

Rehabilitation, Ageing and Independent Living (RAIL) Research Centre

Friends of RAIL eBulletin – July 2025

Friends of RAIL are people in our community who may contribute to – or use – any of RAIL’s research outputs across the areas of rehabilitation, ageing and/or independent living. Friends include consumer and community members, such as people with their own lived experience across the areas of rehabilitation, ageing and/or independent living, and their families and friends.

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A message from Aislinn (RAIL Consumer and Community Engagement Lead)



Hello Everyone,

I hope you are all managing to stay warm during the cooler weather we've been experiencing - as we head toward warmer months with the passing of the shortest day of the year.

Our team hopes you enjoy this e-Bulletin filled yet again with many items, and have a special thank you for the contribution from Stephen with his powerful poem.

As always, please feel free to encourage new Friends to sign up to receive our e-Bulletins and to get an update on what the RAIL team are involved in. You'll note in this edition that, based on the White Paper developed with Friends of RAIL, there has now been a Monash article highlighting the production of this paper. Our team are also working towards an online catch-up with our Friends for later this year, and again, we encourage any suggestions or feedback as to what you'd like this session to include or focus on.

So now, grab a cuppa, get comfortable, and we hope you enjoy reading our e-bulletin.

**A message from Grainne
(Friends of RAIL Consumer and Community Representative)**

Welcome to our second newsletter for 2025. Here we are in winter again! A lot of my friends are getting out their slow cookers and soup recipes.

Some time ago it was suggested I could write an article about a special therapist in my husband Peter's life.

I must start by saying that any of you that have been lucky enough to have Libby Callaway in your life know that you can never replace her friendship, knowledge and interest in your rehabilitation and life. We were that lucky for more than 30 years.



It feels very unfair to single out one person, we had the best and most amazing team of professionals. We even had a carer that became a friend and took Peter to see his beloved Blue Boys (that's the Carlton Footy club for those who don't know) play for 26 years.

I wanted to speak about Peter's physio, Gavin Williams. He too was in Peter's life for 27 years starting when he was a new grad physio. Gavin said they grew up together.



Peter lit up when Gavin came, they had such a great relationship. Gavin kept Peter the most physically well he could be which then enabled us to lead the best life possible. Early on it was keeping him doing standing transfers with me then later on circulation issues in someone that used a wheelchair for 32 years. Being in the best physical health is so important. Seeing Peter put that much effort and strain into it I couldn't cope with. I had to leave the room.

Peter was such a hard worker, one time he worked so hard he ended up in Emergency with chest pains, seems he worked too hard! Up until the week that Peter got very ill he was still going on a standing frame and doing an exercise regime.

When Peter came home it was nothing for Gavin to come in on a public holiday to get Peter's carers up and fully trained.

Amazing and I can't talk highly enough of Gavin or Libby, there is so much more I could say.

RAIL Team member introduction

Hello to all our Friends of RAIL!

My name is Lisa Licciardi, and I am a Research Fellow at Monash University, working across the Rehabilitation, Ageing and Independent Living (RAIL) Research Centre and the Department of Occupational Therapy. I am also a PhD candidate in the Department of Occupational Therapy, currently in my fourth year of part-time study.



I come from a clinical background as an occupational therapist, with extensive experience supporting individuals recovering from brain and/or upper limb injuries. Over the years, I have worked in hospitals, community settings, and private clinics in a variety of clinical, leadership, and project roles. I began my academic journey at Monash in 2017 as a sessional tutor, which has since grown into a range of teaching and research positions.

My research projects have spanned areas including brain injury and assistive technology, Carer Health and Wellbeing Service, Changing the Focus: Physical Activity and Dementia, and a Nationwide Concussion Survey. For my PhD, I am investigating functional outcomes and the role of occupational therapy in the rehabilitation of adults with persistent post-concussion symptoms.

It is a privilege to work alongside such talented and supportive colleagues on research that has the potential to enhance real-world care and outcomes for individuals living with brain injuries or age-related conditions.

On a personal note, I am incredibly proud of my Maltese and Sicilian heritage, particularly the deep cultural connection to food, wine, and the joy of sharing meals with family and friends. Outside of work, I am passionate about health and fitness, with a background in competitive dance, gymnastics, and bodybuilding, and qualifications in Fitness (Certificate III and IV) as well as Nutrition and Diet for Exercise Professionals. I love staying active—whether it's at the gym, outdoors, walking my dog, or spending time at the beach.

Most importantly, I am a proud mum to three wonderful young children, and alongside my incredibly supportive husband, I feel honoured to share life's journey with them—even as they grow up far too quickly!

Friends online event - save the date!

The RAIL team is planning to host an online (via Zoom) event for Friends to meet and share ideas on Monday 24th November, 12.00pm - 1.00pm, AEDT.

If there are any particular topics that you would like this event to cover, please feel free to email us at spahc.rail@monash.edu.

More information will be circulated shortly.

Please save the date! We would love to see you there!



Call for Friends articles

We would love to hear from you!



We are calling for any Friends who may be interested in writing a brief profile about themselves, a reflection on a topic related to rehabilitation, ageing and/or independent living/disabilities, or a poem they might have written. The format is flexible!

If you are interested in writing a brief piece for the next eBulletin, or have something you'd like to be able to be written up on your behalf (e.g. based on a phone call with yourself), please contact Karine via email spahc.rail@monash.edu or phone (03) 9904 4557.

Poem from a Friend



He sits, by the window
The view, a greenish blur
Voices come and go, but faces indistinct, unclear
He wants for nothing
Controlled temperature, three meals a day, morning and afternoon tea
Any assistance he needs washing and dressing
Friendly, caring staff
His family chose well
But now it seems, out of sight out of mind
Initially the visitors came: his children, grandchildren, friends, neighbours
But as the months, now year, passed, the visits decreased
He's being looked after, so no need, it seems
One child, one old friend, his only regular visitors, once a week each
A rich and fulfilling life, now all a fading memory
A witness to history: The first bombs of World War II in Danzig; troops
marching triumphantly in Munich;
trains transporting Jews through Poland; escape to the west before the Red
Army arrives
A hard-working professional
Skilled, knowledgeable, respected
A world traveler, introducing new technologies
Riding the post-war economic boom
His advice and expertise sought after
Now forgotten and ignored
Many have benefitted
None remember
His world the chair by the window, plus: three meals a day, morning and
afternoon tea, a comfortable bed, caring staff
Can he reasonably expect more?
Is it asking too much to still be remembered, by his other children, his friends,

neighbours, former professional associates, colleagues?
A very wide family, social and professional circle
All disappeared from his life
Now in the chair by the window

Stephen Peterson, Friend of RAIL

Monash LENS article by RAIL staff and Friends of RAIL

Consumer and community perspectives are central to the work of the RAIL Research Centre. On the 3rd June 2025, the process leading to the development of a White Paper titled: Opportunities and Challenges in Rehabilitation, Ageing, and Independent Living: A White Paper by Friends of the RAIL Research Centre was summarised by the RAIL team and “Head Friend” Ms Grainne Cruickshank in an article published in the Monash LENS ([Select here to read the LENS article](#)).

As most of you know, the White Paper was launched earlier this year at our in-person Friends of RAIL event on the Peninsula campus ([select here to access the White Paper](#)). The White Paper drew on work commencing at a Friends of RAIL in-person event in November 2023, where Friends were invited to share their views on the challenges and opportunities across rehabilitation, ageing and independent living. Throughout 2024, Friends were consulted via an online forum about this initial roundtable discussion to inform the acceptability and understanding of the summary document.



Thank you to all of our Friends who contributed to the development of the White Paper!

If you know someone who may like to become a ‘Friend of RAIL’, please either [share this link](#) with them to complete the registration survey or they can email us at spahc.rail@monash.edu or, call 03 9904 4557 to speak to Karine about registering.

Top Tip from the RAIL team

Top Tips



Carers Victoria membership card and other cards

Did you know that there are different assistance cards available for carers and companion? Some of these cards include the Carers Victoria Membership Card, the Victorian Carer Card (‘We Care’ Card) and the Companion Card.

[Select here](#) to access the Carers Victoria website and learn more about these cards.



If you have a top tip that would like to share with others, please feel free to contact us at spahc.rail@monash.edu.

Survey for people over 70 living in Australia - priorities and goals

A research team from the School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine at Monash University is inviting older adults 70 years and over to take part in a short survey about what matters most as they age.

The findings from the survey will help design a new trial to support health and well-being with ageing.

[Select here to access the online survey](#) or scan the QR code in the flyer below.

Please feel free to share this with friends or loved ones aged 70 years or older.

Over 70 and living in Australia? Help Shape the Future of Healthy Aging!

We're inviting Australians aged 70+ to share what matters most to you as you grow older.



- ✓ Share your experiences and values
- ✓ Help us design a new trial to support health & well-being with aging
- ✓ Scan the **QR code** or use the link below to take the 10 min survey

https://monash.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_4SnXcwmPCaLGSKG



This project has received Ethics approval from Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (#47703).
The survey will remain open until 31st July 2025. **Contact:** joanne.ryan@monash.edu

Survey participant needed: Co-Designing an Intervention to maximise older Adult Participation in Volunteering



This project is investigating and prioritising the factors that impact upon older adults' participation in volunteering activities to assist in better understanding of why people commence, continue and stop volunteering. This involves an online survey asking you to rank the importance of a range of listed enablers and barriers to older adult volunteering participation.

This research, approved by the Monash University Ethics committee (ID 47057), is being conducted by researchers at Monash University, including Mr Nathan Williams, Dr Dai Pu, Dr Marcelo Maghidman, Dr Debra Mitchell and Prof Terry Haines.

The team is currently recruiting:

1. Anyone in Australia aged 60+

2. Volunteer Program Representatives, aged 18+ (i.e. people involved in organisations where older adults volunteer)

[Select here for more information on the project and to complete the survey](#)

Please feel free to share this with friends or loved ones as relevant!

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Quality and Safeguards Commission Practice Alerts

Did you know that the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission - the independent regulatory body that oversees quality of NDIS-funded supports - has a range of informative evidence-based practice alerts on their website? Practice alerts are 'short research summaries that cover how to provide best-practice safe services to people with disability'.

Practice alerts on the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission website range from topics like oral health, pain management and transitions of care between disability services and hospital through to hot water, sun and summer safety.

[Select here](#) to access the list of Practice Alerts on the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission website.

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day



Did you know that 15th June is the World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) which has been designated by the United Nations?

The WEAAD provides an opportunity for communities to stand together against abuse, mistreatment and neglect of older adults. Abuse comes in many forms including financial, emotional, psychological, physical, sexual, or social.

The 2025 theme of the WEAAD was "Addressing Abuse of Older Adults in Long Term Care Facilities: Through Data and Action".

Please [select here to visit the United Nations WEAAD page](#) or [select here to visit the Victorian Elder Abuse Awareness Day page](#).

If you are experiencing older adult abuse and want to know what options are available to you, call the Seniors Rights Victoria helpline on 1300 368 821.

For nationwide assistance, please call the Australian Human Rights Commission on 1800 ELDERHelp (1800 353 374) or [select here to visit the Australian Human Rights Commission website](#).

Ocean Mind - surf therapy



Ocean Mind is a research-backed program in Torquay for surf therapy (now also on the Mornington Peninsula) for young people experiencing mental health challenges, social isolation, and disability. They offer community programs such as their 6-weeks Swell Program, school programs and also provide tailored 1:1 and group sessions for individuals with NDIS funding.

Ocean Mind has formed a research partnership with Deakin University to use scientific evidence to improve their programs.

[Select here to read an ABC news article](#) on the research conducted by Deakin University researchers on surf therapy

[Select here to visit the Ocean Mind website.](#)

Friend Contribution and Feedback

At RAIL, we are committed to conducting research that occurs with the community and would love to hear from you. If you would like to share a story related to your experience of rehabilitation, ageing, and independent living, be involved with RAIL research, share a top tip with Friends of RAIL, or provide any feedback that you may have on the format/content of the Friends eBulletin, please contact us at spahc.rail@monash.edu or call 03 9904 4557.

RAIL aims to provide an accessible eBulletin for all. Image descriptions are available for images appearing in the eBulletin, with the use of a screen reader. If you have any issues with accessing any part of the eBulletin, please let us know at spahc.rail@monash.edu.

We acknowledge and pay respects to the Elders and Traditional Owners of the land on which our four Australian campuses stand. Information for [Indigenous Australians](#)

We're committed to [diversity and inclusion](#)

<https://www.monash.edu/medicine/spahc/rail/>

Our mailing address is:

spahc.rail@monash.edu

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