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HEALTH CARE

## REHABILITATION, AGEING AND INDEPENDENT LIVING (RAIL) RESEARCH CENTRE

### Member eBulletin #4

#### A message from the Director



Welcome everyone to the New Year! We hope everyone has had a good break (in spite of the bushfires, hailstorms, and even some nice weather over the past couple of weeks in Melbourne!)

RAIL staff have had a particularly busy past 6 weeks with a number of large grants submitted and under review. We continue to achieve some successes, as described below. Congratulations to all involved in successful grants.

A number of the initiatives commenced in 2019 will continue for RAIL into 2020. These include these monthly e-bulletins (please keep sending information that you would like to promote or circulate to other RAIL members), and our monthly forums. We will have another round of strategic research grants, and have a number of other activities planned, including a formal launch of the Centre (mid year).

We are pleased to advise the [RAIL website](https://www.monash.edu/medicine/spahc/rail) (<https://www.monash.edu/medicine/spahc/rail>) is now live. Content on this website will continue to develop over the coming months.

We look forward to another great year ahead collaborating with our members.

Professor Keith Hill

## Staff news



We are pleased to announce our new Research Fellow, Dr Christina Ekegren.

Christina comes to RAIL with a background in physiotherapy and public health research. Since completing her PhD five years ago she has worked at the School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine as an NHMRC Early Career Fellow and Deputy Head of Pre-hospital, Emergency and Trauma Research. She has a strong focus on physical activity research, particularly in clinical populations, such as those who have experienced traumatic injury and older adults. She currently co-convenes the Australian Physiotherapy Association (APA) advisory group, Physiotherapists for Physical Activity.

After working as a dance physiotherapist in Melbourne for several years she moved to Vancouver, Canada where spent three years working and studying at the University of British Columbia. From 2008-2011 she was a Physiotherapy Lecturer at Brunel University in London, UK before returning to Australia to complete her PhD at Monash University. She is currently a registered physiotherapist, an Adjunct Lecturer in the Department of

Physiotherapy, Monash University, an Honorary Research Fellow at Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute and an Honorary Research Fellow of the Emergency and Trauma Centre, Alfred Health.

## Grant success

### *External grants involving RAIL staff:*

RAIL Rehabilitation Leader, Natasha Brusco was recently successful in being awarded two grants:



#### **Huntington's Victoria Ltd.**

***Peer support for the Huntington's community... by the Huntington's community, 'Huntington's community connect'*** - \$443,033.80

#### **Project description: Individual Capacity Building**

The "Huntington's community connect (HCC)" project will deliver a peer support web-based interface and a peer-led model to build capacity for people with Huntington's disease (HD). Activities include a gap analysis of access to peer support for people with HD, a trial of peer-led support groups, evaluation of the HCC peer support web-based interface and development of a model for sustainability.

#### **Limbs4Life Inc.**

***Limb Loss Empowerment Project*** - \$869,858.00

#### **Project description: Individual and Organisational Capacity Building**

The project will deliver support services to people living with limb loss and their families by developing an online and face-to-face peer support program. The project will also undertake governance training engage a media and communications consultant to develop a strategy to increase the organisation's profile and visibility and review technology systems.

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## ***Grants received by RAIL members:***

### **Australian Association of Gerontology Strategic Grant**

RAIL member, Dr Jacqui Allen (Monash University School of Nursing & Midwifery) and her team (Professor Trish Livingston, Professor Alison Hutchinson, Clinical Associate Professor Rhonda Brown, Associate Professor Michelle Lobchuk) were recently awarded an Australian Association of Gerontology Strategic Research Grant (Nov 2019) entitled: Supporting carers' navigation of older adults care transitions to community (\$29, 988.14).



Research question: What are informal carer roles and needs during the care transitions for older adults living with chronic illness in community aged care?

Methods: A Carer Advisory Group will be established, including informal carers of older adults and peak body representatives, to provide guidance to the study. The first phase of the study will involve telephone interviews with 25 informal carers and with 10 health practitioners providing transitional care to older adults. The interviews will enable a detailed understanding of the informal carer role, and the development of a survey. In the second study phase, informal carers of older adults will be invited to test the survey.

## Grant opportunities



The 2020 funding round is now open and offers four grants for up to \$7,000. The RM Gibson Research Fund is targeted at AAG members who are **early career researchers in the diverse fields related to ageing in Australia and the translation of the evidence base into policy and practice.**

AAG Research Trust has partnered with [Dementia Australia Research Foundation](#) to potentially fund one additional grant to the four awarded in this round.

The funding round opened on 28<sup>th</sup> January and closes 17<sup>th</sup> March.

RM Gibson Research Fund is a sub-fund of the [AAG Research Trust](#)

For more information regarding the RM Gibson Research Fund including previous awardees [please click here](#)

## New adjuncts for RAIL

Three researchers have been made RAIL adjuncts in recognition of the collaborative research they are undertaking, and collaborative grants being submitted. The adjuncts are:

### **Adjunct Associate Professor Pazit Levinger (National Ageing Research Institute)**

Associate Professor Levinger (B.Ed, PhD, and Accredited Exercise Physiologist) is a senior researcher at the National Ageing Research Institute and an Adjunct Associate Professor at the Rehabilitation, Ageing and Independent Living (RAIL) research centre.



A/P Levinger has over 12 years experience, skills and expertise in active ageing, physical activity and falls prevention, quantitative gait analysis and clinical biomechanics of different population groups, mainly older people at risk of falling. A/P Levinger's work has mainly focused on translational and implementation research in the community working closely with Local Governments and senior organisations and groups to improve community health and well-being. Current research focuses on the built environment, age friendly communities and active outdoor space for older people.

**Adjunct Senior Research Fellow Claudia Meyer  
(Bolton Clarke Research Institute)**

Dr Claudia Meyer is a Research Fellow at the Bolton Clarke Research Institute in Melbourne. Claudia combines her skills as an experienced physiotherapist with research expertise, particularly for older people and their carers. Her field of interest is implementing research evidence into practice and policy, underpinned by a health equity focus. Her PhD (conferred in 2016) explored the translation of falls prevention knowledge for people with dementia and their carers in the Australian community care context, and she is currently working on several dementia and falls-related projects through Bolton Clarke (a large not-for-profit aged care provider). Claudia is also very active with the Australian Association of Gerontology, being a current Board Director, a longstanding member of the Victorian Executive committee and past National President of the Student and Early Career Group. She also has an active role in the International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics (IAGG), being the current early career representative for the Asia-Oceania region.



**Adjunct Senior Research Fellow Elissa Burton  
(Curtin University)**

Dr Elissa Burton is a sport scientist at Curtin University's School of Physiotherapy & Exercise Science and an adjunct at Monash University (member of RAIL) and the University of Notre Dame (Australia). She was awarded an *NHMRC Investigator Grant* (2020-2024) which will focus on assisting people with mild cognitive impairment to improve their physical health, quality of life and reduce their risk of falling. She has conducted many studies working with older people receiving home care services as well as healthy older people living in the community. Her research concentrates on helping older people to live independently for as long as they choose through healthy strategies, particularly being more physically active.



## Events



**Presentation by Associate Professor Maureen Ashe**

On Wednesday 29th January RAIL co hosted with the Department of Physiotherapy a presentation by Associate Professor Maureen Ashe at Peninsula campus.

Maureen Ashe is an Associate Professor in the Department of Family Practice at the University of British Columbia, research scientist at the Centre for Hip Health and Mobility, physiotherapist, and Canada Research Chair in Community Mobility. She investigates older adults' recovery of physical

function after hospitalization, and engagement in life activities within the community setting. Her research program emphasizes the objective measurement of physical activity and sedentary behaviour patterns across different populations and testing interventions to change health behaviours. She also includes the role of the built and social environments to improve or maintain mobility in later life.

Her presentation was titled 'Reablement & Behaviour Change' and provided an overview of the history of reablement, a discussion about the difference between rehabilitation and reablement, insight into motivation, behaviour and Behaviour Change Techniques (with older adults) and concluded with a group conversation about goal setting.

A big thank you to Maureen for visiting our campus and providing an insightful presentation to our research staff.

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## **Member forums**

***The next RAIL member forum will be held:***

Title: Emerging technologies for independent living

Presenter/s: RAIL members and invited guests

Venue: Meeting Room C1.02, Building C, Peninsula campus

Date and time: 2.30pm - 3.30pm Thursday 27th February

RSVP: [Online](#) by 24/02 (zoom options will be available)

We are currently seeking interest from members to make a short presentation about their current research focusing on emerging technologies for independent living. The presentation format will be 5 x 5 (a 5 min presentation using up to 5 slides) and should address the following:

1. Researcher background
2. Research interest/s
3. Current project/s
4. Planned research
5. Research links to RAIL

If you are interested in this opportunity, please provide a brief overview of your research area (topic and 1 -2 sentences outlining focus) to [spahc.rail@monash.edu](mailto:spahc.rail@monash.edu) by **Monday 10th February**.

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**‘Healthy Ageing’ / ‘End of Life Care’ for people with drug use experiences (Feb 12, 2020)**

As part of a collaboration with the Department of Public Health and the Palliative Care Unit at La Trobe University we invite you to participate in the start of planning for a project that will look to develop knowledge and activities that can improve service delivery for older people with the lived experience of drug use – including alcohol, benzodiazepam, pharmacotherapy, heroin, amphetamines and cannabis.

In this session Professor Sarah Galvani, Dr Gemma Yarwood and Dr Lucy Webb from the Substance Use and Associated Behaviours Group at Manchester Metropolitan University will be outlining some of the work they have been doing in this area in the UK.

Wednesday 12, February, 2020 in the Board Room (20.02)

Latrobe University 360 Collins St., Level 20

9:30am -12:30pm (light lunch to follow)

During the session you will help to develop a plan of action that will be the start of an on-going program looking at achieving positive ageing for people with lived experience of drug use

RSVP to [p.higgs@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:p.higgs@latrobe.edu.au) if interested in attending – for those who cannot be there in person a zoom link MAY also be made available to dial in or video conference in.

## Upcoming conferences

- March 24 2020, Sydney – Dementia Australia National Symposium – Theme: Dementia care is quality care. Early bird extended to Feb 10. <https://www.dementia2020.org.au/>
- May 7-9 2020, Perth – The Australasian Society for the Study of Brain Impairment (ASSBI) 43rd Annual Brain Impairment Conference. Theme: Getting on with the business of living. <https://assbi.com.au/ASSBI-Conferences>
- May 27-29 2020, Melbourne – The Australian and New Zealand Society of Geriatric Medicine Annual Scientific Meeting. Theme: Vision for the future. Abstract submission open (closes February 2020). <http://www.anzsgmconference.org/>
- May 31 – 1 June, 2020, Adelaide – The NHMRC National Institute for Dementia Research (NNIDR) Australian Dementia Forum. Theme: Innovation, Discovery and Translation. Abstract submission open until Feb 14. <https://nnidr.eventsair.com/adf2020/>
- July 12 - 15, 2020. Australian & New Zealand Association for Health Professional Educators (ANZAHPE) 2020 Conference, hosted in Melbourne, <https://www.anzahpe.org/2020-conference>
- Latest NDIS-hosted events for Scheme participants, families and/or providers  
See <https://www.ndis.gov.au/news/events>
- Nov 17-20, 2020. Australian Association of Gerontology conference – Hobart. Theme: A climate for change in Ageing. Abstract submission opens Feb 17, closes April 27. <http://2020.aagconference.aag.asn.au/>
- Nov 29- 1 Dec 2020. Australian and New Zealand Falls Prevention Society conference – Auckland, NZ. Theme: Live stronger for longer. Abstract submission opens Feb 27, abstract submissions close May 29. <http://anzfpconference2020.co.nz/>

If you are aware of any other conferences that may be relevant to members of RAIL, please forward details (if possible, before the timing of closure of abstract submissions).

## Early and mid-career research support activities

Although the staffing level for RAIL at this point is small, we are keen to provide support for any early or mid career researcher that we can. We are happy to provide an external review perspective of grants you are preparing as one avenue of support. If you like to discuss possibly accessing this service, please email Cassie in the first instance ([spahc.rail@monash.edu](mailto:spahc.rail@monash.edu)).

## Member contributions

We would love to showcase current research from our members. 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)