



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

## Friends of RAIL eBulletin – December 2025

**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)**



Dear Friends of RAIL,

Firstly, as we approach what is usually a season of reflection, celebration, and joy, many of us preparing for the end-of-year holidays are instead grieving the tragic loss of innocent lives following the antisemitic terror attack that targeted Australia's Jewish community in Bondi on Sunday. I would like to express our deepest sympathies to those

who have suffered such heartbreaking loss, and we stand in solidarity with the injured and all who are mourning.

2025 has been an incredible year for RAIL, and we are once again very grateful to our Friends of RAIL who have contributed to this success - whether providing feedback from the consumer perspective and lived experience perspective on research projects, through the contribution to the Friends of RAIL White Paper, to attending and supporting our e-forums and events. We truly appreciate all of our Friends' connections and contributions!

We were honoured to end this year with our online event with Reverend Tim Costello – and fabulously facilitating the Q+A event was Grainne and Libby. Thank you to all that attended. Please note that if you were not able to attend this session, we will be providing more details from this session in the New Year.



*Image by rawpixel.com on [Freepik](https://www.freepik.com)*

We hope you enjoy this final e-bulletin for 2025 and we look forward to connecting with you again in 2026. I wish you all a safe holiday season.

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



Welcome to our last eBulletin for 2025, I know we say it every year but how fast the year goes. I thoroughly enjoyed the interview with Reverend Tim Costello, he is amazing isn't he? The term living legend is very apt.

I don't usually write about what is sad or hard, I try to be positive and helpful but I know this time of year is very hard for many. I remember trying to be a part of everything and have Peter (my husband, who had a very severe disability) be a part of all the festivities and every year being completely worn out.

One of my saving graces is that I am so organised (I have a list for my lists!). Peter was very social, so I tried to have him involved in everything. I know that I did have to learn to

say no eventually and realise I couldn't do it all. We were lucky we did have an energetic support team behind us, family and people who cared.

Now that I don't have Peter, I miss some of those times. It is a very difficult time to get through. I know I am lucky, I am very able to talk about Peter, so that helped my grieving, and now it helps sharing those wonderful memories. Last week I went to an occasion held by a professional organisation we used, and they spoke of Peter in their opening speech, and although it was sad and quite emotional for me, it was very touching to hear him being remembered so fondly six years after his passing.

Even yesterday, I went with my sister-in-law (Peter's sister) to experience the new city rail network; it was fun seeing all five new stations and working out where and when we were supposed to be. We found ourselves talking about Peter all the time because of how accessible it all was and how he would have loved it. We laughed when we saw the lift sitting on St Kilda Road for ANZAC Station. For me, talking about him and sharing memories is sad, but it helps me get through what is a very difficult time. A friend of mine has different ways that she gets through the loss of her daughter. She has started new traditions for her hardest days. We do a toast to those who cannot be with us anymore at the start of our Christmas lunch. Maybe remembering, sharing memories, being kind to yourself and being with people that care.

My very best wishes for the festive season.

PS My top tip is to take yourself off to experience the five new stations on the new city rail network if you're in Melbourne. It was a fun day out with my sister-in-law. We booked lunch within walking distance from one of the stations. We had a 20 minute or so walk around each area, very nice to see somewhere you wouldn't normally visit.



Image designed by [Freepik](#)

## RAIL team member introduction



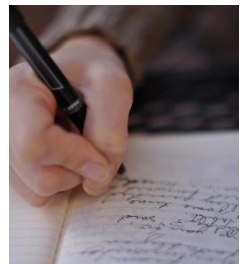
Hello everyone, my name is Lloyd Walker, and I've recently joined the RAIL Team, working with A/Prof Libby Callaway. I was born with a combination of impairments, some visible and some hidden, leading to disability that has changed over time. As a teenager, I was offered some experimental treatments, but I chose to use assistive technology (AT) instead. Some of my technology is implanted, some external. This experience led me to become a rehabilitation engineer, earning degrees in Brisbane and Glasgow, Scotland.

I've worked in tropical regions to big cities, in teaching, research, clinical, and design roles. For the past 12 years, I've focused on assistive technology policy, both in Australia (with the NDIS) and internationally (with the World Health Organisation and International Organization for Standardisation).

I work part-time with the team, contributing to projects to inform the NDIS Evidence Advisory Sub-Committees, a new 6-unit Master's level subject on AT that Natasha Layton is spearheading and other emerging opportunities. I'm now staying fit, regularly kayaking on the Sunshine Coast waterways, and joining in wheelchair basketball.

## Friend 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](mailto: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](mailto:spahc.rail@monash.edu) or call 03 9904 4557 to speak to Karine about registering.

## Friends of RAIL end of year celebration



On 24th November, we had the pleasure of being joined by guest speaker Reverend Tim Costello AO for our Friends of RAIL end of year celebration event. Tim offered an honest and open reflection on a broad range of topics related to kindness and contribution in a question and answer session with our Lead Friend of RAIL, Grainne Cruickshank, and RAIL Deputy Director and Independent Living Stream Lead Associate Professor Libby Callaway.

*Image by starline on [Freepik](#)*

A summary of the key messages from the interview with Rev Costello will be made available in a subsequent Friends eBulletin for those of you who may be interested. Our short plain language captioned video summarising the [Friends of RAIL White Paper](#) that was launched at the beginning of the event will also be posted on our RAIL website in the new year.

Thank you to Rev Costello for his wonderful contribution and to all of our Friends for the kindness and continuous support to RAIL!

Finally, if you have any suggestions or a topic or theme for our next Friends event in 2026, please don't hesitate to email us at [spahc.rail@monash.edu](mailto:spahc.rail@monash.edu) or call Karine on 03 9904 4557.

### **Future Conversations podcast "Ageing in Malaysia: Addressing Challenges and Embracing Opportunities"**

In May 2025, RAIL researcher and former inaugural Director Professor Keith Hill travelled to Malaysia to undertake a range of collaborative activities, including a podcast episode of the Future Conversations hosted by Monash University Malaysia titled "Ageing in Malaysia: Addressing Challenges and Embracing Opportunities".

[Select here](#) to learn more about this Future Conversations episode, and [select here](#) to watch the video.



### **New resource – Staying Active with Dementia booklet**

The Staying Active with Dementia booklet is a guide developed for people living with dementia and their families, friends and/or key supporters. Co-designed by Monash University researchers and lived experience experts, this new resource provides information, key considerations and useful contact details in relation to physical activity and dementia. The evidence-based booklet is an output connected to the Changing the Focus Program – a project lead by researchers from the RAIL Research Centre that uses a shared decision support tool to facilitate collaborative discussions between a research physiotherapist, a person living with dementia and their care partner. Such discussions take place during initial meetings to enable tailored selection of physical activity options. Key aspects of the Changing the Focus program have been selected and provided in the booklet to facilitate access to the information for people outside the program.

[Select here](#) to learn more about this project funded through the National Centre for Healthy Ageing Living Labs program with support from the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care, and select the image below to access the booklet.

## Staying Active with Dementia

A guide for people living with dementia and their families, friends and/or key supporters



Image above: A group of people participating in a seated strength program.

National Centre  
for Healthy Ageing

A partnership between  
MONASH  
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Health

### RAIL Team member appointed to NDIS Evidence Advisory Committee

Independent Living Stream Lead and Deputy Director of RAIL, [A/Prof Libby Callaway](#), was recently appointed by the Department of Health Disability and Ageing, to the NDIS Evidence Advisory Committee (EAC) Assistive Technology and Capital subcommittee, whilst [Professor Helen Bourke-Taylor](#) from the Monash University Department of Occupational Therapy was appointed to the Capacity Building and Therapies subcommittee of the EAC.

The EAC is an outcome of the NDIS review and both committee and subcommittee members will review and assess evidence about disability supports. The EAC will make recommendations to the Minister of the NDIS on the safety, suitability and value of supports for NDIS funding.

[Select here](#) to read more on the NDIS Evidence Advisory Committee, sub-committees and for a full member list.

Congratulations to Libby, Helen and all other members who have been appointed to the EAC.

Note that Monash University is proud to be one of the expert research teams contracted to conduct assessment reports for review by the NDIS's Evidence Advisory Committee. This work will include a systematic review of the effectiveness, safety and economic impact of capacity building disability supports.

## Top Tip from the RAIL team

### Top Tips



**Did you know that the Australian Government has released design guidelines and principles for residential aged care?**

As part of the 2021 Aged Care Royal Commission final reporting, it was recommended that the Government develop design principles and guidance to improve built environment experiences for residents in aged care and their families. [Select here](#) to read the guidelines and examples of good practice aged care design

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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](mailto:spahc.rail@monash.edu).

## Other news and resources



### Community Care Review - Article from a member of our RAIL network

[Select here](#) to read a great article published in the Community Care Review magazine titled “Culturally appropriate care is essential, not an extra” by a member of our RAIL network, Danijela.



### Toolkit for engaging with people with disability in evaluation

As part of the current Australian Disability Strategy, a new toolkit for engaging with people with disability in evaluation has been recently released by the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing.

[Select here](#) to learn more and to review the toolkit and other documents.



### International campaign on the employment of people with Downs syndrome

[Select here](#) to view the Hiring Chain international campaign on open employment for people with Downs syndrome. The campaign offers the viewers the possibility to connect with organisations in their country to explore opportunities to employ people with Downs syndrome in their business.

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).

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**Our mailing address is:**

[spahc.rail@monash.edu](mailto:spahc.rail@monash.edu)

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