



**Merri Health**  
Healthcare that moves with you

# MerriNews

Volume 23. December 2019



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**Inside  
this  
issue:**

**1.**  
WE'RE  
GETTING  
A TRAM!

**2.**  
AWARD  
SEASON

**3.**  
CARERS'  
WEEK  
2019

**4.**  
MENTAL  
SUPPORT  
FOR OLDER  
ADULTS

## In this issue:

### 2. Welcome our new CEO, Tassia

---

### 3. We're getting a tram!

---

### 4. Exploring sustainable solutions

---

### 5. Award season

---

### 6. Celebrating carers

---

### 8. Mental health support for older adults

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# Welcome.

We are pleased to introduce our new Chief Executive Officer, Tassia Michaleas

Tassia commenced her career in community health in 1996 and has been a long standing, highly valued member of the Merri team since 2008, during which she has demonstrated her commitment to the social model of health. Tassia has continually advocated for accessible and culturally-sensitive services and led key collaborations in our sector to achieve system improvements and better outcomes for communities.

"I am truly humbled and privileged to be leading our great organisation in this next exciting phase of our growth and continued service excellence. The communities we support remain at the core of our efforts and dedication," said Tassia.

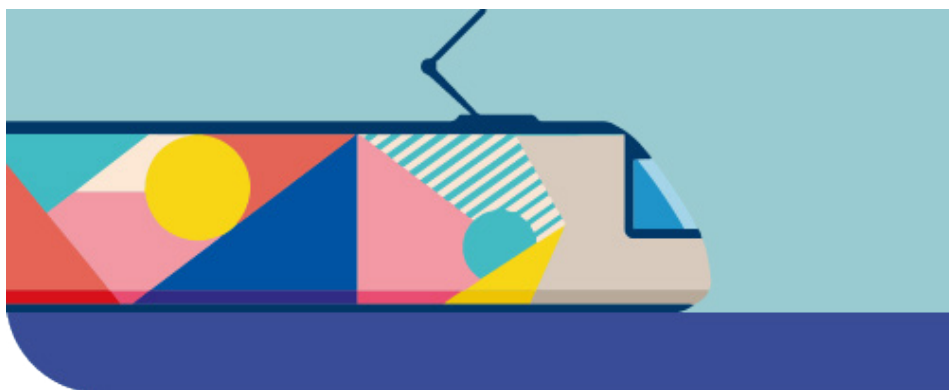
Tassia presented the Board with a very powerful and exciting vision for the future of Merri and commitment to ensuring we remain a leader, providing and advocating for high quality services, healthcare equality and continuing to strengthen Merri as an employer of choice.

Merri's Board of Directors would like to take this opportunity to congratulate and welcome Tassia to this exciting phase, and thank Dr. Antoinette Mertins who has been acting in the role since September 2019.





## We're getting a tram!



Get ready to see our rainbow tram travelling around Melbourne from December 19!

The tram highlights the need for safe spaces for LGBTIQ+ people for better health.

Inspired by LGBTIQ+ advocate Alison Black, it 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 our website from the 19 of December.

All of this is possible as Merri Health is a 2020 recipient of the Yarra Trams Community Partnerships Program that 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.

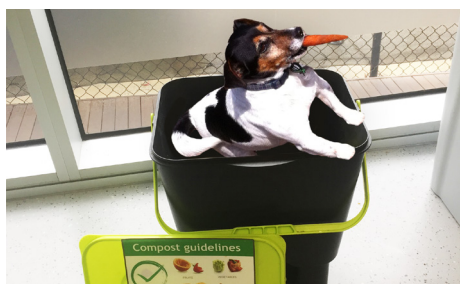
### Did you know?

Statistics from Human Rights Face the Facts 2014 show that 6 in 10 people that identify LGBTIQ+ have been a victim of verbal homophobic abuse.



<https://www.merrihealth.org.au/ally>

## Exploring sustainable solutions



Our Merri Central Coburg site has undergone a composting journey!

Since June 2019, staff at the site have been dedicating their food scraps, paper towel and tea bags to a new compost bin which

is emptied at the Pentridge Community Garden.

The garden is open for use by our staff as well as residents of the Pentridge apartments who have their own veggie gardens that use our compost.

Since we began, we have diverted approximately 210 kilograms of food waste from landfill which equals 10 kilograms a week. This is exactly what Jimmy weighs – our community nurse Catherine’s Jack Russell pictured above!

By the end of the year, we estimate that we will have contributed 280 kilograms of compost to the community garden.

## Merri highly commended at Public Healthcare Awards



Above: Our chairperson Carlo Carli and chief executive Tassia Michaleas

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 Fawcner 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,” 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 and The University of Melbourne for helping to bring our partnership projects to life; Word Play and Count Me In. Both projects build resilience and support the wellbeing of refugees and newly arrived migrants.

## Merri volunteer commended!



Merri Health volunteer Jack [pictured] received high commendations for Volunteer of the Year at the Moreland Awards for her contributions to the community and consumers of Merri Health.

We asked Jack a few questions about her role as volunteer in the mental health art studio at Merri.

### How did you get into volunteering?

I moved here from NSW and started the volunteering process straight away in order to make contacts and friends in a new place. I had studied community services and had a history in art study. This process was interrupted when, out of the blue, I had a serious mystery health issue that interrupted my life for about two years. Commencing with my voluntary work also became a part of my healing process as the artists I worked with, helped me as much as I wished to help them.

### What is your greatest achievement so far with your volunteering?

Volunteering in the mental health art room has shown me how everyone benefits from making space in their week for their own brand of creativity. Art is therapeutic. It can be heartfelt; accessing incredibly personal unique ways to express or be heard. It can be 'switch off your head' time, or it can be just 'PLAY and see what happens' kind of therapy. It is all of these things and more.

Having this volunteering experience has shown me how alike we all are, rather than how different we are.

Read more of Jack's interview.



<https://bit.ly/33PGyvC>



Above: The Northern Badminton Club with Moreland award

## Count Me In Too announced as Moreland Award winners

### A female badminton club in Fawkner awarded for their contribution to sport.

The Northern Badminton Club, in association with Badminton Victoria, is located at Fawkner Leisure Centre.

It provides a culturally safe space for women and younger girls who do not feel comfortable playing sport in a mixed gender environment.

Merri supports the club through Count Me In Too; a partnership project between Moreland Council and Merri Health which aims to increase participation of females from refugee and migrant backgrounds in mainstream sporting clubs.

The club were awarded in the Contribution to Sport category for their initiative to involve more women and girls from different cultural backgrounds in sport.

Award winners were announced at a special ceremony on 1 October at Coburg Town Hall, with the then Moreland Mayor Councillor Natalie Abboud on hand to congratulate the winners.



Above: The Northern Badminton Club receiving award.



# Word Play receives Victorian Early Years Award

Word Play, our partnership program with Moreland City Libraries, received the Victorian Early Years Award for 2019!

Word Play is a new take on supporting families and their children to learn and get school-ready in a fun and supportive learning environment.

The program is now a regular fixture on Moreland City Libraries' Fawkner programming.

View the library's programs here:

<https://bit.ly/2NKgX1o>



Above: Word Play team at awards

# Celebrating the year that was!

Highlighting what's making a difference in people's lives



Above: Carers Terry, Sue and Ayden

Every year we reflect on how we're supporting to build healthy and connected communities.

We launched a range of new services like memory and dementia support for older people, and initiatives like Hello, Fawkner! and its community newspaper, Speak Up Speak Out that worked with young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to promote safe, equal and respectful relationships, and

a whole-of-sector response to elder abuse.

Looking beyond our community to supporting staff, this year we received Employer of Choice for Gender Equality Citation by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency, and for the first time, our results from the all staff survey found that Merri was in a 'culture of success' that is defined as having a large number of staff that are optimistic about the organisation's future.

Find out how we're supporting you and your community via our Annual Report and Quality Account 2019 below.

## What did we achieve in 2018-19?

- > Premier's Primary Health Service of the Year 2018
- > Employer of Choice for Gender Equality citation
- > First provider selected to trial Family Foundations in Australia, an innovative approach to addressing family breakdown
- > Introducing Family Violence Support Service for young people and their families attending Melbourne Children's Court

<https://bit.ly/2O8vrZ8>

# HIPPY Moreland has a new home

We would like to announce that the HIPPY Australia Moreland program has a new home with Uniting Vic Tas as of 1 January 2020.

We are currently working together to transition the program.

A big thank you to the tutors (pictured below) and everyone who has contributed to making HIPPY Moreland such a success and look forward to seeing them continue to thrive working alongside Uniting.

If you're interested in being part of the HIPPY Moreland program, please contact Uniting on 03 9351 3644.



Above: HIPPY Moreland tutors and team leader Amy





Image: The Merindas performing on stage



# Celebrating unpaid carers during Carers Week 2019

This year, we celebrated Carers Week from 13 to 19 October. National Carers' Week is dedicated to recognising and celebrating the outstanding contribution Australia's unpaid carers make to our nation.

Anyone at any time can become a carer and Carers' Week is an opportunity to raise community awareness among all Australians about the diversity of carers and their caring roles.

Carers provide 1.9 billion hours of care each year, with a value of over \$1 billion per week. This National Carers Week, Carers Australia encouraged people to take a couple of minutes to share why they care about unpaid carers to help build a carer-friendly Australia.

Here are some facts released by Carers Australia in light of Carers Week 2019:

- > Around 1 in 10 carers are under the age of 25
- > 618,000 carers are over the age of 65
- > There are 2.7 million carers in Australia
- > The replacement value of unpaid care in 2015 was over \$1 billion per week



Find out how our carer support program can help you.



<https://www.merrihealth.org.au/>

## Annual National Carers Week Koorie Lunch

Koorie carers were given the opportunity to relax, connect with community and have a yarn.

On 14 October, we celebrated the ninth year of our CarerLinks North Koorie celebration during Carers' Week.

The Koorie lunch event has grown in popularity in the community since the first small gathering held at the Indigenous Education Centre at Kangan Broadmeadows in 2010.

This year the theme was 'why we care'. Should all carers decide to stop performing their caring role, it would cost the country \$60.3 billion per year to replace those supports – that's over \$1 billion per week.

The lunch was held at the Aborigines Advance League in Thornbury with the entertainment provided by The Merindas, a contemporary Indigenous R&B/Electropop duo. Merinda means "Beautiful Woman" in the Eora language of NSW.

The carers enjoyed a lunch, connected with each other and had the chance to dance along with The Merindas.



Above: The Merindas



We support all carers. Get in touch to find out more.



(03) 9495 2500



[CarerLinksNorth@merrihealth.org.au](mailto:CarerLinksNorth@merrihealth.org.au)

## Are you a carer?



Anyone can become a carer at any time.

Carers can be parents, partners, spouses, young people and children, other family members, friends or neighbours.

A carer provides support to someone who needs help managing at home or in the community because they are:

- > Frail aged
- > Living with dementia
- > Living with disability
- > Living with mental illness

We work in partnership with you by learning about your needs and what matters most to you. Together we set goals and plan for the future. We work towards finding the best supports for short-term and ongoing care, and strengthen your wellbeing and the wellbeing of the person you're caring for.



Speak to our team about eligibility



(03) 9495 2500



[CarerlinksNorth@merrihealth.org.au](mailto:CarerlinksNorth@merrihealth.org.au)



<https://www.merrihealth.org.au/services/carers-support/>



## Mental health care for older adults

### Free tailored support to help older people meet their mental health and wellbeing goals.

A new program offering mental health and wellbeing support for people 65 years and over is now available.

Known as Stepped Care, we have a group of health professionals available to support older people experiencing anxiety and/or depressive symptoms, social isolation or loneliness.

Support includes one-on-one support over the phone or in person, home visits, mental and physical health assessment and support, health coaching and tailored referrals to other community services.

If you feel that you could benefit from this support, speak to your doctor or health professional about referring you to the program.

Once you're referred, one of our team members will call you and will ask some questions to help find what support is best for you.

As a pilot program, we may not be able to support everyone that is referred, however we have lots of other services that can help.

If you are younger than 65 or don't have mental wellbeing concerns, anxiety or depression but are feeling lonely, our Living Well, Ageing Well program can also support you.



1300 637 744



<https://bit.ly/2NLQh0h>

To receive this newsletter electronically or to update your details, email [communications@merrrihealth.org.au](mailto:communications@merrrihealth.org.au)

#### Quick contacts

T: 1300 637 744  
Carers 9495 2500  
Victims Assistance  
1300 362 739

#### Brunswick

11 Glenlyon Road  
Brunswick VIC 3056

#### Brunswick West

382–386 Moreland  
Road Brunswick West  
VIC 3055

#### Coburg

93 Bell Street  
Coburg VIC 3058

#### Coburg

21 Victoria Street  
Coburg VIC 3058

#### Coburg

Ground floor,  
19 Pentridge Blvd  
Coburg VIC 3058

#### Craigieburn

120 Hothlyn Drive  
Craigieburn VIC  
3064

#### Fawkner

79 Jukes Road  
Fawkner VIC 3060

#### Glenroy

5D Cromwell Street  
Glenroy VIC 3046

#### Preston

Ground floor, Suites  
3-4, 306-308 Bell Street  
Preston VIC 3072

#### Preston

Level 2, 110 Chifley Drive  
Preston VIC 3072

#### Wangaratta

Level 3, 62-68 Ovens  
Street Wangaratta  
VIC 3677

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