, which at the time was named 'Hello, Fawkner!', was distributed monthly to a subscriber list of 109 people whose details were gathered at various Merri Health community engagement activities such as The Community Grocer, the Fawkner Festa, and a survey of Fawkner residents. A total of 43 editions were distributed monthly between November 2017 and June 2021. This included a total of 310 articles written by both community members and members of the Hello, Fawkner! team at Merri Health.

Since its inception, the subscriber list of the e-newsletter has grown by almost 600 per cent, and currently includes close to 600 people. The e-newsletter has 32% opens on average, which is very good according to industry average.

#### The newspaper

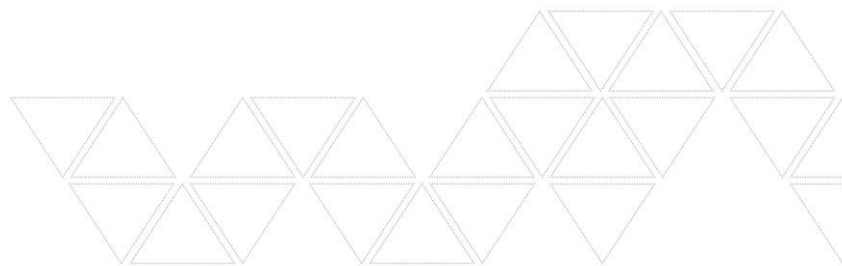
Media consultant Papermill Media was engaged to facilitate the development of three editions of the newspaper - including interviewing residents, writing articles, taking photos, coordinating translations into community languages, organising layout, printing and distribution. The three editions were distributed directly to Fawkner households and community pick-up points in May 2019, November 2019 and August 2020.



The Newspaper at the Community Grocer in Fawkner







A total of 7,000 copies were delivered to Fawkner households, including 24 community pick-up points such as the Fawkner library, Leisure Centre, and local businesses. The printed publication was an important medium for directly reaching those Fawkner residents that were not able to engage with our online communications, such as older residents. All editions were also published in a digital format and available on the Merri Health website and social media pages.

## Community voice and contributions

*“As an immigrant in Australia, I’ve gained confidence and improved my writing skills in English a lot. I always loved to write and dreamed to write to a newspaper and The Fawkner Times was a wonderful opportunity for me! I also gained a strong sense of community through the e-newsletter, I’ve connected with my neighbours who read my articles and I’m now much more involved in my community”*

A key component of both publications was contributions by community members from diverse cultural backgrounds to the content, which included recipes, poems, and articles about issues they were passionate about, as well as a one-off ‘Kids edition’ during the COVID-19 lockdowns. The publications also provided an opportunity to promote and encourage residents to get involved in other aspects of Hello, Fawkner!, such as The Great Idea Program and The Harmony Day Party Program.

We engaged community voices in the printed form of the publication by running a ‘newspaper naming’ competition at ‘The Fawkner Festa’ community festival in November 2018. In total, 90 Fawkner residents submitted their ideas for a name of the newspaper, and then community members voted to name the paper ‘The Fawkner Times’ via a poll promoted in the e-newsletter.

## Community participation and readership

A total of 126 community contributions were made to the e-newsletter, many of whom were people who had never previously written an article. There were 119 community projects profiled, and 21 community member profiles/stories were shared.

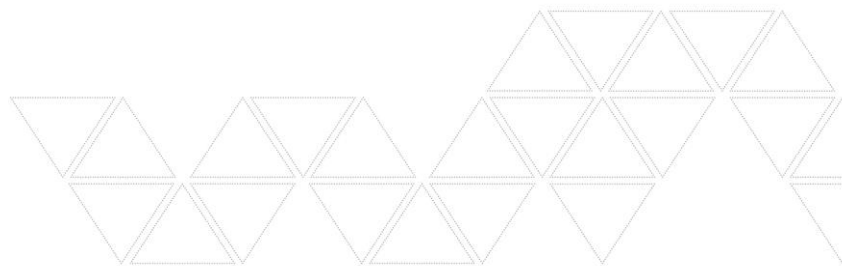
In addition, a total of 71 community members contributed to the development of three editions of The Fawkner Times newspaper, including articles and profiles on community-led events. Our community news survey, which was conducted in 2021 and completed by 94 Fawkner residents showed:

E-newsletter	Newspaper
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>73 people were readers</li> <li>74% were aged 25-44</li> <li>26% only spoke English, 48% spoke Urdu, 9% spoke Italian and 9% spoke Arabic</li> <li>Readers also spoke Greek, Bengali, Turkish French, Tamil, Mandarin, Russian, Punjabi and AUSLAN</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>55 people were readers</li> <li>73% were aged 25-44</li> <li>25% only spoke English, 49% spoke Urdu, 11% spoke Arabic and 9% spoke Italian</li> <li>Readers also spoke Greek, Bengali, Turkish French, Tamil, Mandarin, Russian, Punjabi and AUSLAN</li> </ul>

## Publication impact

The community news survey also showed that The Fawkner Times had positive impacts on both contributors and readers of the two publications, including an increased social connection and understanding of diverse cultures in Fawkner. For contributors, it also increased opportunities for community leaderships.

Publication	Community leadership	Social connection	Respect for diversity
	N = 28	N = 100	N = 100
E-Newsletter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>78% they felt they had contributed to the community</li> <li>63% reported increased connection and pride to their community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>78% reported increased feelings of connection to community</li> <li>86% reported increased knowledge of Fawkner activities, events, and businesses</li> <li>60% said it increased their ability to communicate with other Fawkner residents</li> </ul>	78% reported increased understanding of the diverse cultures of people who live in Fawkner
	N = 19	N = 93	N = 93



## Newspaper

- 78% said they felt they had contributed to the community
- 63% reported increased connection and pride to their community
- 85% reported increased feelings of connection to the Fawkner community
- 89% said it increased their knowledge of Fawkner activities and events, businesses
- 55% said it increased their ability to communicate with other Fawkner residents
- 72% reported increased understanding of the diverse cultures of people who live in Fawkner

# Acknowledgments

## Key supporters and partners

- Department of Social Services (DSS)
- Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
- Moreland City Council
- Fawkner Neighbourhood House
- Urdu Speaking Women's Group
- Fawkner Service Providers Network
- Fawkner residents and program participants
- Community Health Promotion team, Merri Health
- Communications team, Merri Health
- Finance team, Merri Health
- Other Merri Health staff
- Fawkner Service Provider Network
- PaperMill Media

## Links

- Short clip about Hello, Fawkner!: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zWDn5bJ598I>
- Promotional clip for The Great Idea Program starring the 'Cook Dine & Shine' team: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UbiyHBOI7DU>
- Harmony Day Party Program Clip 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zWDn5bJ598I>
- Harmony Day Party Program Clip 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pqtxRPBB22A>
- Harmony Day Party Program Clip 3: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XjKwBvJ4kjY>
- Harmony Day Party Program Clip 4: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HK-meXTMqRA&t=12s>
- Harmony Day Party Program 2019: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pqtxRPBB22A&t=12s>
- The Fawkner Times newspaper: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QbFqUh84CY4>