



**Merri Health**  
Healthcare that moves with you

# MerriNews

Volume 29. May 2022

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# Welcome.

A message from  
Chief Executive Officer  
Tassia Michaleas

## Welcome to the May edition of MerriNews.

In April, we were delighted to be joined by Aboriginal Elder Aunty Di and Victorian MP Sheena Watt to launch our new Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2022-2023.

The RAP outlines 72 actions we are taking over the next two years to support greater recognition, respect and health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

I am incredibly proud of what's been achieved so far, and excited to take the next steps in our reconciliation journey. Our third RAP pushes us to move from 'safe to brave'.

We have also released our Family Violence and Gender Equality Strategic Action Plan 2022-23. The plan outlines our focus and strategic actions to create a better future for our community that is free of violence and is gender equitable, safe and respectful.

We are proud to be working with The Orange Door to provide support for children and families experiencing family violence.

We are also delighted that Merri Health has been recognised as an Employer of Choice for Gender Equality for the fourth time by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency.

Merri Health is now delivering free dental care to primary and secondary school kids in Moreland as part of Smile Squad, a Victorian Government Initiative led by Dental Health Services Victoria.

In April, I was joined by local MP Lizzie Blanthorn and Coburg North Primary School Principal Monika Gruss to launch the program.

You can keep up to date on all our news at our website: [merrihealth.org.au](https://merrihealth.org.au)





## Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Launch

**In April Merri Health proudly launched our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2022-2023, to support greater recognition, respect and health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.**

Merri Health CEO Tassia Michaleas joined Aboriginal Elder Aunty Di, Victorian MP Sheena Watt, RAP artist Simone Thomson, local Aboriginal community members, Merri Health staff and partners to unveil Merri's new RAP.

Endorsed by Reconciliation Australia, the RAP details 72 commitments Merri Health will action across four focus areas: Relationships, Respect, Opportunities and Governance.

Merri Health CEO Tassia Michaleas said: *"As a health provider with services and partnerships across Victoria, we have an important role to play in leading change across our community.*

*I'm so proud to present Merri Health's third RAP, which builds on our reconciliation*

*achievements so far, and recognises the work we still need to do to close the health gap and see meaningful change for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples."*

### **RAP commitments include:**

- Enhancing health and wellbeing outcomes by improving the cultural safety and accessibility of Merri Health services and programs
- Supporting local Aboriginal businesses to improve economic and social outcomes
- Working with partners to address race-based discrimination
- Improving employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, professional development and student placements
- Celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and history to promote connection, collective pride and recognition

Merri Health has a deep commitment to listening to and being led by the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our reconciliation efforts.

***"To ensure we have meaningful outcomes, respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their culture and knowledge must remain central to our work."***

### **Tassia**

The RAP launch opened with a moving Welcome to Country from Aunty Di.

Merri Health unveiled a vibrant new RAP artwork by respected artist Simone Thomson and local Aboriginal acoustic artist Anna Liebszeit performed at the event.



View our full RAP plan here:  
[merrihealth.org.au/assets/Uploads/MerriHealth-RAP-2022-A4-v5-FA-Digital3.pdf](https://merrihealth.org.au/assets/Uploads/MerriHealth-RAP-2022-A4-v5-FA-Digital3.pdf)



# New family violence gender equity plan

May marks Australia's Domestic and Family Violence Awareness Month.

Merri Health views family violence as a serious health problem and are committed to the prevention and awareness raising of the issue.

Gender inequality is the key driver of violence against women. Our new 2022-23 Family Violence and Gender Equality Strategic Action Plan outlines the actions we will take towards our strategic goal to 'create a better future for our community that is free of violence and is gender equitable, safe and respectful'.

**We commit to family violence and gender equality initiatives across the organisation through action in three strategic areas:**

1. Leadership, workplace commitment and responsiveness
2. Community education and awareness raising
3. Workforce and organisational practice



Read a summary of the plan here: [merriverse.merrihealth.org.au/u/499d](http://merriverse.merrihealth.org.au/u/499d)



## Employer of Choice for Gender Equality again!

**Merri Health has been named Employer of Choice for Gender Equality by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) for the fourth time!**

CEO Tassia Michaleas said, *"This acknowledges the commitment, hard work and values demonstrated every day by our people across our organisation."*

*"I am proud of our commitment to gender pay equity, zero tolerance of gender-based harassment and discrimination, sexual harassment and bullying."*

**Achievements in Merri Health's latest Gender Equality Report show:**

- Gender pay gap reduced to 1.9% from 9.2% – substantially lower than the 13.2% national average
- Zero complaints of gender based discrimination and sexual harassment again
- Sector-leading parental leave

- 343 different flexible working arrangements used by staff
- 98% of staff agreed that gender and sexual harassment are not tolerated at Merri.

***"There is still work for us to do, and we will continue to strive to make Merri Health a supportive, safe workplace that provides equal opportunity and rewards for people of all genders."***

**Tassia**

WGEA Director Mary Wooldridge said, *"Critically, these organisations are delivering on a formula that sees better support structures in place for working families; stronger actions to address pay inequalities; and strategic recruitment and promotion practices that help to encourage the full participation of women at work"*.

# Merri Health recognises Aboriginal Country names in addresses

**Mail from Merri Health looks a little different now, as we are recognising Aboriginal Country names in our address information.**

Traditional Country names are now included above our street address in all Merri material including email signatures, stationary, our website and outgoing mail, to recognise and show our respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities past and present.

Merri Health CEO Tassia Michaleas said, *"We want to continuously recognise and celebrate the contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders communities."*



*"Now when people see a Merri Health address, they will be reminded of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique connection to country."*

This initiative reinforces our firm commitment to support the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through initiatives that promote respect, equality and recognition.

This initiative supports proud Gomerai woman **Rachael McPhail's** drive to have Traditional Country names included in all addresses.

She took her idea to Australia Post which has developed **addressing guidelines**.

*"Using Traditional Place names in mailing addresses means acknowledging and celebrating the fact that each area in Australia had a former beautiful name prior to colonisation."*

**Rachel McPhail**

We encourage you to find the Traditional Country name for the area that you live in, and keep your eyes peeled for Merri mail.



# Merri Health launches Smile Squad: free dental care in Moreland schools

**Merri Health is delivering free dental care to primary and secondary school kids in Moreland as part of Smile Squad, a Victorian Government initiative led by Dental Health Services Victoria and delivered by community dental agencies across the state.**

Smile Squad provides access to free mobile dental care for all Victorian public school students, at school during school hours.

Tassia Michaleas said Smile Squad is a timely program as the recent COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a decline in children seeing dentists, due to the barriers faced in accessing appointments.

*"During the COVID-19 pandemic children were often not able to access dental appointments due to lockdowns and other restrictions. This has resulted in children now presenting with more dental issues", Ms Michaleas said.*

*"We're so pleased to be bringing kids the dental care they deserve and need as part of Smile Squad."*

All state primary and secondary schools in Moreland have access to Smile Squad – all they have to do is sign up.



For more information and to find out which schools Smile Squad will be visiting, visit: **smilesquad.vic.gov.au**



## Young carer video launch at Melbourne Zoo



Above: Young carers

**Saturday 5 March 2022 saw the official launch of Merri Health's young carer videos - with the event being held at Melbourne Zoo.**

Merri was funded by the Victorian Government to create a series of videos involving young carers, aiming to raise awareness and celebrate what a young carer is.

Young carers living in Melbourne's North enjoyed a day out at the zoo, followed by a buffet lunch. The official launch event was hosted by Maryanne Tadic, General Manager Healthy Communities, and Juliane Reissle, Manager Carer Services.

Brittany Giles, Young Carer Support Worker, is a part of the team that puts on events for young carers such as Pasta Night, Murder Mystery and Dumpling Day.

**Do you know a young carer? Contact us for support**



**Nicholas.Colicchia@merrihealth.org.au**

## Connecting carers through a social Lebanese feast courtesy of Merri Health



Above: Carers enjoying a social feast

**Merri Health's Carer Services team put on a delicious banquet for Hope Spring Carers Group.**

The dinner was a chance for carers to socialise with other carers, take a break from their caring role and feast on delicious Lebanese food.

The group enjoyed dishes such as Falafel, Kofta and Tabouli at Maroush restaurant in Eltham.

Our Carer Services team worked alongside Marzia, who is a carer and runs the group, to put on a delicious meal for carers.

"I just wanted to say a big THANK YOU to Merri Health for being instrumental in making our Carers' dinner possible. Everyone really enjoyed both the food and the company. It was equivalent to 5 or more sessions of therapy!" Marzia.

The carers in the group are registered with Merri Health through Carer Gateway and receive supports such as counselling, peer support and respite.

***"It was so nice for the carers to be able to come together in a social way especially after the tough time we have all gone through being so socially isolated because of the COVID restrictions. It was a special and lovely evening."***

**Carer**

**Find out about our carer services**



**<https://bit.ly/3rlwxVH>**



Above: Hansha from our Infrastructure team with our IFS team and the Orange Door team.

## Merri Health's Integrated Family Services team are now in partnership with The Orange Door

**The Orange Door is an intake, referral and information service for people who are experiencing or have experienced family violence, and families who need extra support with caring for children.**

They link clients and workers with the right supports depending on your situation. If you are living in Moreland, you may be referred directly to our Integrated Family Services team.

This partnership allows child wellbeing to be the central intake point, as we know that family violence and child wellbeing are linked with one another. Having the focus on child wellbeing ensures children are supported in the family violence space.

Any parents experiencing family violence and looking

for child wellbeing support can also be assisted.

The goal of The Orange Door is to streamline the process for people experiencing family violence to gain support by creating a direct linkage to consult.

**To make a booking, call The Orange Door intake**

 **1800 271 151**

**Learn more about our Integrated Family Services**

 **1800 271 151**

# 4

## reasons to get your third dose

**As winter approaches, the Victorian Government is encouraging everyone eligible to get their COVID-19 booster shot.**

Whether you've had COVID or not, a third dose of the COVID-19 vaccine provides the best protection.

**Here are four reasons you should get yours today:**

1. The colder months mean we'll be inside more, which increases the risk of catching respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19.
2. Vaccine immunity wanes over time. And, even if you've had COVID-19, your natural immunity will also decrease.
3. If you have underlying health issues or a weaker immune system, you're at higher risk of serious illness.
4. Lots of people are still getting infected with COVID-19, making it easier to catch and spread.

So, if it's been three months or more since your second dose, it's time to get your third dose now.

Make an appointment with your GP or pharmacists or go to a vaccination centre.



# A new look has arrived at reception!

**Merri Health's reception teams are sporting a stylish new look, with a custom-designed blouse created exclusively by local Melbourne designer, Studio Zoe.**

The new uniform has been introduced to make it easier for people visiting our sites to identify Merri Health staff.

The colourful design includes Merri Health's brand colours and triangle motifs in a gender-neutral pattern. It reinforces a welcoming, professional look that is consistent with our refurbished, branded

reception areas, and complements Merri's information and facilities.

We engaged various designers before coming to the final design, and a local seamstress to work on styles to suit different body shapes.

The final pattern provides flexible styling options for our teams and embodies Merri Health's brand look.

**Keep an eye out for our reception team rocking the new look at our sites!**



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

## Quick contacts

T: 1300 637 744  
Carers 1800 422 737  
Victims Assistance  
1300 362 739

## Brunswick

Wurundjeri Woi  
Wurrung  
11 Glenlyon Road  
Brunswick VIC 3056

## Brunswick West

Wurundjeri Woi  
|Wurrung  
382–386 Moreland Road  
Brunswick West  
VIC 3055

## Coburg

Wurundjeri Woi  
Wurrung  
93 Bell Street  
Coburg VIC 3058

## Coburg

Wurundjeri Woi  
Wurrung  
21 Victoria Street  
Coburg VIC 3058

## Coburg

Wurundjeri Woi  
Wurrung  
Ground floor,  
19 Pentridge Blvd  
Coburg VIC 3058

## Fawkner

Wurundjeri Woi  
Wurrung  
79 Jukes Road  
Fawkner VIC 3060

## Glenroy

Wurundjeri Woi  
Wurrung  
5D Cromwell Street  
Glenroy VIC 3046

## Preston

Wurundjeri Woi  
Wurrung  
Level 1 and 2,  
110 Chifley Drive Preston  
VIC 3072

## Wangaratta

Level 3, 62-68 Ovens  
Street Wangaratta  
VIC 3677

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