



**Merri Health**  
Healthcare that moves with you

# MerriNews

Volume 21. April 2019

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 Merri-Health

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# Welcome.

The year has started at a fast pace at Merri with many new initiatives in the pipeline for further expansion of our services to communities.

We were incredibly proud to receive our citation as an Employer of Choice from the Workplace Gender Equality Agency. We are one of seven health/social assistance organisations and one of 141 agencies nationally to receive this citation! This is testament to our ongoing commitment to gender equality and the significant work we have undertaken as an organisation to receive this.

As a provider of aged care and mental health services, we have taken an active role in responding and providing input into the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, and the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental

Health System. We provide key services to our community in both of these sectors so we watch with great interest for the recommendations, and hope they result in improved access and quality of services.

If the first few months of 2019 are any indication, we are set for a very busy year across all our teams at Merri to support our community on a daily basis. I look forward to keeping you updated on activities at Merri Health.

**Nigel Fidgeon**  
Chief Executive Officer

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# Be Merri health and wellbeing festival a hit!

In its second year, our team hit the road as we took our roving week-long festival beyond Moreland this year, visiting Craigieburn, Coburg, Fawkner, Broadmeadows, Preston and Brunswick West.

We attended local shopping centres and outdoor areas in the community with activities like lung checks, diabetes assessments, jewellery making, easy exercise in the park, story time in the library, face painting and more.

Our health checks in partnership with Priceline Pharmacy Brunswick West were a hit, as locals had their iron, cholesterol and sugar levels checked, and were shown how to do a breast check using a prop. Thank you to our local Priceline team, Alvin and Rusaal that helped make this possible, and to the sponsors that kindly donated items for the participant goodie bags!

As the festival drew to a close in Northland on Friday evening, our carer team drew a name out of a box from those that participated in our Quiz Master game, with Moreland local Isabella the lucky winner of the \$100 Rebel Sport voucher.

"I was there for an outing with my baby and wanted to chat to someone. The team were really friendly and it made such a difference to my day. Thank you – it really

left me with a smile on my face," said Isabella.

Thank you to everyone that attended and to our wonderful partners that helped make it possible; Moreland City Council and its Coburg and Fawkner libraries, Priceline Pharmacy Brunswick West, Vision Australia, Urdu-speaking women's group, Northern Badminton Club, The Community Grocer, Centrelink and My Health Record. Thank you as well to our wonderful community member and designer Mary Lin, who worked with our team to design the materials for the festival, our t-shirts and reusable tote bags.

While the festival has now come to a close for another year, we're looking at how we can make it bigger and better in 2019.



If you have feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Get in touch



1300 637 744



[communications@merrhealth.org.au](mailto:communications@merrhealth.org.au)



## Free support for new parents



### Are you expecting a baby or adjusting to life with a new baby at home?

Join our Family Foundations program and get free support from qualified and experienced parent coaches.

Family Foundations supports new parents, including you and your partner, with 10 sessions delivered in your home.

You will learn about:

- > how to strengthen your relationship with your partner and build a strong parenting team
- > how to adjust to your new role as a parent
- > how to match your parenting to your baby's unique temperament
- > how to help your baby feel secure, which is important for their future mental health.

This support is available to anyone that is having a baby or has a baby that is under 12 months old, and lives in the West or North of Melbourne. Priority is given to those living in Wyndham, Brimbank, Moreland and Hume.

Family Foundations is led by Merri Health in partnership with the Murdoch Child Research Institute.



Call our Family Foundations intake worker.



03 9355 9901



[family.foundations@merrhealth.org.au](mailto:family.foundations@merrhealth.org.au)

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# Hello, Fawkner!

*Hello Fawkner!* is a local project led by our community wellbeing team, which highlights and strengthens the incredible things that happen across the diverse suburb of Fawkner.

Building a connected and respectful community, the three-year project includes a range of exciting initiatives such as the community-led Harmony Day events, a community leadership program called the Great Idea program, a monthly online newsletter, and a community newspaper called 'The Fawkner Times' which will be released shortly!



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## Great Idea projects announced!

Earlier this year we put a call-out to Fawkner residents for 'great ideas' that we could help turn into reality, as part of the Hello, Fawkner! 'Great Idea' program.

We are pleased to announce the three successful projects are Lost Recipes of Fawkner, Cook, Dine and Shine and Bulk Food Store. Congratulations! Thank you to all that entered.

Read more about each initiative in this month's Hello, Fawkner! e-newsletter. Follow the link below to sign up.

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



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## Together in harmony

Every year we proudly celebrate cultural diversity during Harmony week from 17-23 March.

This year, our *Hello, Fawkner!* initiative supported 16 community-led Harmony Day celebrations across Fawkner, providing groups and individuals with \$100 to spend on their event!

All through the month of March, Fawkner residents filled their homes, parks and schools with wonderful food, costumes and stories at Harmony Day celebrations. Our *Hello, Fawkner!* team was delighted to be able to visit a few of these events, and received fantastic photos and highlights from all the celebration hosts. Altogether, 17 events were held. It was great to hear from everyone about how much fun they had with their friends and neighbours, learning about different cultures, and discussing what it means to live in a community as diverse as Fawkner.

Let's continue to work together to build inclusive, respectful and connected communities where everyone belongs!



Images: Fawkner locals celebrating cultural diversity during Harmony Week.

# Community health's first Employer of Choice for Gender Equality

Merri Health is officially Employer of Choice for Gender Equality!

We are one of seven organisations in the health/social assistance industry, and the first community health organisation granted the citation by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency for 2018/19 period.

Merri Health's chief executive Nigel Fidgeon shared that it's been a long-term journey that commenced in 2013.

"A phased, whole of organisation approach, we've been committed to reviewing, and strengthening policies, practices and attitudes towards flexible work, parental leave, support for women in leadership, return to work initiatives and gender pay gaps. Most recently we cemented our commitment to 40 per cent gender ratios in senior leadership positions and gender pay equity.

"Lots of work and input from across the organisation went into this incredible achievement and we're committed to continuing to strengthen this over the next few years," said Nigel.

Gender inequality is the key driver of violence against women and impacts on health and determinants of health. It is one of the many reasons Merri is committed to it, promoting gender equity to staff, clients, partners and broader community.



Learn more about our journey on page 60 of our 2018 Annual & Quality of Care report.



<https://bit.ly/2K7YxrW>

## Doing it on my own: how the NDIS is helping Charley

Celebrating National Youth Week, we spoke to Charley on how the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is helping him focus on the things that matter.

Young Moreland local Charley has become more self-reliant since receiving support under the NDIS.

Charley was born prematurely which affected his development. As a child he received support with his motor skills from an occupational therapist. Now at 23, Charley has rediscovered the support of an occupational therapist who is helping him take control of his health.

Charley has been receiving fortnightly sessions to work on his health and wellbeing goals, and getting around on his own without the support of his mum.

"The NDIS has made a big difference as my mum couldn't afford to pay for all of this," said Charley.

Occupational therapist Craig has been exploring different options like apps and a Fitbit, to help Charley manage on his own and stay on track.

"We're currently trialling a sleep app which taps into the body's natural sleep patterns to wake someone, which means Charley doesn't have to rely on his mum in the morning.

"To increase his fitness we'll be working with a support person to get Charley to go out locally and walk his dog which he has really wanted to do," said Craig.

Taking control of his health, Charley is feeling positive about the future and is doing the things he loves like writing music and going out to see bands.

"Throughout my life I've had a lot of knock backs and got bullied but there are a lot of organisations that can help. If you need to, reach out to safe places like the Kids Helpline.

"There are good people out there," he said.



Do you have an NDIS plan and not sure what to do next? Our team is here to help.



1300 637 744



<https://bit.ly/2D4Znzq>

## Take home a pre-loved book



Storycycle's Book Stop has landed at our Bell Street, Coburg site!

Storycycle provides second-hand children's books which are now available in our waiting room. Children can read or look through them while they wait for their appointment, and if they like a book they can take it home too! Once we're running low, more books will be added.

Storycycle is a not-for-profit organisation that distributes good quality, used children's books to community organisations.

Thank you StoryCycle for helping us support children's literacy, providing local children with access to books, and giving pre-loved books a new home.



## Carers get active!

Carers are being encouraged to take control of their health by joining our carer Active April challenge!

A month dedicated to putting your health first through wellbeing and exercise, our carer Active April challenge is supported by our Carer Health and Wellbeing Coaching team. Carers are encouraged to take part and prioritise their wellbeing to stay in their caring role for longer.

All carers that choose to take part in the challenge will be supported via an information pack by our Carer Health and Wellbeing Coaching team, guiding you through registration and how to track your 30 minutes of daily physical activity. This can include incidental activity like walking around the supermarket as you do your shopping. With prizes available and the opportunity to put your health first, taking part is a must!



Get involved in Active April!



03 9495 2500



CarerLinksNorth@merrrihealth.org.au

## Free health assessment

Get a free health assessment from our Carer Health and Wellbeing Coaching team.



03 9495 2500



CarerLinksNorth@merrrihealth.org.au

# Free education and training workshops for carers

Join a workshop to support you in your caring role.

Carers are being encouraged to join a free workshop and/or training session to support them in their caring role.

Connect and share your experience with other carers while learning new skills through interactive and informative workshops.

Supporting carers and carer groups based in the northern region of Melbourne, our workshops are delivered in an inclusive and sharing environment and include topics like how to find information, supports and services, planning for the future, keeping healthy and active and exploring ways to get back into the workforce.

Workshops are free to all carers and in home respite and/or a contribution towards the cost of transport may be available.



Join a workshop or find out more.



03 9495 2500



CarerLinksNorth@merrrihealth.org.au

# Help shape the future of carer services and support

Your voice and feedback are important: it helps keep our carer services appropriate, accessible and relevant to carer needs.

If you're a carer and would like to be involved in shaping the future of carer services and support, we invite you to join our Carer Engagement Register! It's an opportunity to have your say about issues that affect you as a carer, help us plan for the future, be involved in carer event planning and/or provide feedback to the government on carer issues.

Along the way, not only will you help make a difference to the future of carers, you will also learn more about the health care system, pick up new skills and meet new people who have a similar experience to you.

Respite and other supports are available to support carers to be involved.



Above: carers who helped with the planning of Carers' Week activities 2018.



Join the Carer Engagement Register!



03 9495 2500



CarerLinksNorth@merrrihealth.org.au

# School holiday fun with young carers



Above: young carers at the skating rink.

As we get closer to the April school holidays, our Young Carer team has reflected on all the fun they had during the December holidays.

Supporting young carers to take some time away from their caring role and connect with others (while having fun!), our team took a group of young carers to escape the summer heat at IceHQ ice skating rink.

After being suited up with safety gear and given a lesson about how to get around on the ice, carers took off to have some fun and try some tricks on the ice, followed by a group lunch.

If you're a young carer and would like to join the group, get in touch! We have lots planned for the April school holidays, and also offer other activities during the school term too.



Join the young carer program!



03 9495 2500



young.carers@merrrihealth.org.au



## Free education program for Indigenous children

A free education program for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will be launching this May.

Speak Up, Speak Out will work with 10-12 year olds from Moreland and Hume, to learn about healthy, supportive and safe relationships in an effort to stop family violence and violence against women.

Led by former AFL Essendon player Courtenay Dempsey, participants will gather fortnightly across seven sessions. Training and leadership workshops will be based at the Essendon football club and will include an overnight camp.

“Programs like Speak Up, Speak out are important for young Indigenous kids because it empowers them with the skills and confidence to become respectful future leaders within their communities.

“The kids will enjoy a range of exciting activities teaching them about gender equity, respectful relationships and upstander actions, while also providing many experiences that connect them to culture and community,” said Courtenay.

The program is currently at capacity however if you'd like to express interest in joining future sessions, get in touch.



Express your interest in future sessions.



1300 637 744

*Speak Up, Speak Out is a partnership project between The Long Walk Trust and Merri Health.*

*Above: Courtenay with Moreland students Matthew and Destiny. Image by James Ross featured in Northern Leader, 5 March 2019.*

If you would prefer to receive this newsletter electronically or want to update your details, email [communications@merrrihealth.org.au](mailto:communications@merrrihealth.org.au)

### Brunswick

11 Glenlyon Road,  
Brunswick VIC 3056

### Brunswick West

382-386 Moreland  
Road, Brunswick West  
VIC 3055

### Coburg

93 Bell Street,  
Coburg VIC 3058

### Fawkner

C.B Smith Reserve,  
79 Jukes Road Fawkner  
VIC 3060

### Chifley Drive, Preston

Level 2, 110 Chifley Drive,  
Preston VIC 3072

### Glenroy

5D Cromwell Street,  
Glenroy VIC 3046

### Merri Central

Ground floor, Unit 4  
19 Pentridge Boulevard,  
Coburg VIC 3058

### Victoria Street, Coburg

21 Victoria Street,  
Coburg VIC 3058

### Bell Street, Preston

Ground Floor, Suites  
3 & 4, 306-308 Bell St,  
Preston VIC 3072

### Wangaratta

Level 3, 62-68  
Ovens Street,  
Wangaratta VIC 3677

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