



Member eBulletin #27

A message from the Director

It was very pleasing to hear Dr Em Bould present outcomes from their study titled: '*Dog Buddies*', an animal-assisted activity designed to address the need for evidence-based programs that create opportunity for people with cognitive disabilities to be more socially included in mainstream society, at the recent RAIL members and partners forum. This was the first completed study from the RAIL seeding grants (four awarded in 2020, two in 2021). It was an excellent presentation, and the project outcomes have been published in *Disability and Rehabilitation* ([doi: 10.1080/09638288.2022.2034993](https://doi.org/10.1080/09638288.2022.2034993) Online ahead of print). These are excellent outcomes for a small seeding grant. It is hope that Em and the team can successfully use these outcomes to support further successful applications and studies in this important area. Don't forget that the call for applications for the current round of RAIL seed grants is open - see details below.

RAIL ran (together with the National Centre for Healthy Ageing) another very successful forum and exhibition as part of the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) Melbourne Design Week on March 17th. Details and photos from the forum and Exhibition are shown below. Congratulations to Aislinn Lalor who

successfully submitted the competitive successful application to have this event as part of the NGV Melbourne Design Week, to Libby Callaway and Gabby Brand (School of Nursing and Midwifery) who have been driving our series of narrative portrait work, and Karine Fortin for excellent event organisation. Our next aim is to translate some of the narrative portraits into teaching materials for our students to gain better understanding of key aspects of rehabilitation, ageing and independent living.

It seems that hardly an e-bulletin goes by recently that we are not congratulating one or more staff on awards received. In recognition of the outstanding contributions of RAIL Rehabilitation Stream Lead Dr Natasha Brusco's research, she has recently been awarded the University's Advancing Women's Success Grant, which aims to support the career progression of early-mid career high potential academic women with primary carer responsibilities. Tarsh has hit the ground running with her plans to use this funding to gain valuable data to inform an upcoming Partnership Grant application (see below). Congratulations Tarsh!

I hope you enjoy reading about our activities and outcomes in the e-bulletin, and we welcome any contributions you consider will be of interest to others. Finally, if you have colleagues, or people new to Monash who would like to become a Member of RAIL, and thereby be on our email communications and e-bulletin distribution list, please complete the Member survey [online](#).

Stay safe and well.

Professor Keith Hill

Member profile



A/Prof Michele Callisaya is a senior research fellow in the Peninsula Clinical School, Monash University and Peninsula Health. Michele is also a physiotherapist who has worked in rehabilitation and aged care for over 20 years. Her prior work has highlighted the importance of the interplay between specific cognitive domains and gait impairments in increasing the risk of falls in older people as well as more recent work looking at the role of physiotherapy post a diagnosis of dementia.

She completed a PhD from the University of Tasmania and went on to successfully obtain an NHMRC Early Career Fellowship (2011-2015) and an NHMRC Boosting Dementia Research Leadership Fellowship (2017-2021). She sits on the Dementia Australia and Physiotherapy Research Foundation grant committees.

Her current projects include:

1. Examining the knowledge, confidence, attitudes and beliefs of physiotherapists in working with people with dementia
2. Understanding excellence in dementia care in relation to physiotherapy and developing the core capabilities required by physiotherapists working with people with dementia
3. Digital upper limb, graphomotor, gait and speech biomarkers of early cognitive impairment
4. Implementing virtual care for older people by improving telehealth and novel tablet based applications

If you would like to learn more about Michele's research you can listen to her recent interview with Clare Pickering from the Australian Physiotherapy Association: <https://australian.physio/home/podcast/michele-callisaya%E2%80%94all-good-balance>

RAIL & NCHA Melbourne Design Week 2022 Benefiting everyone: Good design features for healthy ageing

The RAIL Research Centre, together with the National Centre for Healthy Ageing, was pleased to host a 2022 [Melbourne Design Week](#) satellite event on Monash Peninsula Campus from 17 - 25 March 2022. This event was called "[Benefiting Everyone: Good Design Features for Healthy Ageing](#)" and aligned with the Melbourne Design Week theme of "[Design for Civic Good](#)". The event included a free public talk, as well as a week-long portrait exhibition hosted on the Peninsula Campus. This exhibition focused on good design features of objects, buildings, designs and services that make people feel part of a community across the lifespan, provoking conversations and engagement of a broad audience about ways we can together collaborate to create a better and healthier future for all. Invited speakers at the keynote event included the Chair of the [Centre for Universal Design Australia](#), Dr Jane Bringolf, and the Mayor of [Frankston City Council](#), Mayor Cr Nathan Conroy. There was also a presentation by the Head of Strategy at the [St Kilda Football Club](#), Andrew Dick, on the new [Healthy Futures Hub](#) at Seaford Football Ground, which staff from the Monash School of Primary and Allied Health Care have led collaboration on with other community partners. The narrative portrait exhibition was curated by Monash University School of Nursing and Midwifery [Associate Professor Gabrielle Brand](#), with photography by [Fred Kroh](#). If you would like to read more, this event was [written up in an article](#) published in The Senior.



Left to Right: Dr Aislinn Lalor, A/Prof Libby Callaway, Prof David Copolov AO, Mr Andrew Dick, Mayor Cr Nathan Conroy, Dr Jane Bringolf, Prof Keith Hill, Dr Natasha Brusco, Prof Velandai Srikanth, A/Prof Gabby Brand at the Melbourne Design Week satellite event on Monash Peninsula Campus



The public photographic exhibition on Good Design Features for Healthy Ageing

Member and Partner forum

Upcoming RAIL forum

The next RAIL forum titled *Falls prevention in the community - What's new?*, will be held via Zoom on Thursday 28 April, 1:00pm - 2:00pm, AEST.

Speakers include:

- **Professor Keith Hill**, Director of the Rehabilitation, Ageing and Independent Living (RAIL) Research Centre, Monash University
- **Professor Terry Haines**, Head of School of Primary and Allied Health Care, Monash University
- **Dr Morag Taylor**, Senior Postdoctoral Research Fellow at Neuroscience Research Australia, UNSW Sydney

- **Professor Anne Tiedemann**, University of Sydney Robinson Fellow and Lead of the Healthy Ageing research theme at the Institute for Musculoskeletal Health, The University of Sydney

The flyer with the details of each presentation will be circulated shortly. If you would like to register for the event now, please click [HERE](#).

Previous RAIL forum

In our most recent RAIL forum held on 24 March 2022, Dr Em Bould presented their work from their RAIL funded project '*Dog Buddies*', an animal-assisted activity designed to address the need for evidence-based programs that create opportunity for people with cognitive disabilities to be more socially included in mainstream society.

Em presented brilliantly the outcomes of their project with the inclusion of powerful videos as a way to relay data. Attendees were also invited to bring their dog and introduced them in the chat box which made the session very interactive.

Thank you to Em for a wonderful presentation!



Left: Em and Barney; Right: Knuckles, an Assistance Dog Australia graduate now working with a person with PTSD

2022 Advancing Women's Success Grant Award

The *Advancing Women's Success Grant* supports the career progression of early to mid-career high potential academic women with primary carer responsibilities and assists the university in fostering talent and progressing gender equity in senior roles within the academy

(<https://www.monash.edu/gender-equity/programs/aws-grants>).



This year, RAILs **Tarsh Brusco** was awarded this grant. For the last 15 years Tarsh has enjoyed balancing her part-time career with her parental role for her three children, in addition to other carer responsibilities. Tarsh reports that this grant is a “game changer” as it will allow her, together with her RAs, to complete essential pilot work for a NHMRC Partnership Project grant

application which will be submitted later in the year. The grant application will focus on scaling the Risk Assessment for moving Individuals SafEly (RAISE) program across the hospital and residential aged care settings. Tarsh feels that this grant shows the true values of Monash University in its quest to advance women's academic careers.

Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences Graduation



The RAIL Research Centre Independent Living Stream Lead, **A/Prof Libby Callaway**, was invited to deliver the [Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences Graduation speech](#) within the ceremony held at 11am on 23/3/22 at Monash Clayton Campus. Libby drew on key messages from a poem by Michael Leunig, called '[Get a Life](#)' to reflect on the use of research and education to 'rebuild a life after acquired brain injury'. With the permission of her colleague, Chris and his family, Libby shared his journey of recovery after brain injury. She discussed Chris' collaboration within various work with Libby and

her colleagues using co-design, and co-producing a range of outputs such as [online allied health and NDIS participant training resources](#) and [co-authored publications](#).

Libby discussed the impact Universities can have on people's lives through innovation. This included the example of Australian-first [smart technology-enabled units](#) built on the border of the Monash Peninsula Campus, which opened in 2015 and have grown collaborative research, work and education opportunities with tenants living in these units (all of whom have lived experience of disabilities).

Finally, Libby encouraged the new Monash graduates to use their careers to benefit others' lives - and their own - paraphrasing the words of Leunig's poem by asking - 'anyone can get a career, and anyone can use it, but who will dare to inhabit the thing and use it?'

RAIL paper of the month

Nurses sustain manual handling risk assessment behaviours six-months after a training program to move patients safely: a pre-post study

Helen L. Kugler, Nicholas F. Taylor, Leanne Boyd & **Natasha K. Brusco**

ABSTRACT

Purpose

To determine if a patient manual handling training program focused on dynamic manual handling risk assessment for staff and patient safety, together with the patient's need for physical rehabilitation, can be transferred and sustained in clinical practice.

Materials and methods

Using a pre-post design, nurses ($n = 72$) from acute and rehabilitation wards participated in a 4-hour training session teaching dynamic manual handling risk assessment to safely move patients. Clinical observations audits of patient transfers were conducted prior to, and at 1-month and 6-months post training. Surveys determined experiences of training. Nurse musculoskeletal injuries and patient falls were measured 6-months after training.

Results

Program patient handling skills were competently implemented 89% of the time 1-month following training and were sustained 6-months following training. There was no change in falls rates and staff injury rates were very low pre- and post-training. Training was well received and all nurses passed the competency assessment.

Conclusion

The patient handling training program taught nurses to better identify factors associated with risk to themselves and their patients and gave them improved skills to help patients move. Skills were incorporated safely into clinical practice and sustained at 6-months. It is uncertain whether training impacted musculoskeletal injuries.

Implications for rehabilitation

- A dynamic manual handling risk assessment program for safely transferring and moving patients balances staff safety with the patient's need for physical rehabilitation.
- Nurses can be taught risk assessment skills to better identify factors associated with risk to themselves and their patients that can be translated to clinical practice.
- Thorough risk assessment at the point of the nurse-patient interaction can enable a patient to move at their highest level of function thus providing patients with opportunities to progress their rehabilitation at every interaction.

Helen L. Kugler, Nicholas F. Taylor, Leanne Boyd & **Natasha K.**

Brusco (2022) Nurses sustain manual handling risk assessment behaviours six-months after a training program to move patients safely: a pre-post study, *Disability and Rehabilitation*, DOI: [10.1080/09638288.2022.2048908](https://doi.org/10.1080/09638288.2022.2048908)

Launch of a free online training resource for allied health students - 12pm AEST on 13/4/22 via Zoom

Please join staff from the Monash School of Primary and Allied Health Care, lived experience collaborators and community based allied health professionals and disability service providers at **12pm AEST on Wednesday 13/4/22** as we launch a free online training resource for allied health students undertaking professional practice placements in the field of disability, called My Professional Practice Space: for allied health students. To book your attendance at this launch, use [this form](#) or email libby.callaway@monash.edu

This resource has been developed as part of an [NDIS Jobs and Market Fund project](#) led by Associate Professor Libby Callaway (RAIL Independent Living Stream Lead), with Dr Em Bould, Ms Lisa Licciardi, Ms Karen Dixon, Dr Mong Lin Yu, Ms Kirsty Pope, and Prof Ellie Fossey from Monash Occupational Therapy, and Prof Prue Morgan and Ms Alison Francis Cracknell from Monash's Physiotherapy Department. In collaboration with NDIS participants employed on the project, as well as industry partners Able Australia, Yooralla, Osborn Sloan and Associates and Applied Communication Skills, this two year project built further on a [previous NDIS workforce codesign project](#) our team delivered. The new project has scaled up the Monash NDIS allied health student training program delivered in Specialist Disability Accommodation and Supported Independent Living settings to run across Victoria and Tasmania and extend into NDIS-funded lifestyle programs. Evaluation from the program implementation, and participant-led resources stemming from it, informed the design of a free Learning Management System called My Professional Practice

Space for allied health students. This Learning Management System is free for use by allied health educators, clinical supervisors, allied health students and other people interested in NDIS workforce development nationally.

Select the dark blue button if you are an allied health professional. Select the light green button if you are a person with disability and complex support needs, or family, friends or carers. Select the purple button if you are an allied health student.

Allied health
professionals
>>>



People with
disability and
complex
support needs,
friends, family
or carers >>>



My Professional
practice space
for allied health
students >>>



My Professional Practice Space for allied health students will be available for use nationally on 13/4/22, and will add to the suite of existing free resources available via www.myalliedhealthspace.org for allied health professionals and people with disability, their families, friends and other key supporters

Launch details

Date: 13/4/22

Time: 12pm AEST

Venue: via Zoom

To register, please click [HERE](#).

**Call for Abstracts - Australian Association of Gerontology
conference 2022**



Submit an Abstract

Submit an abstract for the **55th AAG Conference in Adelaide from 22 to 25 November**, with pre conference workshops on the 9 November.

Our 2022 Conference theme is *The Future of Ageing Well: Inspire; Motivate, Innovate* and we are delighted to confirm that **Professor Ngaire Kerse, The 2022 AAG Gary Andrews International Fellow** will be providing keynote address.

Submissions are now open for the 2022 AAG Conference and will close on 29th April 2022. [Click here to submit](#)

The 55th AAG Conference in Adelaide welcomes abstract submissions for Symposiums, Orals and Poster presentations from researchers, educators, aged care and health practitioners, policy makers, educators, students and those engaged in improving the experience of ageing for older people.



Key Dates

Abstract submissions

NOW OPEN

Abstract Submission Closes

29 April 2022

Notification to authors week

ending 10 June 2022

Preliminary Program

Released week ending

24 June 2022

All speakers to be

registered 29 July 2022

For more information about the 2022 AAG Conference, please visit: <https://aagconference.asn.au/>

To access the Abstract Guidelines and submit, please click [HERE](#).

RAIL Early to Mid Career Seed grant currently open

The 2022 round of RAIL seeding grants is currently open and **will close on Monday 9th May 2022**.

A total of \$45,000 is available for this round of RAIL EMCR research grants, with individual applications able to apply for up to \$15,000.

The objectives of this scheme are to:

- Support early-mid career researchers with high research potential to progress their research careers by funding high quality research projects and pilot research projects on a competitive basis

- Encourage cross disciplinary research collaboration
- Enhance the staff member's competitiveness in bidding for external research funds
- Provide experience in preparing a grant application for peer review
- Provide research funding for projects that are strategically aligned with RAIL's research priorities
- Provide an opportunity for research mentorship

Given RAIL's focus on building research on the Peninsula campus, projects need to include at least one researcher based at the Peninsula campus of Monash University.

Chief Investigators from the successful grants from the previous grant scheme are ineligible to apply as Chief Investigator in this round, but can be an Associate Investigator in this round.

To obtain a copy of the guidelines and application form please click [HERE](#).

RAIL RESEARCH PROJECTS - Research participants required

Live Up Research Project



LiveUp research – evaluating a digital suite of solutions aimed at improving functional abilities in older Australians

Building on UK research into compressing functional decline (LifeCurve), the Commonwealth Department of Health has funded research, conducted by the Rehabilitation Ageing and Independent Living (RAIL) Research Centre at Monash University, and Curtin University, into an exciting set of digital solutions developed by Independent Living Assessment (iLA), an initiative of Indigo

(Formerly Independent Living Centre WA).

This research is targeted at older people who live at home and are beginning to experience some functional difficulties, or who are keen to stay healthy and active.

RAIL researchers **Dr Natasha Layton**, **Dr Natasha Brusco** and **Professor Keith Hill** in partnership with Dr Elissa Burton of Curtin University, will be conducting the early implementation evaluation with participants from Victoria and from Western Australia.

The LiveUp website will be launched early February, at which time RAIL members are invited to view LiveUp and use the LifeCurve tool at <http://www.liveup.org.au>.

Participants from Frankston and the Mornington Peninsula region (Victoria) **who are over 65 (or over 55 for indigenous Australians), living at home and experiencing some functional difficulties are sought** – for further information please contact **Dr Natasha Layton** natasha.layton@monash.edu.

A home-based walking aid-training program for people with dementia or cognitive impairment and their carers

We are seeking people with dementia or cognitive impairment and those who care for them to participate in a 6-week walking aid-training program at home.

What are the eligibility criteria?

- are aged 65 years or older
- formally diagnosed with dementia, or have a cognitive impairment (assessed by a cognitive test, the researcher can assess this if you have not had one done recently), or if you receive a dementia supplement in your home care package.

- had at least one fall in the preceding 12 months, or report unsteadiness when walking or turning.
- are not already using a walking aid or if using a walking stick but would like to try out a more supportive walking aid e.g. a wheeled walker
- are willing to participate in a 6-week walking aid-training program.
- have a carer who is available to support and reinforce correct walking aid use.
- live in metropolitan Melbourne.

What will I receive?

- Free home visits and training by an experienced physiotherapist.
- Free walking aid if using one is safe for you.

Further information and enrolment:

Please contact Dr Angel Lee at Angel.Lee@monash.edu.

We are enrolling participants until 31st May 2022

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 would like to discuss possibly accessing this service, please email Karine in the first instance (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.