



Merri Health

MerriNews

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 Merri-Health

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Welcome.

As we head into September, we have some updates, including the news that our CEO Nigel Fidgeon has moved on.

We don't often talk about those 'behind the scenes' so today we'd like to take the opportunity to say thank you and farewell to our CEO Nigel Fidgeon. Nigel has been our CEO for more than eight years and after many wonderful years advocating for the needs of community health, he will start a new chapter as CEO at Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA).

During this time, Nigel's support has been key in many initiatives with some incredible outcomes: Rainbow Tick accreditation and an ongoing commitment to inclusive and safe services for LGBTIQ+ people, responding to family violence and gender equality that saw our citation as Employer of Choice for Gender Equity 2019, new as well as additional services to continue to respond to the needs of vulnerable, disadvantaged and at-risk people, and fostering partnerships with incredible for-purpose/non-for-profit organisations.

Nigel's last day in the office was 30 August. We'd like to wish Nigel all the best in his new role and look forward to seeing what's next!



New program to address loneliness in older people

A new pilot program to support older adults went live on 12 September for R U OK Day.

Living Well, Ageing Well supports healthy ageing, is free and open to anyone 50 years and over living in northern metropolitan Melbourne.

Project coordinator Joanna Pankhurst said the program comes in response to an increase in isolation and loneliness being experienced by older adults.

“R U OK day is an opportunity to start meaning conversations and connect people with community. As people age, they face different issues like health conditions or lack of transport that make it difficult to get involved in the community.

“Living Well, Ageing Well helps connect people to local groups and activities, and we also visit people in their homes to work through barriers to keep them connected,” said Joanna.

The 2019 national wellbeing report from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare found an estimated 1 in 4 Australians are currently experiencing an episode of loneliness.



The program is a phased approach that will see resources, one-on-one support and a calendar of events rolled out shortly. Social and activity groups will follow.



Find out more



1300 637 744



service.access@merrrihealth.org.au

Thousands of students stand against discrimination



Students from a participating school

Thousands of Victorian students came together to form a human rainbow in support of inclusive and safe communities for Wear It Purple Day.

Captured from above by a Victorian Police helicopter, students from Coburg High, Brunswick South Primary and Pascoe Vale Girls College created largescale human art forms. The footage formed part of the Domino Effect, a short film that promotes active bystander actions to address bullying and discrimination of LGBTIQ+ people.

Take a look!



<https://youtu.be/bXaSiqWG6Q0>

Cut back on sugar for oral health



In light of Dental Health Week, here are some ways you and your family can be more aware of sugar intake.

Sugar is one of the leading causes of tooth decay, and most of us aren't aware of how much hidden sugar we are actually eating and drinking.

Here are some things to keep in mind to make sure you are on track to good oral health:

- > Brush at least twice daily with toothpaste that contains flouride
- > When adding sugar to hot drinks, remember that 1 teaspoon of sugar is equal to approximately 4 grams of sugar
- > Food packaging that claims 'no added sugar' often contain a higher level of natural sugar
- > Consume less than 5% of the daily total energy intake to decrease your risk of tooth decay and obesity

When food shopping, you may want to compare product labels so you can make an informed decision on what food to purchase for you and your family.

For more information on how to keep you and your family free from oral health issues, visit ada.org.au



Women's badminton in Fawkner

A female only badminton club has landed in Fawkner.

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

Community engagement officer Nazish said the program supported locals to connect.

“Sport is not only good for physical, mental and academic development but it can also be a great opportunity to socialise and make life long friends. Count Me In Too supports girls and women from Fawkner and Glenroy to find sports and sports clubs best suited to their needs and preferences.”

If you are interested in being involved with the Northern Badminton Club, contact Nazish on **1300 637 744** or email community.wellbeing@merrihealth.org.au.

 @NothernBadmintonClubVictoria



Above: Project officer Courtenay Dempsey with Aunty Pam Pedersen

Local students graduate Speak Up, Speak Out program

After four months of sessions, graduates of Speak Up, Speak Out enjoy a family day at the Essendon Club.

Speak Up, Speak Out is an education and support program that promotes gender equity for young Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students.

Family day was the final session held on 17 August where students celebrated and shared what they had learnt with their family and friends.

Students and their family were welcomed on the chilly, yet sunny morning by Kellie Hunter, respected Wurundjeri woman, with a traditional smoking ceremony. It followed students sharing what they had learnt and demonstrating upstander action: speaking or acting in support of an individual or cause, or intervening on behalf of someone being attacked or bullied.

The day ended with the students receiving their graduation certificates and enjoying a lunch by Mabu Mabu along with their families.

Following its success, the pilot program has been re-funded for another term and is set to support another 15 students that will start the sessions in October.



Above: students share what they learnt during family day

Yarra Trams Community Partnerships Program finalists!

We have been shortlisted for the 2020 partnerships program with Yarra Trams. This competition is an opportunity for not-for-profit organisations to highlight important issues on the tram network as part of a year-long partnership.

Our video submission outlined the need for a rainbow tram in support of the LGBTIQ+ community. We have asked Yarra Trams to join us as an ally to make sure LGBTIQ+ people are able to get to where they are going, safely.

Merri Health consumer Alison features in the video telling us personal experiences of taking public transport. Alison has received abuse from other passengers while on public transport, and feels that a rainbow tram would encourage more LGBTIQ+ people to take public transport.

“I could 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.”



Learn more about our journey by keeping an eye out on our website

www.merrihealth.org.au

Fawkner good food projects

Wholefoods market and group dining arrives in Fawkner.



Grant recipients of our ‘Hello, Fawkner!’ Great Ideas program are hard at work as they launch their food focused initiatives in Fawkner.

With a vision to bring good food to Fawkner, locals Zavi and Sana have launched Cook, Dine and Shine, a monthly event for women to come together, bring a plate of food and enjoy the company of new people. It is a chance to discover new cultures and enjoy new food.

Adding some friendly competition, each month the team will vote on the best dish, so participants are encouraged to

bring along their best cooking!

Not far behind are locals Sam and Katherine who are mid-way through planning their wholefoods store that will sell ethically produced, pesticide-free products with little to no packaging.

Set to open in February 2020, Sam and Katherine have expressed their gratitude in the interest of the Fawkner community and are working hard to stock as many of the food options requested by residents so far.

Keep an eye on Merri Health’s Facebook for updates on the projects.

NDIS: self-managed or agency managed plan?

We have broken down the differences between agency managed, self-managed and having a provider manage your NDIS plan.

Learn about the advantages and disadvantages of each plan to see what is right for you.



merrihealth.org.au/news/understanding-your-ndis-plan/



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



1300 637 744 and press 2



merrihealth.org.au



Image: team members from Merri Health's carer support team led by Vicki Down (right)

Merri Health consortium announced statewide carer service provider

A consortium of seven Victorian health and social support providers has been selected to deliver Victorian carer services over the next five years.

Led by local health provider Merri Health, the group will deliver new, improved and expanded services to carers under the brand Carer Gateway. Carer Gateway represents the single biggest reform to carer support in more than a decade.

Merri Health's general manager of healthy communities, Maryanne Tadic said the group came together to deliver better outcomes for carers in Victoria.

"Collectively, we have been supporting Victorian carers for more than 100 years.

"Every carers experience is different. By working together, we'll be able to meet the unique needs of carers across the state," said Maryanne.

The group will work in partnership with existing providers to ensure services are not impacted for any transitioning carers.

More information

> The consortium will support approximately 742,990 carers across Victoria

> Consortia members include Alfred Health, Ballarat Health Services, Barwon Health, Bendigo Health Care Group, FamilyCare, Uniting [Victoria and Tasmania] Ltd., and Merri Health

Women's Health Week

Carers supported to put their health and wellbeing first with an afternoon at the Fairfield Boathouse.

Women's Health Week is a week dedicated to all women across Australia to make good health a priority. This year the event ran from 2-6 September. The two biggest barriers for women not maintaining a healthy lifestyle is 'lack of time' and 'health not being a priority'. Now in its seventh year, Merri Health's CarerLinks North program supported female carers to come together and prioritise their wellbeing.

The event took place on Thursday, 5 September at Fairfield Boathouse, with picturesque views of the Yarra River and available walking tracks. On the day, we were very fortunate to have beautiful, sunny weather, which was an incentive for 23 of the 26 carers to go on the walk.

"The scenery was stunning, information beneficial, and food and drink was incredible. Nothing could be better!" shared one of the carers.

Carers enjoyed a meal and a presentation from the CarerLinks North Health and Wellbeing Coaches on self-care and



Above: carers enjoy their surrounds

nutrition, before going for a walk around Fairfield Boathouse. Carers unable to participate in the walk took part in a guided meditation session.



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



(03) 9495 2500



CarerLinksNorth@merrihhealth.org.au

Free activities and workshops



Carers are encouraged to get involved in one of our many free activities and workshops for carers.

Ten workshops and an array of activities are on offer for carers to learn practical information and advice to support you and the person you care for, and connect and share your experience with other carers.

The free workshops and activities are available for carers living in Moreland, Darebin, Banyule, Yarra, Nillumbik, Hume or Whittlesea.

Sessions are FREE and a contribution to the cost of respite may be made, if needed. This will be discussed with the carer in advance.



Get in touch with our team or visit our website for more.



(03) 9495 2500



CarerlinksNorth@merrihhealth.org.au



<https://www.merrihhealth.org.au/services/carer-support/activities-and-workshops/>



Free support for Victorians

Support is now available for two programs: support for new parents and LGBTIQ+ health support.

If you are currently expecting or have a baby that is 12 months and under, we can support you via our FREE Family Foundations program. Get support from qualified and experienced parent coaches for you and your partner across 10 sessions that are 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
- > 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.



1300 637 744



family.foundations@merrrihealth.org.au

LGBTIQ+ health

Supporting the wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ Victorians, we also have support available in our QHealth program.

If you identify LGBTIQ+ and have been impacted by drug and alcohol misuse: whether it be you or someone close to you, past or present, get in touch. Our counsellors are LGBTIQ+ identifying.



1300 637 744



qhealth@merrrihealth.org.au

To receive this newsletter electronically or to update your details, email communications@merrrihealth.org.au

Quick contacts

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