

# Rehabilitation, Ageing and Independent Living (RAIL) Research Centre

## Member & Partner eBulletin – June 2025

**Members** of RAIL are Monash University education and research staff or students across a variety of disciplines that are interested in rehabilitation, ageing and independent living.

**Partners** of RAIL are people outside Monash University from various types of organisations/background across rehabilitation, ageing and/or independent living, including academics from other Australian and international Universities, industry leaders, clinicians and other health and care providers, service providers and those involved in policy and planning.

### In this RAIL eBulletin edition:

- [A message from the Director](#)
- [Partner profile](#)
- [RAIL Research Centre eForum](#)
- [RAIL short courses 2025](#)
- [Highlighted publication](#)
- [Grant success](#)
- [Work highlights from a RAIL Member](#)
- [Monash LENS article by RAIL staff and Friends of RAIL](#)
- [Pets and People program media roadshow](#)
- [Multi-purpose visit to Malaysia](#)
- [International occupational therapy academics at Monash University](#)
- [New report by the Centre for Research Excellence in Disability and Health](#)
- [Member and Partner Contributions](#)

## A message from the Director

I hope our Members and Partners are keeping warm with the cooler weather. Over recent months, the RAIL Research Centre has been active across Research, Education and Community Engagement. New research grant success has included funding from the Department of Social Services, the Transport Accident Commission and the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF). Education includes preparation for RAIL's four short courses, which are being held between



June and August 2025. Please read below for more details about our Research and Education.



Community Engagement has included RAIL leading [George's Gymnastics Program](#), a 5-week inclusive gymnastics program, designed to enhance social connections and physical activity for primary school children with a disability (aged 5-12). The program involves 200 children from seven Special Schools, including Vermont South Special School, Bayside Special Developmental School, Eastern Ranges School, Belmore School, Endeavor Hills Specialist School, Glenallen School and Emerson School.

## Partner profile



Hirofumi Nagayama is an occupational therapist and an Associate Professor at Kanagawa University of Human Services in Japan. His work focuses on supporting older adults and stroke survivors through evidence-based occupational therapy practices. He has a particular interest in evaluating the cost-effectiveness of occupational therapy for these populations and has led multiple research projects to help inform policy and improve clinical practice. In recent years, he has also engaged in clinical epidemiology research using big data – contributing to the understanding of real-world rehabilitation outcomes and developing new predictive models.

Hirofumi is also passionate about advancing occupational therapy education and mentoring students to become thoughtful, evidence-informed practitioners. As part of this interest, he is also keen to learn more about occupational therapy education in Australia. By exploring differences between the Australian and Japanese systems, he hopes to gain insights that can contribute to improving occupational therapy education in Japan.

Hirofumi is currently spending three months at Monash University on a sabbatical, working closely with Associate Professor Libby Callaway, who works across the Occupational Therapy Department and the Rehabilitation, Ageing and Independent Living (RAIL) Research Centre, as RAIL's independent living stream lead. Hirofumi's visit has been a deeply rewarding experience to date, and he has had the opportunity to exchange ideas with inspiring colleagues, observe occupational therapy classes, and begin collaborative work on translating and culturally adapting outcome measures used in Australia and internationally for use in Japan.

Outside of work, Hirofumi enjoys exploring local cafés in Melbourne and spending time with his family, including their beloved toy poodle back in Japan.

Hirofumi is grateful for the warm welcome he has received at Monash University and sees this visit not as an endpoint but as a starting point for ongoing collaboration – especially future exchanges between students and researchers at both universities.

## RAIL Research Centre eForum



During the last RAIL eForum hosted on 5th June, Dr Natasha Layton, Dr Pauline Kleinitz and Professor Sarah Anderson delivered inspiring presentations reflecting on their career as allied health practitioners / researchers and sharing experiences working in international work contexts.

The presentations led to a great discussion with the audience and gave much food for thought to many!

Thank you to Dr Layton, Dr Kleinitz, and Professor Anderson for this great panel!

Join us for our next eForum scheduled on Tuesday 12th August 12-1pm EAST, during which three graduate students supervised / co-supervised by a RAIL team member will showcase their work!

## Select here to register for this RAIL eForum



### HDR student showcase

The Higher Degree by Research (HDR) students connected to RAIL are conducting novel, in depth research across a wide range of health disciplines and topics.

Please come along to this next RAIL eForum, which will showcase their ongoing work.

Date:	Tuesday 12 <sup>th</sup> Aug 2025
Time:	12.00pm – 1.00pm AEST
Venue:	Online Via Zoom
Register:	<a href="#">Select here to register for this RAIL Research Centre eForum</a>



Or scan the QR code

#### Sarra Pirmohamed - Standardising outcomes in randomised controlled trials of physical activity interventions for older adults: A Delphi study

Using a modified Delphi survey with international knowledge users, we aim to create a core outcome set (COS) - a standardised list of outcomes - to measure in all trials of physical activity for older adults. This COS will increase capacity for knowledge synthesis in this field, and ensure the older adult perspective is incorporated in future research.

Sarra is a MSc student at Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada, where she also obtained her BSc in Biomedical Physiology. She is interested in the health of older adults, particularly through the prescription and promotion of physical activity. Her current work focuses on optimising outcome selection in research of physical activity for older adults.



#### Zelalem Muluneh - Understanding Restrictive Practices (Restraints and Seclusion) in Mental Health Inpatients Settings: Use, Definition, and Measurement

This presentation highlights variability in reported rates of restrictive care practices (RCPs) in mental health settings across institutions and jurisdictions. It examines how inconsistencies in definitions, measurement, and reporting methods contribute to these variabilities. Additionally, it explores how clinicians across various settings interpret and classify the same RCPs.

Zelalem Muluneh is a final-year PhD student at Monash University (School of Primary and Allied Health Care). He has eight years of research and clinical experience in mental health. Zelalem obtained his bachelor's degree (Psychiatric Nursing) and Master's degree (Clinical and Community Mental Health), both from the University of Gondar (Ethiopia) in 2013 and 2016, respectively.



#### Matthew Ferris - Australian Paramedics perspectives of Reasonable Compulsory Overtime: A Delphi study

This research explored frontline paramedics perspectives on what makes compulsory overtime reasonable. A Delphi approach found consensus was met on 17 conditions that were reasonable or unreasonable. Patient acuity, shift length and ramping were key influencing factors. These findings could support clinician and patient safety.

Matt Ferris is a clinician / researcher with Monash University where he is currently undertaking a PhD. He works primarily as a paramedic, but also as a Registered Nurse, and has worked in rural and metropolitan settings where fatigue and fatigue management is a significant issue.



#### Contact us

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## RAIL short courses 2025



Places are still available for the following three short courses:

### Designing accessible research, education and services (DARES)

- **When:** Thursday 24th July 2025
- **Where:** Healthy Futures Hub in Seaford, Victoria

To find out more about who needs the DARES short course you can either [select here to download a PDF document](#) or select the play button on the image below to watch a 3-minute video.

For more information on this short course, please [select here to visit our registration page](#).



### Exercise to optimise balance, mobility and fall outcomes for older people

- **When:** Thursday 7th and Friday 8th August 2025 (participants may register for one or both days)
- **Where:** Monash University Peninsula Campus, Frankston, Victoria

The course will provide participants with practical tools and evidence-based information on effective falls prevention exercise programs and public health messages.

This course is suitable for fitness educators and professionals, allied health professionals (e.g. physiotherapists, exercise physiologists, occupational therapists), medical and nursing staff, health promotion practitioners, health educators, researchers and academics and has been accredited with [Physical Activity Australia](#) for 2 PDP points and [AUSactive](#) for 6 CEC points.

For more information on this short course, please [select here to visit our registration page](#).

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## Understanding and evaluating the measurement properties of outcome measures

- **When:** Wednesday 13th and Wednesday 20th August 2025 (participants may register for one or both days)
- **Where:** Online via Zoom

The course will provide participants with practical skills in evaluating the psychometric properties of outcome measures, as well as how to design and conduct reliability and validity studies.

This course is suitable for health care providers, health service researchers, academics, quality and program managers and HDR students interested in evaluating (or developing) outcome measures.

For more information on this short course, please [select here to visit our registration page](#).

### Highlighted publication

**Licciardi L, Lalor A, Olver J, Callaway L.** Occupational Therapy Practice in Adult Rehabilitation of Persistent Postconcussion Symptoms: A Scoping Review. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*. 2025 May 1;79(3):7903205150.  
doi: 10.5014/ajot.2025.051001

Lisa Licciardi is a registered occupational therapist who works part-time as a Research Fellow in the Rehabilitation, Ageing and Independent Living (RAIL) Research Centre and Occupational Therapy Department at Monash University. Lisa is also enrolled in a part-time PhD in the Department of Occupational Therapy. Lisa is in her fourth year of study, and successfully completed her confirmation milestone in March 2023.

Lisa's PhD research examines the functional outcomes and role of occupational therapy in the rehabilitation of adults experiencing persistent post-concussion symptoms (PPCS). Her recently published scoping review examined literature describing the occupational therapy role in PPCS, finding only 16 original sources that met the review inclusion criteria. These publications demonstrated occupational therapists may practice across a majority of World Health Organization' International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (WHO ICF) subclasses, and assessments and interventions were often reported at the WHO ICF body structures and body functions domains. Given the review identified there is limited evidence to inform occupational therapy practice in adult PPCS rehabilitation, Lisa is now undertaking a qualitative study exploring the role and perspectives of occupational therapists working in adult PPCS rehabilitation services in Australia and New Zealand. For the third PhD study, Lisa plans to interview people with lived experience of PPCS who have accessed occupational therapy services to listen to their perspectives on the



occupational therapy role. Combined, evidence from these studies will inform final work in the PhD program with the aim to fill the gap of clinical practice guidance for occupational therapists working with adults with PPCS, and evidence-inform rehabilitation service design for this growing population.

[Select here to visit the journal page and to read the abstract](#)

## Grant success



### **Department of Social Services (DSS)**

"Co-designing virtual reality modules and leveraging a certified social enterprise network to empower Australian Disability Enterprises to transition people with intellectual disabilities into open employment"

The purpose of the DSS Structural Adjustment Fund is to support the employment of people with high support needs and assist the disability employment sector to evolve in line with the guiding principles for the future of supported employment ([select here](#) to read about these principles). Associate Professor Libby Callaway (RAIL Independent Living Stream Lead and Associate Professor in Occupational Therapy) was invited to join a group led by Wallara's Executive Team and the Open Tech Lab at Monash University (via Professor Charmine Hartel and colleagues) on a new DSS Structural Adjustment Fund project. This co-design project has been developed to support people with intellectual disabilities to test out work skills using virtual reality modules. The goal is to show how Australian Disability Enterprises can assist to transition people with intellectual disability into Open Employment. For details on the Structural Adjustment Fund, [select here](#).

### **MRFF Survivorship Care and Collaborative Research Prioritisation Grant**

Dr Christina Ekegren (Senior Research Fellow and rehabilitation Stream Lead; RAIL Research Centre) has been part of a successful team, led by Professor Belinda Gabbe (School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine, Monash University), on a recent MRFF Survivorship Care and Collaborative Research Prioritisation Grant for a new 5 year project entitled: Advancing Care Through Injury Outcome Navigators (ACTION) Study. Ms Britta Morrison, from the School of Primary and Allied Health Care and Friend of RAIL, is also part of this successful team, providing important consumer insights.

### **MRFF Dementia, Ageing and Aged Care Mission Grant**

RAIL team member Dr Sara Whittaker (Research Fellow) is a chief investigator on a recently awarded MRFF Dementia, Ageing and Aged Care Missing Grant led by Associate

Professor Noleen Bennett from the Department of Nursing at the University of Melbourne entitled: 'Safe at home': a novel infection and antimicrobial use surveillance program for vulnerable Australians using support at home aged care services.

### Transport Accident Commission (TAC)

Dr Christina Ekegren (Senior Research Fellow and rehabilitation Stream Lead; RAIL Research Centre) has been part of a successful team, led by Dr Pete Nicklen (Department of Physiotherapy, Monash University) on a recent TAC tasking statement for a new project entitled: Evidence review of the treatment effectiveness of Remedial Massage therapy delivered by non-Allied Health practitioners.

Congratulations to all the investigators for their success!

## Work highlights from a RAIL Member



In this edition of the RAIL e-Bulletin, we are pleased to highlight the work of Dr. Yulisna Mutia Sari, our first graduate PhD student in 2023 and a current research fellow at Monash University Indonesia. Dr. Sari has recently completed a significant multidisciplinary project titled **Developing a Model of Future-proofing for Climate Resilience by Engaging Communities (MoFCREC)** ([select here to learn more](#) about the MoFCREC).

As part of the older people stream, her research focused on identifying resilience strategies specifically designed for older adults confronting the challenges posed by climate change. This project, funded by KONEKSI—a collaboration between the Australian (DFAT) and Indonesian governments—has yielded crucial insights into enhancing community support systems for ageing populations especially within marginalised communities.

Currently, Dr. Sari is engaged in **Designing a Framework for an Online Community Assistance Ecosystem** ([select here to learn more](#) about this project). This innovative project aims to improve access to health services for stroke survivors with residual disability and their caregivers in Indonesia, ensuring they receive the vital support they need. The initiative is also funded by KONEKSI, emphasising the importance of collaborative efforts in addressing health disparities.

In addition, she is part of a team who received a **Monash Incubator Grant** (collaboration between Monash Australia, Indonesia and Malaysia) for a project on **Culturally Appropriate Medication Management for Older People in the Indo-Pacific** ([select here to learn more](#) about this project). This vital work aims to generate new evidence from Indonesia and Malaysia to inform medication management policy and practice to improve health outcomes for older adults through culturally sensitive practices tailored to diverse communities.

Dr. Sari's dedication to advancing the well-being of older adults through innovative research exemplifies the mission of the RAIL Research Centre.

## 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](#)).

Want to know more about the White Paper? [Select here to access the White Paper](#)

RAIL established the consumer and community network called Friends of RAIL in 2021. Want to know more about Friends of RAIL or know someone in the community who would be interested in joining Friends of RAIL? [Select here for more information about the Friends of RAIL](#).

## Pets and People program media roadshow



Dr Em Bould (they/them), Senior Research Fellow with the Department of Occupational Therapy and the RAIL Research Centre at Monash University along with their retired show dog Barney, have recently attracted media attention with their Pets and People program.

This program explored the potential for shared interest in pets to help build connections between young and older adults to reduce loneliness and social isolation.

You can [select here to read the paper](#) and learn more about this program, or [select here to watch a short video summary of the paper](#).

Some of the recent media outputs include:

- [Select here to listen to the 'Pets and Loneliness' radio interview](#) with Dr Em Bould for Joy Ride
- [Select here to read the HelloCare feature story](#) about the Pets and People program
- [Select here to access the Herald Sun article](#) 'The simple 60-minute pet program helping aged care residents' (**article behind paywall**)

## Multi-purpose visit to Malaysia

Professor Keith Hill visited Kuala Lumpur in late May to undertake a mix of activities. These included:

- (1) Podcast with Professor Pei Lee Teh (researcher and collaborator at Monash Malaysia), a residential care manager / developer, and a local politician, on Ageing Well (the podcast will be available in a couple of months);
- (2) Two day planning meetings for International Association of Geriatrics and Gerontology (IAGG) Executive Committee, and IAGG 2028 Regional Conference (KL, Malaysia);
- (3) Visited former PhD student (Asmidawati Ashari, at Universiti Putra Malaysia) and provided a public talk on falls prevention and carers health; and meetings / presentation with their research team on falls clinics; and
- (4) Presented and led workshop sessions in IAGG Masterclass for young geriatricians, allied health and gerontologists).



## International occupational therapy academics at Monash University

The RAIL Independent Living Stream Team has been pleased to co-host two international occupational therapy academics recently, in conjunction with the Monash Occupational Therapy Department. The first is Associate Professor Hirofumi Nagayama from the Kanagawa University of Human Services in Japan, who is visiting for three months. You

can read more about Hirofumi and his work in our Member Profile in this eBulletin edition. The second is Professor Carolina Bottari from the University of Montreal. Carolina has an extensive track record of research in the field of traumatic brain injury (TBI), including over a decade of published work on a smart technology for cooking, called Cognitive Orthosis for coOKing (or COOK). The COOK technology has now been further developed for use to enable safety and participation in cooking by people with TBI and older adults who experience cognitive changes (e.g. from early stage dementia). More recently, Carolina's work has moved from TBI into the area of ageing and homelessness, further demonstrating the value of working at the intersection of rehabilitation, ageing and independent living research that we have also been harnessing in RAIL. [Select here](#) to read more about Carolina's work.



## New report by the Centre for Research Excellence in Disability and Health

Last month, the Centre for Research Excellence in Disability and Health released a new report titled "A comparison of the characteristics of people with disability in Australia according to whether they received National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) funding". The report was authored by Glenda Bishop, Anne Kavanach, Sue Onley, Nicholas Disney and Zoe Aitken from the University of Melbourne. The aim of the project was "to compare the characteristics of Australians citizens or residents with disability aged under 65 years who were NDIS participants with those who did not receive NDIS funding [and] comparisons were made according to age, sex, socio-economic characteristics, geography, type of disability, level of functioning and support needs" (p.3). The authors explained that the study used data from the linkage of the 2018 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC) and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), available in the Person Level Integrated Data Asset.

There were some important findings from this project, including the disparity in funding for people with disability who are not eligible for the NDIS, and the complex cross-sector coordination often required by people with disability both within and outside of the NDIS to get their needs met. There are also important implications of study fundings specific to

future planning of mainstream or 'foundation supports', which are summarised well on page 5.

[Select here](#) to access the report.

## Member and Partner contributions

We would love to showcase current research from our members and partners. We invite you to submit a short story (and relevant images) about any research you are working on that aligns with RAIL. Submissions are due by the 30th of each month to [spahc.rail@monash.edu](mailto:spahc.rail@monash.edu).

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](mailto: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](#)

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