

Rehabilitation, Ageing and Independent Living (RAIL) Research Centre

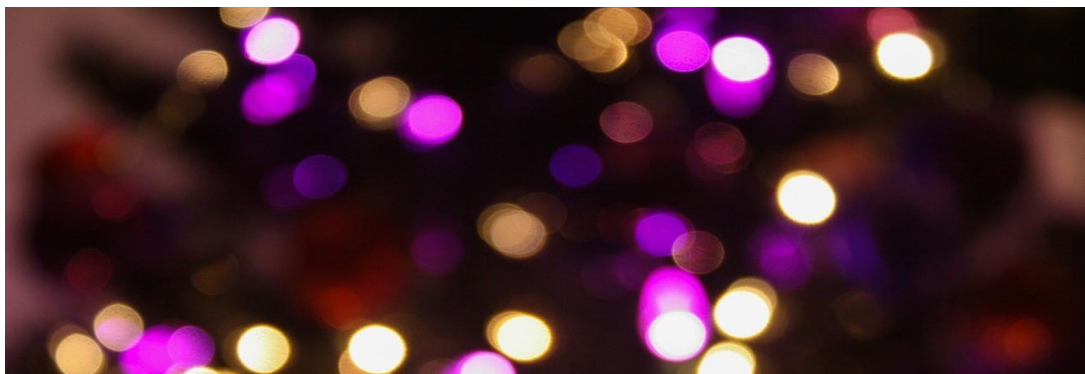
Member eBulletin #41 - December 2023

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

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A message from the Director



It is always timely as we come to the end of another 12 months to reflect on what has been an extremely busy and successful 12 months for RAIL as a centre, our staff, and our many collaborators and partners within and external to Monash university. RAIL continues to be a relatively small team, but a team that works exceptionally well together, has a strong interdisciplinary and collaborative focus, and does integrate our three areas of research focus (across rehabilitation, aging, and independent living / disability) very well.

The items in this e-bulletin will give you a good sense of the recent activities we have been engaged in. Of particular note, I am very pleased with a significant strengthening of our centre to centre collaboration with the Centre for Person Centred Research (CPCR) at Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand. In November, a number of our team visited the CPCR, where we ran a very successful joint forum that included showcasing a number of staff projects and PhD student work from both of our centres, there were multiple meetings to progress ideas on future collaborative research, and several staff also undertook other relevant meetings (e.g. with the Accident Compensation Corporation). I am confident that this intense period to bring our centre's staff together will result in some strong tangible outcomes in the coming year or two.

At the end of a very busy year, I take the opportunity on behalf of the RAIL team to wish everyone a happy and relaxing holiday period. Take time to spend with family and friends, and to recharge for what 2024 has ahead.

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



Dr Ravi Manohar is an MPhil student (on the pathway to PhD) at the School of Primary and Allied health care, Peninsula campus under the supervision of Professor Terry Haines and A/Prof Natasha Brusco. He also works as a Research Assistant in Primary Care Research under Prof Haines.

Dr. Manohar is an overseas-trained doctor and has a background MBBS, MS (General Surgery), and MBA in healthcare services management, and has also completed the Australian Medical Council's MCQ exam. He has over 8 years of clinical experience as a consultant hair transplant surgeon in India.

After migrating to Australia in 2020 as a permanent resident, during his study for Australian medical exams, he developed an interest in the research field. He is growing as a researcher with an interest in quality health services, healthy ageing (with a special interest in magnesium supplementation in ageing population), and health economics.

He is presently working on “Designing of hospital wards to efficiently minimize adverse health events in patients and staff”. Initially, he is involved in the umbrella review on “The role of the built environment on adverse patient and staff outcomes in hospital wards”. Dr Manohar has a rich Indian cultural background. Apart from work he enjoys cycling, playing table tennis, carrom, and cooking healthy and gluten-free low glycemic index Indian dishes.

RAIL Research Centre eForum

Previous RAIL eForum

In our last 2023 RAIL e-forum held on 23rd October, three of our PhD students, Zelalem Muluneh, Sara Whittaker and Doha Alhashmi presented on their PhD project and journey. It was wonderful to hear more about the three different projects and great to see the diversity, quality of presentations and great research impact.

Thank you to Zelalem, Sara and Doha for their excellent presentations and we are looking forward to hearing more about your projects as you progress further through your PhD journey.

Upcoming RAIL eForum

We are pleased to inform you that our first 2024 RAIL eForum, titled *Launch of the My Therapy Community of Practice* will be held on Thursday 15th February 2024, 12.00-1.00pm (AEDT). During this eForum, we will officially launch the new Community of Practice arising from the My Therapy clinical trial, which evaluated the impact of a self-directed therapy program within rehabilitation settings. Come along to this forum if you are interested in learning more about our free online training program, clinician mentoring program and suite of resources to help you implement the My Therapy program within your health service.

Speakers include:

- Associate Professor Natasha Brusco, RAIL Research Centre Rehabilitation Stream Lead and Lead Investigator of the My Therapy project
- Dr Christina Ekegren, Senior Research Fellow with the RAIL Research Centre and Project Manager of the My Therapy project
- Alicia Devlin, Co-lead, Community of Practice
- Emma Dorward, Co-lead, Community of Practice

More information will be circulated early in the New Year. If you would like to register now and save the date, please complete the registration below.

[Register here](#)

RAIL paper of the month

Ekegren CL, Clark-Ash M, **Callaway L**, **Hill KD**, Gabbe BJ, Kunstler B, Keeves J, Kimmel L, Reeder SC (2023). Perspectives of telehealth access and implementation in people recovering from serious transport injury, health care providers and compensation system staff during the COVID-19 pandemic in Australia. *Injury* 54(10)

Abstract

Introduction

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, few injury compensation schemes supported access to service-delivery via telehealth. The aim of this qualitative study was to explore the perspectives of people recovering from serious transport injury, health care providers, and senior staff of a transport injury compensation scheme, in relation to the uptake and implementation of telehealth during the COVID-19 pandemic, and its ongoing use.

Methods

Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with 35 participants, including 15 seriously injured patients, 16 health care providers and 4 compensation scheme staff. A thematic analysis was performed using a framework approach.

Results

Themes identified included the need to provide continuity of care via [telehealth](#) during the pandemic for patients recovering from injury, and the associated organisational and technical support needs. It was noted that some types of services worked well via telehealth, including psychology, while others did not, including physical assessments. The convenience of telehealth was highlighted, in relation to reduced travel. However, there were often safety fears relating to falls, and communication issues with injured people.

Conclusions

This research found that the majority of injured patients and health care providers had benefitted from the introduction of service delivery via telehealth during the pandemic for some types of services. Participants saw opportunities for continued benefit post-pandemic, particularly for improving equity of [access to health care](#) for people with barriers to mobility and travel.

RAIL awards and recognition

Australian Association of Gerontology Fellows

As a recognition for their service and achievements by the Australian Association of Gerontology (AAG), RAIL Team Members Dr Aislinn Lalor, Dr Angel Lee and Dr Sze-Ee Soh, and RAIL Executive committee member Associate Professor Helen Rawson from Monash Nursing & Midwifery were awarded as Australian Association of Gerontology Fellows during the recent AAG conference held on the Gold Coast on 14-17 Nov 2023. Other 2023 AAG Fellows include Partner of RAIL Prof Danny Hills from the Australian Primary Health Care Nurses Association (APNA), Dr Claudia Meyer (adjunct to RAIL / Monash) from Bolton Clarke and A/Prof Frances Batchelor from NARI along with colleague Dr Anita Goh from NARI. Congratulations to everyone for their award!



Eastern Health Research Forum



Associate Professor Natasha Brusco and her My Therapy team was awarded best short oral presentation at the recent Eastern Health Research Forum. Congratulations to Tarsh and her team for this great recognition of the work done on the My Therapy project!

RAIL team member baby news

We are thrilled to share with you that our PhD student Louise Puli (supervised by Dr Christina Ekegren, Dr Natasha Layton and Associate Professor Libby Callaway) recently welcomed a beautiful little girl named Giselle Grace. Congratulations to the parents! We wish them happiness, love and plenty of sleep! The team cannot wait to meet Giselle Grace!

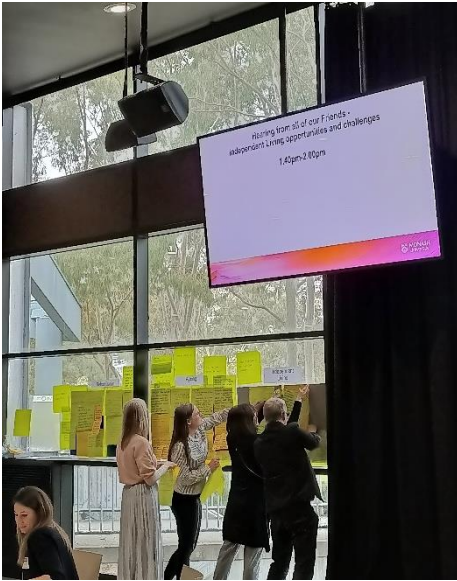


Reflection from the recent Launch of Friends of RAIL



On Thursday 2nd of November, 2023, Professor Terry Haines (Head of the School of Primary and Allied Health Care at Monash University) led our official Launch of the Friends of RAIL.

We were very fortunate to have presentations of key challenges and opportunities identified by Vincent Rovtar, Coral Keren and Chris Le Cerf, across our three streams of RAIL, being Rehabilitation, Ageing and Independent Living. Our three Stream Leads also responded briefly to each of our Friends. Following a lovely lunch where new and existing Friends of RAIL were able to connect, the afternoon session involved interactive group discussions about challenges and opportunities across rehabilitation, ageing and independent living – building on the key points of Vince, Coral and Chris. Each table made notes on large post-it notes and the key points of discussion are currently being typed up and synthesised into a document called a White Paper. This document will help provide a base to which our RAIL team can draw on, but also assist others in identifying some of the challenges and opportunities that are faced by individuals across ageing, disability and independent living, and rehabilitation.



We very much thank all those who were involved on the day and look forward to sharing the final White Paper from this day with you all in 2024.

RAIL Research Centre visits the Centre for Person-Centered Research (PCR) at Auckland University of Technology (AUT), New Zealand

This visit was the culmination of 3 years of engagement by RAIL with Professor Nicola Kayes, Co-Director of the AUT Centre for Person-Centred Research and independent chair of the RAIL External Advisory Committee.

Five RAIL staff including A/Prof Libby Callaway, Dr Christina Ekegren, Dr Aislinn Lalor, and Dr Natasha Layton as well as international post doctoral fellow Dr Raphaelle Guerbaai landed in humid Auckland on Sunday 19th November and were greeted by a lovely hamper filled with exquisite New Zealand produce upon our arrival at our accommodation. This thoughtful gesture of warm hospitality set the tone for an entire week of engaging exchanges and unforgettable experiences.



connected through a common ancestor.

Particularly poignant for us as visitors to Aotearoa was the foregrounding of Te reo Māori (the Māori language) throughout all interactions and research endeavours. This included *Kia ora* (meaning *welcome*), the infusion of Te reo Māori in all engagements and the way this opened up exploration of concepts such as *whānau* for which English does not have an equivalent term, but refers in Te reo Māori to the collective of people

The Centre for Person-Centered Research is notable for its qualitative research and use of critical epistemologies to rethink inclusion, engagement, and rehabilitation. Our team had an unforgettable experience being welcomed to the Te Herenga Waka o Orewa Marae and taking part in a phase of Te Tiriti building underway between the Centre for Person-Centered Research and the Marae. The team took part in a *Pepeha* which is a way of introducing yourself in Te reo Māori. It tells others who you are by sharing your connections with people and places that are important to you. This was a moving exercise for many of us.



A Joint Symposium between Monash University and AUT 'Connecting Communities Together' focused on mobilising knowledge across health, rehabilitation, and disability. Held at the beautiful city campus, a mix of keynotes, a postgraduate research datablitz, and panel discussions covered aspects of **working at the interface in health and rehabilitation; living well in the community; and designing for meaningful research impact.** An active

in-person and online audience attended this session, and many links were made between RAIL researchers and attendees from across health, disability, funding, and advocacy sectors as well as researchers and students from other universities who attended.

Program link <https://cpcr.aut.ac.nz/connecting-communities-together>



Numerous other meetings, working sessions, and site visits occurred between the RAIL and AUT-PCR teams over the week. Highlights included a session with the AUT Good Health Design team as part of the School of Art & Design at AUT which led to a discussion about securing funding for design work, presentations on injury-related research to the Accident Compensation Corporation of New-Zealand, and four site visits across Auckland to assistive technology centres run by the Independent Living Charitable Trust and AccessAble, including a visit to their large-scale assistive technology repair and reissuing centre.

The RAIL team has returned energised and full of plans for collaborations with our NZ colleagues within and beyond the AUT community. We are grateful both for the opportunity to spend time together and to explore research and practice deeply with our NZ colleagues. Such opportunities for thinking and exploration are rare and deeply valued.



Collaborating with the Polio Community

Dr Natasha Layton of RAIL is a longstanding voluntary member of the [Clinical Advisory Group](#) of Polio Australia. To mark World Polio Day on October 25th this year, Natasha gave a keynote address to around 60 polio survivors in Hastings, Victoria. The requested topic, **What have Human Rights got to do with Assistive Technology**, generated a lot of discussion about the progressive realisation of rights and the changing policy and funding context over a lifetime for people with polio.



[Image description: Assistant Director with the Australian Department of Health, Dion Abel, Dr Natasha Layton (RAIL Research Centre) and Hastings MP Paul Mercurio]

This has led to an invitation to speak further on the topic at Post Polio Victoria's 2023 Annual General Meeting in December. Natasha and Senior Policy Advisor from Australian Federation of Disability Organisations, Lauren Henley, will together present on: **Working towards equity in assistive technology funding in Australia: the situation for polio survivors**. The basis for this talk will be the RAIL Seed grant funded [AT Equity Studies](#) which provided important evidence about current inequities across 109 different government funding schemes for assistive technology and home modifications.

Note: Post Polio Victoria (PPV) has won first prize in the Focus on Ability™ annual International Short Film Festival challenges filmmakers to create a short film that celebrates the achievements and abilities of people with disability.

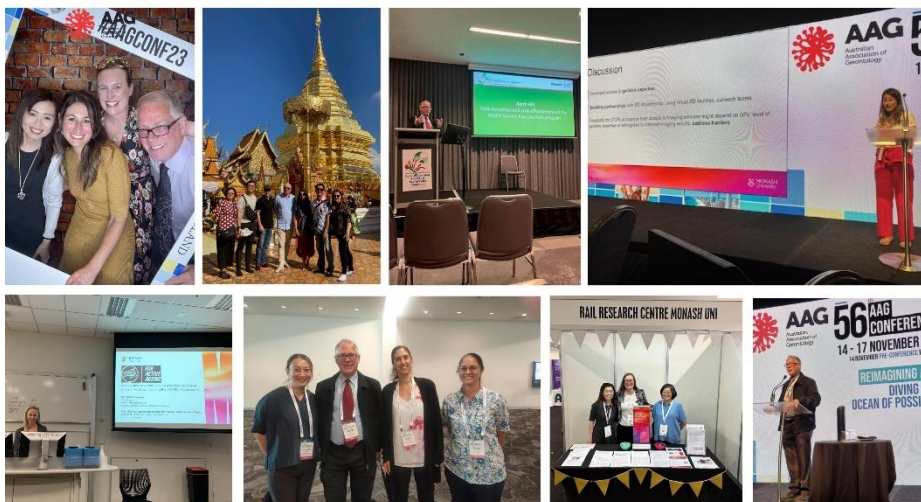
[Click here to view the Post Polio Victoria 5-min documentary](#)

RAIL's conference participation and attendance

The RAIL team has been very busy over the past 2 months with many team members presenting at multiple conferences. Some of the conferences include:

- **The Australian Physiotherapy Association (APA) Conference | IGNITE 2023** held in Brisbane on 5-7 October. Professor Keith Hill was an invited speaker (*Challenges, solutions and successes of physiotherapy for people with dementia and their carers*), and other staff presentations included Associate Professor Natasha Brusco, Dr Christina Ekegren, and PhD student Sara Whittaker (*symposium on the My Therapy project*), Dr Christina Ekegren also presented on *Can a new ward environment and intensive allied health staffing model enhance therapeutic opportunities in trauma care?* and Dr Sze-Ee Soh had two presentations (*Feasibility and acceptability of a falls prevention e-learning program for physiotherapists* and *Adherence to exercise programs in community-dwelling older adults following a hip fracture: a systematic review*).
- **The Australian Association of Gerontology (AAG) Conference 2023** held on the Gold Coast on 14-17 November. Dr Aislinn Lalor and Professor Keith Hill gave oral presentations on qualitative and co-design research on the improving health and wellbeing of older carers of older people (with a further presentation on the qualitative components of this RAIL project by Associate Professor Susan Slatyer from Murdoch University). Dr Raphaëlle-Ashley Guerbaai also presented results from her PhD studies, that are informing her current research with RAIL. As an AAG Collaborating Research Centre, RAIL also had an exhibition booth promoting our research.
- **The Australia and New Zealand Falls Prevention Society and World Falls Congress 2023 Joint Conference** held in Perth on 26-28 November. Professor Keith Hill provided an oral presentation *Falls outcomes and cost effectiveness of Seniors Exercise Parks*, Dr Sze-Ee Soh co-presented a pre-conference workshop on *Exercise to reduce falls risk in older people* (co-led with Mel Farlie from the Physiotherapy Dept), and gave an oral presentation on *Current physiotherapy practice around falls prevention in people with breast cancer*.
- Associate Professor Natasha Brusco, Rehabilitation Stream Lead, was invited to present as a keynote speaker on the *Quality of Life: Socio-economic Impact for Rehabilitation* at the **13th Pan-Pacific conference on rehabilitation: Health & Well-being Beyond the Era of New Normal** in Chiangmai, Thailand on 23-24 November 2023.
- Dr Christina Ekegren was invited to present on physical activity as a vital sign in hospital settings at the **Delirium conference, Waitemata Health in Auckland** on 20 November 2023 and on this project as well as the Exercise Right for Active Ageing project at the **Asia Pacific Society of Physical Activity Conference 2023** in Wellington, NZ on 27-28 November.

Below are a few photos of the team members at some of the conferences listed above. Congratulations to everyone for the multiple presentations!



Free dementia rehabilitation e-course and community of practice are available in 2024!



The focus of the course is to raise awareness and provide strong evidence for the need and provision of rehabilitation as part of post-diagnostic care for all people with dementia of any age, and their care partners. Interventions target cognitive, psychological, physical and social aspects of functioning to help maintain independence, well-being, and be engaged in a meaningful life as long as possible (World

Health Organisation 2023).

The free course on dementia rehabilitation is available to doctors, allied health professionals, nurses, case managers and support coordinators of NDIS and Aged Care services who work with community-dwelling older adults in the Eastern and South Eastern parts of Melbourne. You will receive a certificate of attendance to claim for CPD hours.

This course is part of the "INCLUDE" study funded by the Australian Government's MRFF fund.

For more details or to participate, please email Dr Angel Lee (Monash University) ASAP, no later than 31/12/2023. Email: angel.lee@monash.edu.

Workers' Voice on ABC Conversation Hour

The Chief Investigator of a new ARC Discovery Grant Project, Professor Alex Collie, was joined by the Friends of RAIL Consumer and Community Representative, Grainne Cruickshank, and two other people with lived experience of Workers' Compensation Schemes on the ABC Conversation Hour with Richelle Hunt last week. To listen to this contribution on demand, go

to: <https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/theconversationhour/the-conversation-hour/103118214>. To learn more about the ARC Discovery Grant Project, called Workers' Voice, you can read [this article](#) or visit the project website via <https://workersvoice.com.au/>

People with lived experience of workers' compensation, or their families or friends, may wish to share their perspectives on Workers' Compensation via a brief survey on the Workers' Voice website, which can be accessed via <https://workersvoice.com.au/workers-voice-survey/> There is also the option to nominate to share your Workers' Compensation story - for details, go to <https://workersvoice.com.au/tell-us-your-story/> People can also ask questions of the research group via <https://workersvoice.com.au/ask-us-a-question/>

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.

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.

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

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spahc.rail@monash.edu

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