

# With you for every age and stage of life

## Our services



### Ronaldo's story

Ronaldo\* was first referred to Merri Health's respite services as he was finding it difficult to get around on his own, with his wife Maria\* not comfortable leaving him alone.

Our staff met with Ronaldo and Maria so that they were both actively involved in the planning of services and supports implemented.

Ronaldo was connected with a respite worker that would do activities with Ronaldo, meeting his goal of having someone to talk to and join for a walk once a week. Not long after, both Ronaldo and Maria were introduced to our social groups known as the Social Support Program, where they've met new people and have fun in a safe and welcoming environment. Both attend a weekly program and report looking forward to the activities each week.



Merri Health's carer service, CarerLinks North has an ongoing focus in building relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, in an effort to increase carer engagement, access and help bridge the health gap. In 2016/17:

**60** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers attended an outing to Arthur's seat

**100** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers attended an outing to Melbourne Star Observation Wheel

**55** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers attended the Long Walk to the G held during AFL's Indigenous Round

**60** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers celebrated Carers' Week with a Koorie carers' lunch

## Merri Health creates healthy, connected communities through local health services for people at every age and stage of life.

## Our reach

### North and West metropolitan region

Covers 2,981 square kilometres and 14 local government areas, and is the most diverse population in Victoria.

**1.9m** people call this region home

**37.8%** speak a language other than english

**34 years** median age of residents in Moreland

### Hume region

Covers north eastern Victoria and the Goulburn Valley and includes 12 Local Government Areas. Hume has one of Victoria's fastest population growths.

**170,194** people live in the Hume region

**28.5%** of the population aged 45-64 years

**18.4%** people were born overseas

## Health initiatives

### NDIS made easy

#### David's story

David\* has benefited from the introduction of the NDIS. As a single 59 year-old who suffers from depression, severe anxiety with panic attacks and chronic back pain, David relies heavily on staff from his supported accommodation to support him.

Support coordination helps anxiety sufferer get their life back on track. With the help of a support coordinator, David now get 7 hours of one-on-one support with a carer who can assist him to access the community.

"So far David has been able to start sorting out financial issues that cause his anxiety, and we've helped him participate in activities he enjoys.

"We are also working on building David's confidence to enable him to join an art group as making art is something he enjoys and helps him cope. The sessions are helping him heal from the past and manage his anxiety," said support coordinator, Rose.

### Local health initiatives

Count Me In improves the physical and mental wellbeing of children and young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds by linking them into sports clubs.

Since the project begun in September 2016, Count Me In has reached 172 children from 28 different schools and

nine countries. Children have become involved in a variety of different sports, with families given the opportunity to meet and connect with new people.

**"It's fun and it's good for your body. It helps you get active and increase stamina and get fit."**

— Hasiah\*, a Count Me In participant



### Samia's\* story

We attend a MerriKids playgroup at Merri Health, Thornbury. Over the two terms we've seen real improvements in our son's behaviour and development.

Kate, our key worker from Merri, gives us confidence to parent our son to the best of our ability, helps us trust our instincts, and encourages us when we are feeling worn down. She helps us differentiate between what is standard toddler behaviour and that which is a more particular to him. She has never labelled him or dismissed our concerns.

We would be lost, and lost within the system without her.



Following the success of our back pain clinic, we have once again partnered with St Vincent's Hospital and North Western Primary Health Network to provide timely, non-surgical treatment as a first option for knee osteoarthritis.

The Brunswick-based clinic provides timelier access to osteoarthritis support, with a team of professionals supporting clients in a community setting.

Experienced musculoskeletal clinicians from St Vincent's Hospital and Merri Health assess and treat clients, using a non-surgical treatment as a first option. Clients can also

access care coordination and other appropriate community services to help in managing their condition.

The clinic will continue to operate on a trial basis until December 2017.



Good oral health starts with your first check-up.

Each year we measure how well our dental service is responding to community needs and where we can improve. Here is a snapshot:

**273** clients provided with priority of access to dental care in 2016/17

**583** clients removed from our 2016/17 waitlist

**100%** response rate to emergency care



Sexual health education program Relate has been working with young people with disabilities for over 20 years to help them cope with their changing bodies.

Bringing the program to schools, TAFE and other educational settings, Relate teaches the difference between public and private and what is appropriate in different relationships.

"Learning what touch is appropriate in different relationships will help guard children from abuse. Learning to identify what body parts are private and what behaviours are against the law is vital in this process," said Human relations educator, Melanie Guiney.



### Fernando's story

After many failed attempts at quitting cigarettes, Fernando\* gave it one last shot, with a referral to our stop smoking service via his doctor.

Fernando was a heavy smoker, smoking about 25 cigarettes a day, with many underlying health issues that were made worse with cigarettes.

An assessment by our team found Fernando was highly addicted to nicotine. Fernando was given an individualised program that took his needs and results into consideration to ensure he was set up for success.

Fernando also learnt about the triggers to smoking, and has regular checks to stay on track and supported.



### Jelena's story

Jelena\* first came to hear about the Victims Assistance Program following a traumatic incident that left her 4-month old baby Thomas\* with acquired brain injury.

Jelena's life was turned upside down one morning, as a drug and alcohol affected driver ran off the road and crashed into the front room of their home. Upon impact, Thomas was thrown from his cot and onto the opposite wall – as a result he sustained a permanent brain injury.

Our victim support worker worked closely with Jelena and the family to find the right support – Jelena was referred to Child First and brokerage counselling, and our victim support worker advocated for the family with Ministry of Housing, regarding their current housing.

Following ongoing advocating, Jelena received good news with the family moving into new housing and the Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal allocating an award, which provided financial support.



Our young carers program support school aged young people who care for a family member, relative or friend with a disability, mental health issue, medical condition or is frail aged.

In 2016, young carer staff held a series of consultations with young carers who were receiving services from the program.

The feedback was very valuable as it provided us with the opportunity to review the service and engage young carers in developing a program that provides individualised support when they need it, as well as providing group activities where they can spend time together, learn new skills, support each other and have fun.



\*Names have been changed to respect the privacy of our clients. Stories and quotes have been included with the permission of the client.

 **11**  
sites

 **40+**  
years of serving  
the community

 **125+**  
partners

 **183**  
active volunteers

 **375**  
staff members

 **172,988\***  
occasions of service  
in 2016/17

 **\$ 32,525,564**  
total revenue

\*Estimate based on our two main data systems. Clients may be duplicated in these systems. There are many other client systems that are not included in this estimate.