



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

Friends of RAIL eBulletin – April 2026

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)



Welcome to the April edition of the Friends of RAIL eBulletin for 2026!

It's wonderful to stay connected with our growing community of members, partners and contributors who share an interest in rehabilitation, ageing and independent living.

In this edition, we highlight some exciting research underway, including innovative work to improve hospital safety and new projects focused on assistive technology for people living with motor neurone disease. We also share updates on our 2026 activities (watch this space!), community programs like George's Gymnastics, and opportunities for you to get involved in research and events.

As always, we value your perspectives and contributions. Thank you for being part of Friends of RAIL— we hope you find this edition informative and engaging.

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



Here we are four months into 2026, for me what a beautiful summer we had. I had visitors from Perth and Scotland for nearly six weeks, so I have been a tour guide and tourist in my own city and loved every minute. So much to see and experience in Melbourne.

I made time last year to visit the Healthy Futures Hub in Seaford. What a great place, offering so many services all under one roof, a great initiative and partnership.

<https://www.healthyfutureshub.com.au/about>

While I was there having one of their tasty sausage rolls, I picked up a brochure on an organisation called Solve. After doing some research, I have found that it is called Freedom Solutions Australia. They started as TADVIC in 1975, which was Technical Aid to the Disabled, and they now design and build customised assistive technology equipment. I remember them helping Peter to be able to use his SLR camera with his left hand only (very difficult), and they made it mountable to Peter's tray on his wheelchair, mostly by using a tripod Peter had. That would have been in the late 1980s. The modifications made it possible for Peter to enjoy one of his pre-injury hobbies. I know of another project they did work on in my street that gave back independence to a young man who used a powered wheelchair. Nice to see they are still making a difference in people's lives 50 years on.



[Image by [Renan Brun](#) from [Pixabay](#)]

Friends of RAIL 2026 activities

Watch
this
space

Building on our 2025 Q&A with Rev. Tim Costello AO and an upcoming 2026 RAIL eForum on participatory research methods, we're planning a series of activities for Friends of RAIL this year. This will include an in-person session where our Friends can engage in creative methods such as body mapping or Photovoice, followed by an online session towards the end of the year to share reflections and experiences. Keep an eye out for upcoming dates and details on how to get involved.

New research to improve hospital safety: Smart Ward - PREDICT



Predicting Risk and Early Deterioration through Intelligent Continuous monitoring

A new 3.5-year research project, Smart Ward - PREDICT, is underway to improve safety for older adults during hospital stays. Led by Associate Professor Christina Ekegren and supported by a \$1.4M NHMRC Ideas Grant, the study focuses on using non-invasive technology to better monitor patient wellbeing.

One of the key goals of the project is to track patient movement without the use of cameras or wearable devices, which can often be intrusive or uncomfortable. Instead, the team is using radar and Bluetooth sensors to passively monitor activity.

By integrating this movement data with electronic health records through the National Centre for Healthy Ageing (NCHA), the project aims to identify subtle changes in behaviour. Researchers will work with expert panels to train computer systems to recognise early warning signs of common hospital complications, including falls, delirium and pressure injuries.

The ultimate goal of the project is to shift hospital care from being reactive to proactive. By alerting staff to potential risks before an incident occurs, the technology can help reduce the workload for clinicians and, most importantly, create a safer environment for patients.

The MND and Assistive Technology Evidence (MATE) Research Program: Lifetime costs and outcomes of equipment for people with MND

RAIL Research Centre were recently awarded a Fight MND Grant to research the assistive technology (AT) needs of people with MND (motor neurone disease).

Associate Professor Natasha Layton leads a multi-interest holder team including:

- RAIL researchers, including Associate Professor Tarsh Brusco and Associate Professor Libby Callaway, Dr Em Bould and Dr Sandra Hakim
- Partners MND Victoria and MND NSW
- An experience-based co-design panel including people living with or affected by MND and expert clinicians.

Using **data** from MND Victoria and MND NSW Loan Libraries, the project will provide evidence as to **what** AT to provide, **when** to provide it, and the **best way** to provide it so people with MND have the best quality of life possible. Knowledge-translation strategies will be used to inform policy, guide AT funding investment, and offer practical guidance to the MND community.



[Select here](#) to learn more about Fight MND and view the other grant recipients/projects.

[Illustration by [Simon Kneebone](#)]

George's Gymnastic Program 2026

For the fifth consecutive year, children from the partnering Victorian Special Schools will take part in the [George's Gymnastic Program](#) - a 5-week inclusive gymnastics program for primary school children with a disability (aged 5-13). The program was established in 2022 through a collaboration between the RAIL Research Centre, Waverley Gymnastics Centre, and Vermont South Special School and is fully funded by the [Waverley Gymnastics Centre](#).

The program adopts a 'no barriers' approach to gymnastics, is delivered annually in Term 2 (April to June), and is supported by Monash University physiotherapy and medical students. In 2026, George's Gymnastics Program will welcome over 200 children from eight Victorian Special Schools: Vermont South Special School, Bayside Special Developmental School, Burwood East Special Developmental School, Eastern Ranges School, Belmore School, Endeavour Hills Specialist School, Glenallen School and Emerson School.



Associate Professor Tarsh Brusco and her son George (the program's namesake).

World Day for Assistive Technology on 4 June 2026

A promotional banner for World Day for Assistive Technology. On the left, there is a photograph of three children standing outdoors. The child in the middle is wearing a prosthetic leg. The banner has a dark blue background with white text. The main text reads 'Assistive technology transforms lives.' Below this, it says 'We're proud to support' followed by a yellow button with '#WorldATDay' and a white arrow pointing to the right. At the bottom right, it says 'Unlôck The Everyday' in white text. The AITSO logo is visible in the bottom right corner of the photo.

Over 2.5 billion people need at least one form of assistive product - and access to it is a human right.

But only 10% of people in Low Income Countries can access the AT they need. What can be done?

- [Select here](#) to learn about global actions for AT
- [Select here](#) to visit the 'Unlock the Everyday' site

RAIL team media outputs

Check out the latest media outputs involving the RAIL team:

- Associate Professor Libby Callaway spoke to ABC Radio about the Federal Government's NDIS reforms and wrote a commentary in *The Conversation* with Associate Professor Lloyd Walker.
 - [Select here](#) to read the commentary.
 - [Select here](#) to listen to the radio interview on ABC North and West regional South Australia (SA).
 - [Select here](#) to listen to the radio interview on ABC South East SA.
- Associate Professor Tash Layton was invited to participate in an interview for an article published in The Guardian. [Select here](#) to read the article titled “**Prosthetics**

aren't made for people like us': the brothers creating innovative artificial limbs for Africans".

Top Tip from the RAIL team

Top Tips



Knowing My Human Rights

Australia is a signatory to many international human rights treaties. The [Australian Human Rights Commission 'know your human rights' page](#) lists 12 rights that apply to individuals.

An important right is the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. [Select here](#) to see how Australia plans to progressively realise these rights, and how we as individuals can contribute – informing the government about whether our rights to access, to independent living and to healthcare, are 'realised, or not yet realised'.

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

Participants sought: Study on mental health services after minor to moderate motor vehicle crash injury

Monash University researchers from the School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine are conducting a study on mental health service use and are looking for research participants who have used mental health services after sustaining a minor to moderate motor vehicle crash (MVC) injury to be involved in a 45–60-minute conversation with a researcher.

[Select here](#) or scan the QR in the flyer below to express your interest.



Help improve mental health services after a motor vehicle crash

About the study

Your experience with mental health services after a crash matters.

We're conducting a study at Monash University to better understand how people access and experience mental health services after minor to moderate motor vehicle crash injuries.

Who do we need?

People who:

- Experienced injuries such as whiplash, soft-tissue injury, sprains, or bruising after a motor vehicle crash within the last five years; and
- Have accessed mental health services to support recovery with their injury (e.g., psychologist, psychiatrist, GP mental health plan).

What's involved?

A one time, 45 - 60 minute conversation with a researcher from Monash University, conducted over Zoom or phone.

Participation is completely voluntary and confidential.

Why?

We want to learn about your experience using mental health services after your injury.

Share what helped, what didn't, and what could be improved to better support recovery. Your story could help someone else in your position in the future.

Interested? Get in touch!

Contact the Monash University Research Team to express interest by scanning the QR code on the right, emailing hwlg-injurystudy@monash.edu, or calling (03) 9903 0660.

This project is approved by the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (Project ID: 50050)



Other news and resources



Get Active Victoria

“Get Active Victoria is a free government initiative dedicated to supporting Victorians to live a more active and healthy life.”

[Select here](#) to visit the Get Active Victoria website where you can find useful ideas for getting active, information about parks and outdoor recreational facilities, etc.



Aged care AI boom

ABC News recent article released regarding Australia being on the verge of an aged care AI (artificial intelligence) boom. [Select here](#) to read the article.

What are our Friends' thoughts about this article?

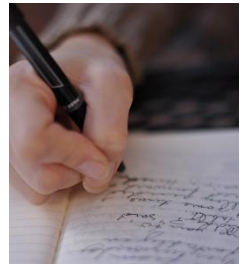


Australian Disability Strategy 2nd Implementation Report

[Select here](#) to access Australia's Disability Strategy - 2nd implementation report.

Friends contribution and feedback

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



Finally, 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

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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To see how we handle your personal information, please refer to our [Data Protection and Privacy Procedure](#) and the relevant Data Protection and Privacy Collection Statement that applies to your interaction with us, available [here](#) or contact dataprotectionofficer@monash.edu

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