



Spotlight on...



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

Annual and Quality of Care Reports 2018 summary version

Our stories

NDIS made easy



Over the past 12 months, early intervention service MerriKids, has been busy welcoming new families and helping with the rollout of the NDIS.

Supporting children aged 0-8 with a developmental delay or disability, and their families, MerriKids supports children to learn, develop and reach their full potential, with support provided from the family's home, child care, kindergarten or school environment.

To date, MerriKids has supported 50 families to transition into the NDIS and will be working with another 90 Hume Moreland clients, transitioning from September.

To support the growth of the service, we have recruited three new therapists, introduced new groups and the Easy Eating clinic.

A recent client survey found that before receiving support from MerriKids, 85% rated their quality of life as poor. Post receiving support from our team, 100% agreed their quality of life is 'good to excellent'.

"Sessions have had a great and positive influence and impact on our lives," said parent Maria*.

If you're in need of support or guidance around the NDIS, get in touch with our friendly team.

Young adults



I started in the TRACKS program in 2014 when I was in year 7. At that time I was living in a family violence refuge and to make matters worse, I was getting really badly bullied at school. I was really angry and confused and not sure how to deal with this. I was referred to TRACKS and it changed my life.

Through the program, I was able to go on camps and build good friendships with kids from my school, as well as others. I started to realise that I was likeable and that being bullied was more about the bully than me.

This year I turned 18 and have commenced a Diploma of Community Services. Looking back, I was struggling at school and wasn't sure what I wanted to do. Now, I'm a peer leader with TRACKS and will start placements with the team soon too – yet another opportunity!

> Jorge is a peer leader with TRACKS: one-on-one and group support for anyone aged 16-25, experiencing drug or alcohol use.

Aged care



Trevor Crapper has been receiving support from our Wellness at Home team. Supporting Trevor with a Home Care package, Trevor is able to stay living in his home and stay active in the community for longer.

After a fall which affected his ability to move around freely, Trevor has benefited from being linked with our groups that have helped him maintain his independence.

"We go for a monthly outing for lunch. We went to Mount Macedon last week, which was great. I look forward to it, in the sense that you're going somewhere and not stuck at home as I've got mobility problems," said Trevor.

"Staff are all very client-focused. They treat me with respect. I couldn't ask for better help".

A tailored Home Care package can help older people who have complex or changing care needs, with things such as case management to plan, coordinate and monitor services. The Home Package moves with your needs and we tailor packages to suit your changing needs.

CarerLinks North



Terry came into his caring role very suddenly and unexpectedly.

He and his wife, Julie, went to bed Sunday night and at 6am the next morning, Terry was woken by Julie, who was completely disorientated and insisting that she had to go to the doctors immediately. Once taken to the hospital, Julie went into a coma for 15 days. She was diagnosed with viral encephalitis. Julie lost part of her memory as well as the ability to look after herself. She was in rehabilitation for 6 weeks learning to walk, eat and perform activities of daily living.

Terry has been a full time carer for Julie since 2010.

"People don't understand the role of the carer and don't realise the amount of time that the caring role entails," Terry said.

Terry receives support from CarerLinks North including short-term and emergency respite. Someone comes to his house to care for Julie for a couple of hours while he is out. This allows him to take a break from his caring role and have peace of mind that Julie is safe.

Child and family



Family Foundations is a new program that provides important insights and skills for couples (or whoever may make up the co-parenting team), expecting a child or that have a child under 12 months of age.

Adapted from the US model developed by Dr Mark Feinberg, the program has demonstrated positive impacts, including birth outcomes, parent stress and depression, parenting and co-parenting quality, family violence, mental health, social competence, disruptive behaviour, and school adjustment.

More than 50 families have participated in the program since commencing in March 2018.

Feedback from participants has been overwhelmingly positive. One couple who completed the program said it has been "transformative" for their relationship. Specifically, the father reported talking more about his feelings and needs, while the mother said she is more flexible, which is promoting greater involvement from her partner in the parenting of their baby.

For support for new parents, call our team to see how we can help.

Chronic conditions



Culturally appropriate phone-based support has been introduced by our cardiac and respiratory support program to cater for the diverse local community.

Hospital Admission Risk Program (HARP) Complex Care recruited Greek and Italian patients who experienced an acute coronary event or intervention, to receive coaching over the phone in their specific language by a nurse or dietitian.

Providing targeted, culturally appropriate secondary prevention intervention through dietary advice (which had a greater focus on a Mediterranean diet) and education, the program was able to achieve 5-10% body weight loss over a six month period.

The program was adopted to the Greek and Italian population, as it was recognised that non-English speaking patients are disadvantaged in accessing cardiac rehabilitation programs as they respond to health, services and information differently.

Disability services



Our team created online resources to provide extra support for residents of supported residential accommodation. Residents may include people who are frail, aged or have a disability.

A significant number of Supported Residential Services (SRS) residents live with chronic health conditions which require food and nutrition to be managed well. Traditional training options available to staff do not offer the flexibility that SRSs need: they are limited by funding and time constraints and do not always respond to their specific challenges.

Two tailored videos have been released on the Merri Health website on topics of healthy eating and type 2 diabetes management – these are areas that SRS staff have the greatest level of difficulty meeting.

The videos were developed using the co-design process with SRS proprietors, residents, and an academic lecturer involved in the process. Their input was key to ensure the content was relevant and evidence based, and met the needs of SRS staff.

To access the videos, go to: <https://goo.gl/tuYtvJ>

Dental services



Our dental service provides dental treatment under the guidelines of Dental Health Services Victoria and is based at our Brunswick site at 11 Glenlyon Road.

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

364 clients provided with priority of access to dental care in 2017/18

755 clients removed from our 2017/18 waitlist

98.7% response rate to emergency care

Health and wellness



Since March 2017, we have improved outcomes for patients with osteoarthritis of the knee.

Based in the community, we set up a local clinic at our Brunswick site to support patients with assessment and appropriate treatment. Experienced musculoskeletal clinicians from St Vincent's Hospital and Merri Health assessed and treated clients, adopting non-surgical treatment as a first option. Patients had access to a team including an orthopaedic surgeon, advanced practice musculoskeletal physiotherapist, care coordinator, dietitian, and a GP experienced in musculoskeletal medicine.

Provided in the community, the project has delivered:

- timely access to services (on average two weeks for an initial appointment)
- a high uptake (84%) of clients accessing ongoing therapy (this was 64% greater than patients attending the other St Vincent's Hospital specialist clinics)
- a low (12%) referral rate to surgery
- high patient discharge rate from the clinic to the care of a GP
- an improvement in pain and functional capacity, as self-reported by the client.

Mental health



Jeff* was referred to Merri Health by their local council outreach worker. Jeff who identifies as being gay and lives with another man, has experienced issues of intimate partner violence and substance abuse.

Physical and mental health issues were also identified in the referral, such as cancer, agoraphobia, and depression. The client also experienced financial and accommodation stress.

With the help of QHealth, Jeff was able to get access to the support needed quickly, and due to the urgency of their condition, was able to bypass the usual waiting time for the generalist counselling service.

Our QHealth worker has been supporting Jeff to manage their relationship distress. This involves outreach, counselling and case work.

In the past, Jeff felt isolated because of their mental health, agoraphobia and substance use. By being involved in this program they have a safe place to explore their feelings and situation. They are able to have honest conversations and consider new ways to move forward.

Health initiatives

Community leaders

Leaders aren't born, they are made, and they are made through hard work and dedication.

I became a member of the Leadership Committee of the Urdu social group of Merri Health in July 2017. Joining the leadership committee was one of the decisions I will cherish for the rest of my life. It proved to be a pathway that opened doors to new horizons.

This versatile experience gave me a chance to give back to a community which has been my clan for years and to make new friendships that I will always cherish. By the end of this journey, I could never have imagined I would be holding a recognised qualification in this field; Certificate IV in Community Development.

Today, I stand my ground as a person, molded beautifully to confidently voice her opinions in front of others, and strong enough to deliver the best for my community.

Merri Health taught me how to lead: not to follow a path laid out by others but to pave my own way.

> Lala Rukh is a community member and participant in our Urdu-speaking women's group.



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


 **10**
sites

 **40+**
years of serving the
community

 **395**
staff members

 **114**
active volunteers

 **257,902***
instances of service
in 2016/17

 **15,454****
number of unique clients
supported in 2016/17

\$ 36,773,223
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.
** Estimate based on three main data systems. There are many other client systems that are not included in this estimate.

