



Merri Health
Healthcare that moves with you

Research + Innovation

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Welcome

Our commitment to health care isn't restricted to providing services. We pride ourselves on being an active participant and contributor to undertaking research and evaluation.

Research and Innovation is Merri Health's bi-annual publication that highlights some of our recent and current achievements in the areas of research and evaluation.

By conducting ongoing reviews of our programs and services, we ensure that they are based on best practice, are evidence-based and aligned to the population health needs of our community.

Research and Innovation highlights current research and provides the opportunity to identify new opportunities for collaboration, share our learnings and contribute to evidence base for population health and wellbeing.

In this edition you will find information on our 2020 campaign for inclusive and safe services and spaces via 'Safe Spaces' campaign, insights into a pilot project supporting people aged 50+, and local projects we're supporting to connect locals to health and wellbeing activities.

This newsletter is aimed at current and potential partners, stakeholders, funding bodies and key players in the community, health and primary care field, such as the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Health and Ageing, academic institutions, Medicare Local, Primary Care Partnerships and other community health organisations.

Free healthy ageing seminars for adults

Program coordinators, Joanna and Matilda kick off our Living Well, Ageing Well pilot program with monthly free seminars in response to the increasing health issues and feelings of loneliness in those aged 50+ in the community.

'Keeping active for living well' was an interactive session held in October with an experienced physiotherapist and the overall feedback was positive.

"The talk was informative and I felt part of a group, so really well done," said Ed*.

A second seminar, 'Brain health for healthy ageing' was held in November. It was an informative and practical session with a specialist occupational therapist. Participants shared that they were pleased to see Merri tackling issues that are not always openly discussed.

"Thank you for being so attentive to curb back loneliness and mental health issues by holding these workshops," said Frances*.

Lastly, an end of year celebration was held in December which included a morning tea and quiz about the Moreland area.

After three successful seminars In 2019, the team are planning to roll out some brand new sessions for those who are 50+ and wanting to improve their wellbeing. Each of the following sessions will be held at Merri Health, 93 Bell Street Coburg.

January 29, 2:30pm-4pm

Ageing well with confidence: a myth busting informative session focused on bladder and bowel health with an experienced nurse.

February 29, 2:30pm-4pm

Ageing well into Australia's aged care system: information on your options and how to navigate the system.

March 25, 2:30pm-4pm

Ageing well at home setting up your home to support safety and independence for ageing well.

*Names have been changed to respect the privacy of our clients.

RSVP or find out more:



LivingWellAgeingWell@merrihealth.org.au



Above: Matilda and Joanna at a community day

Tooth decay on the rise for school aged children

Public dental at Merri Health is urging parents to support good oral health as more than half of school aged children in Moreland have tooth decay or are missing a tooth.

Statistics 2018/19 from Dental Health Services Victoria show that 29 per cent of children aged 0-5 years and 59 per cent aged 6-8 years in Moreland using public dental services have at least one decayed, missing or filled tooth.

Merri Health's oral health therapist Ann Dinh said tooth issues can lead to other problems.

"Children with tooth decay and poor oral health can have trouble eating, sleeping and paying attention.

"If left untreated, tooth decay is serious and can result in hospitalisation."

In Moreland, tooth decay is five times more prevalent than asthma.

Offering local support, Moreland kindergartens and childcare centres can take part in Smiles 4 Miles, a program that offers oral health education based on the messages Drink Well, Eat Well and Clean Well.

"We help children develop good oral health habits for life. Glenroy Memorial preschool recently received their Smiles 4 Miles completion award that saw 72 children graduate," said Ann.



Victorian Public Healthcare awards

Merri Health awarded highly commended at awards!

Merri Health has taken home two highly commended awards at the 2019 Victorian Public Healthcare awards.

Merri was awarded highly commended for Premier's Primary Health Service of the Year and the Secretary's Award for excellence in culturally diverse health for Word Play, a free literacy program for Fawkner families to learn English together.

Merri chief executive Tassia Michaleas said the awards recognise our work towards building healthy and connected communities.

"The awards represent our workforce's ongoing commitment to supporting the health and wellbeing of all Victorians.

"We are truly humbled to have been recognised alongside some incredible state-wide projects," said Tassia.

Merri was also a finalist for Chief Health Officer's Award for supporting healthy populations for Count Me In.

Thank you to our partners Moreland Council, Moreland City Libraries and The University of Melbourne for helping to bring our partnership projects to life; Word Play and Count Me In.

The Victorian Public Healthcare awards recognise Victoria's leading healthcare providers, celebrating high quality care, innovation and the contribution the workforce makes in supporting the health of all Victorians.

Merri also received a Victorian Early Years Award on 22 October 2019 for Word Play, our partnership project with Moreland City Libraries.

<https://bit.ly/2ZV4H2w>



Rainbow tram

Melbourne rainbow tram calls for safe spaces.

Above: our rainbow tram at the depot ready to leave on its first journey

Merri Health is calling on you to support safe spaces for LGBTIQ+ people.

This comes as we unveil our rainbow tram that highlights the need for safe and welcoming spaces for LGBTIQ+ people for better health.

The campaign has been inspired by LGBTIQ+ advocate Alison Black and follows years of discrimination and harassment that left Alison scared to travel alone or access services.

“You can feel the eyes on you because you look different, you move different, you act different.

“Seeing the tram, I can imagine quite a few people wanting to use public transport again. I would and I’m somebody who was used to hiding all the time,” Alison said.

Melbournians are being asked to commit their support by displaying a safe spaces poster or sticker at their worksite or committing their personal support as an ally. Information and materials to support safe spaces for LGBTIQ+ people is available on the Merri Health website.

LGBTIQ+

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer and Asexual. We acknowledge that the + sign is meant to account for the many possible ways a person can identify, but we also acknowledge that it’s not explicit in accounting for multiple identities.

Merri Health is a tram wrap recipient of the 2020 Yarra Trams Community Partnerships Program, which provides \$1 million of free advertising value annually to eight community organisations making a positive impact on diversity and inclusion in Melbourne.

The rainbow tram will operate on routes 48 and 109 from 19 December 2019 until 24 March 2020 and can be seen running along Collins Street in the CBD.

Find out more:



merrihealth.org.au/ally

Hello, Fawkner! Great Idea Program

2020 applications are now open.

Do you have an idea that will make Fawkner an even better place to live? Between April 2020 and April 2021 Hello, Fawkner! is running a program for people like you. Your project might be a community artwork, a campaign, a community space, an event, an online project, a social group or something we haven't thought of.

If successful, you will be supported to:

- Further develop your idea and create a project plan
- Develop a budget (you will receive some funding to support your project)
- Put your idea into action
- Meet other people in Fawkner with community projects too

Who is eligible?

All Fawkner residents and informal groups are invited to apply.

Applications must list two Fawkner residents (you may have more than two people involved in your project, however only two people can actively participate in the program).

Your team must be willing to work with diverse members of the Fawkner community, including those from a range of cultural backgrounds.

All members of the Fawkner community are encouraged to apply.

In the last round we supported these three wonderful local projects to get started:

- Cook Dine & Shine
- Fawkner Wholefoods Collective
- Of Fawkner

To find out more about The Great Idea Program or to request help with your application, email hellofawkner@merrihealth.org.au or call 1300 637 744.

Applications close 5pm on Friday 14 February 2020.



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



Fawkner women take on tennis

Count Me In Too encourages females from different cultural backgrounds to get involved in sport.

As part of Count Me In Too, a partnership project between Merri Health and Moreland City Council, 16 women from culturally diverse backgrounds gathered at Fawkner Tennis Club on Sunday 15 December to participate in Tennis Victoria's Open Court Sessions Host Training. The training provided an opportunity for women and girls to be trained to facilitate sessions at the club.

The facilitation training was delivered by Tennis Victoria following a four week social women's-only tennis program, held at Fawkner Tennis Club over September and October. The program supported over 135 women and girls to come and try tennis. For some participants, this was the first time they had played sport outdoors.

The program was social in nature, encouraging participants to pick up a racquet and give tennis a go. Families had the opportunity to get to know each other following the session over afternoon tea.

At the end of the program, participants provided feedback to Fawkner Tennis Club, Merri Health and Tennis Victoria,

and expressed their interest to continue social play on Sundays. Many women and girls were also interested in commencing group coaching sessions. A total of 16 individuals and families registered as social members of the club and five families enrolled in coaching sessions. Following the Count Me In Too tennis program, membership at the club increased by approximately 20% in just five weeks.

Those who joined as social members, were inducted to the club. This included learning how to care for and maintain the courts, opening and closing procedures, and caring for the club house.

The facilitation training provides women and girls with a pathway to take on leadership roles within the club and will assist in facilitating the ongoing delivery of women's social play sessions.

The Count Me In Too Project is supported by the Victorian Government and the Australian Government Department of Social Services. Visit www.dpc.vic.gov.au or www.dss.gov.au for more information.

 **1300 637 744**

Exploring co-design



Above: Merri co-design class

Our community engagement coordinator Jess Dorney held a co-design class with a group of Merri staff. The aim was to introduce what co-design is and how it can be implemented across a variety of projects. We spoke to speech pathologist Adriana who attended the class.

What understanding of co-design did you have prior to the class?

I had a brief understanding on the benefits of including clients in the design of a program. I have previously been involved in running a focus group with clients prior to the development of a group.

What is the biggest take away you got from the session?

That co-design works along a continuum which can be implemented along the entire stage of developing a program rather than only at the beginning.

Can you see yourself applying what you've learned in future?

I can definitely see myself engaging with consumers in future when planning projects. I have already used the knowledge gained to implement ideas in a current program that is still in the planning stage.



Be Well, Live Well

A new program to help the management of heart disease, lung disease, diabetes and asthma.

Be Well, Live Well is the newest program from our Prevention and Chronic Illness Care team that will help sufferers of lung disease, heart disease, diabetes and asthma to manage their conditions.

It is an evidence-based program that will be run by a specialist team who are equipped to provide group and individual sessions that are tailored to suit the needs and goals of participants.

Be Well, Live Well is set to kick off in March 2020 and will support people to:

- Get back to feeling themselves after being unwell or in hospital

- Stay as healthy and well as possible
- Build confidence and knowledge to make healthier choices

The program will provide a physical component as well as education sessions to allow participants to manage their lives in a way that suits them best.

Learn more about Be Well, Live Well and how you or someone you know can be involved.



1300 637 744

Quick contacts

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1300 362 739

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Brunswick West

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Coburg

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Coburg

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Coburg VIC 3058

Coburg

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19 Pentridge Blvd
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Craigieburn

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Craigieburn VIC
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Fawkner

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Glenroy

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Glenroy VIC 3046

Preston

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Preston VIC 3072

Preston

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