

Rehabilitation, Ageing and Independent Living (RAIL) Research Centre

Friends of RAIL eBulletin #2 - May 2023

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. To become a Friend of RAIL, email spahc.rail@monash.edu.

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A message from Aislinn
(RAIL Consumer and Community Engagement Lead)



Image: Aislinn is a volunteer for Guide Dogs Victoria

National Volunteer Week 2023 is 15-21 May. If you or someone you know volunteers, we want to thank and celebrate you and the contribution it makes to Australian Communities!

Would you like to be more involved with RAIL?

There are many ways that you can be involved with RAIL including via free education sessions and forums, and contributing to and/or collaborating on education and research activities with RAIL. We also hope to provide opportunities for information sharing of relevant research outcomes, and opportunities for networking between Friends of RAIL. We are keen to hear your ideas on how Friends of RAIL can grow and become a supportive, collaborative and influential group – let us know via: spahc.rail@monash.edu.

We hope you enjoy reading about our activities and outcomes in this eBulletin and welcome any contributions you consider will be of interest to others.

Aislinn Lalor

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



Hi everyone,

Welcome to the second Friends of RAIL eBulletin! Our first newsletter was lengthy and full of information and hopefully you found lots of interesting reading.

As I write this note and think about the last three months since our first eBulletin, I thought I would share a recent event from my personal experience. I attended (by zoom) a forum about COVID19's impact on falls, sedentary behaviour and deconditioning in older adults hosted by RAIL. I really enjoyed this forum during which Keith, the Director of RAIL, presented and it was great to hear all that was said, but days after I had a fall. As my friends tell me, you know when you are getting old when you say you had a fall and not just fell over! I had a heavy fall, lucky for me no broken bones. Lots of skin off everywhere, my knee mainly ended up getting infected and had to be dressed. Eventually got it healed and a week later, I had another fall in the middle of traffic. Same spot my beautiful new skin peeled back, had another dressing done at an amazing clinic. Healed in a week and no ongoing injuries. Lucky me! Then last week, my 90 year old aunt had a fall resulting in injuries that put her into hospital. Thankfully she will be okay. The lesson for me is to not

rush as much, concentrate and be more aware. We are all ageing and with COVID 19, we aged fast and at home in our own environment.

Grainne Cruickshank

Telling others about becoming a Friend of RAIL



Do you know someone who may like to become a 'Friend of RAIL'? If so, please share [this link](#) with them to complete the registration survey or they can email spahc.rail@monash.edu or call 03 9904 4557 to speak to Karine about registering.

In addition to this Friends of RAIL eBulletin (distributed each quarter), RAIL also runs free networking events for our Friends and invites Friends to contribute to and/or collaborate on education and research activities.

Upcoming events

RAIL Friends Morning Tea



We are pleased to announce that we will be hosting our first **Friends of RAIL event!**

Where: Monash University Peninsula Campus (Frankston)

When: **Thursday 1st June 2023, 10.00am – 12.00pm, EAST** (including morning tea).

The event will include:

- a short 30 minutes introduction to the RAIL Research Centre's work
- useful tools
- an opportunity to network with the team and other Friends of RAIL

A Zoom (online) option for the 30 minutes presentation will be offered for those who cannot join in person. More information will be circulated via email shortly.

RAIL Friends event planning

We are also planning a bigger event to be held on Thursday 2nd November 2023 in the Mornington Peninsula area and we would love to hear from current Friends as to what you would like this event to include. For example, maybe you would like, brief presentations from each RAIL stream Lead on our research or specific presentations or informal opportunity to network with other Friends? Would you like it in person or online?

You can let us know by emailing spahc.rail@monash.edu or calling (03) 9904 4557.

RAIL Team member introduction

In this edition, we would like to introduce you the Director of the RAIL Research Centre, **Professor Keith Hill**.



Image: Keith on recent holiday on a cruise on Ha Long Bay, Vietnam

Hi everyone,

I am a physiotherapist and researcher, with over 40 years of clinical (mainly hospital, rehabilitation and ageing) and research experience. I have spent most of my working life in Melbourne, but took an interesting change of career for eight years in 2012 – I went to Perth for a role as Head of School of Physiotherapy and Exercise Science at Curtin University. This was a very enjoyable phase of my working life, but when a position was advertised to head up a new research Centre at Monash (the RAIL Research Centre) I applied and was successful, coming back to Melbourne in July 2019.

My research started out being very physiotherapy specific in the ageing and rehabilitation areas – particularly falls prevention and exercise to improve health and well-being. However, over the years my research focus has broadened substantially, both through changes in my own interests (for example, now a couple of my main research areas are improving carers health and well-being, and exercise for people with dementia. But my research activities have also broadened because of the amazing mix of researchers and research expertise at RAIL, for example we have recently completed some work looking at improving falls prevention for people with intellectual disability (who have very high rates of falls, but very little research being done in this area), and also several projects in the area of assistive technology / aids, through collaboration with several of our Occupational Therapy team members (Libby Callaway and Natasha Layton) and Tarsh Brusco (Physiotherapist).

Outside of work I enjoy family time, the outdoors (including bushwalking and gardening), and of course, supporting the “mighty” Carlton Football Club (who were mighty when I was supporting them in the 70’s and 80’s, but it’s been a long time between drinks!)

I look forward to getting to meet and get to know Friends of RAIL over our range of future activities.

If you would like to know more about our team or the Centre itself, please visit <https://www.monash.edu/medicine/spahc/rail/>

Top Tip from the RAIL team

Top Tips



In each e-Bulletin we aim to share “top tip(s)” or link(s) to information that may be of interest and relevance to you. Our top tip for this edition is:

Are you thinking about exploring a new interest or activities in your local area? The Clubs section of the Yellow Pages offers a great range of community clubs and interest-based groups for you to think about possible activities.

For an A-Z list, go to <https://www.yellowpages.com.au/vic/social-general-clubs-10642-category-a1>



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

Spotlight on a Friend of RAIL



My name is **Joy Green**, I am a self-confessed gym junkie. I have worked at Monash Sport Peninsula Campus for approximately 16 years as a part time Fitness Services Coordinator, I have recently transitioned from permanent part time to casual with Monash Sport and Mornington Council. My role involved administration including payroll, fitness memberships, venue bookings and many other aspects.

Although I already had qualifications as a Fitness Instructor, I was extremely fortunate that Monash supported any training required to progress my career.

Some of the training included:

- Creative Exercises for Older Adults
- Functional Training
- MS/Acquired Brain Injuries/Stroke
- Body Balance (Yoga/Pilates)

I was instrumental in setting up an Older Adults exercise group. I initially was the guest speaker at a Probus meeting and some of the members decided they would like to do an exercise class as one of their activities. The group expanded to 25-30 participants from all walks of life, dancing, balancing, push-ups, squats just to name a few exercises all to their favorite music. We always finished with a cuppa, biscuits or fruit cake.

Why Did I Become a Friend of RAIL

RAIL personifies all that I have been working towards. I realized how important socialization, exercise and ageing independently are to the particular group I have had the pleasure of teaching and feel the need to reach out to others in the community that could benefit from these social interactions.

Links with RAIL

My initial link with RAIL was in December 2019 by an invitation from Libby Callaway (RAIL Independent Living Stream Lead) to give a brief presentation on the Older Adults group I had been training and how the group aligned with the RAIL project's vision. Libby introduced me to the RAIL team and Gabby Brand (Monash Nursing and Midwifery) in

particular that organized a photo shoot of my Older Adults group for the RAIL project launch at Frankston Arts Centre, some of these photos were then also utilized at the RAIL Forum during NGV Melbourne Design Week 2022.

My Passion

I am passionate about health and wellbeing, especially with regard to ageing, rehabilitation, mental and physical wellbeing, socialisation and loneliness.

Mum is in Residential Care with Alzheimer's, with my daily visits I experience first hand some of the distress and loneliness the residents feel, isolated from their families. I take my music with me and hope that I enhance the resident's days with some singalongs, dancing, chatting and making cuppas.

Random Facts About Me

Married for 48 years with 2 sons and 4 grandchildren

I play Walking Netball with a group of fabulous women aged between 50 & 90, I warm them up with Tai Chi and Dance then Balance/Stretch after we've played and of course a cuppa!

If you would be happy to provide a Spotlight of yourself to be featured in upcoming Friends of RAIL ebulletins, please contact Karine via emailing spahc.rail@monash.edu or calling (03) 9904 4557.

RAIL Project spotlight



In this edition, we would like to introduce you to a project titled ***'Bringing It Home': The exploration and co-design of consumer-led methodologies to understand lived experience of home and living within a National Disability Research Partnership*** led by A/Prof Libby Callaway, RAIL Research Centre Independent Living Stream Lead.

This research was one of nine projects funded through the first research investment as part of the Australian Government's new [National Disability Research Partnership](#).

The project team included:

- People with lived experience of disabilities;
- Researchers from Universities across Australia who are developing and using innovative methodologies to build evidence of home and living impacts and outcomes, including: the RAIL Research Centre and Occupational Therapy Departments at

Monash University, The Hopkins Centre at Griffith University and the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning at the University of Melbourne;

- Members of the [Specialist Disability Accommodation \(SDA\) Alliance](#), Australia's peak body for the new build SDA market within the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS); and
- Social Ventures Australia, an organisation that has recently released a [disability housing outcome framework](#).

You can watch a short video which gives you an overview of the project [here](#) or there is a summary below.

We did two things in the project:

1) **A scoping review** of methods that have been used by, with, and for people with disabilities to evaluate home and living options – we found 22 kinds of research methods from this review; and

2) New research to explore a range of expert ideas on which of these methods found through the scoping review are accessible and inclusive for people with disabilities. Responses were sought from disability lived experience experts, government representatives, health professionals, and representatives from Peak Bodies, Non-Government Organisations and Disabled Persons' Organisations and we found that 'one size does not fit all' when it comes to selecting methods to be used by, with, and for people with disabilities that have been used to evaluate home and living options, and what may work for one person to give their perspectives may not work for another, so a range of methods need to be used.

If you have questions about this project, please feel free to contact Libby at spahc.rail@monash.edu.

Reflection from a RAIL online forum - COVID-19's impact on falls, physical activity, sedentary behaviour and deconditioning in older adults

The recent RAIL forum describing Covid-19's impact on falls, physical activity, sedentary behaviour and deconditioning in older people, presented by Professor Keith Hill, and Associate Professor Janneke Berecki (from the Monash University Accident Research Centre) attracted a large national and international audience. The forum highlighted growing data being reported highlighting that older people are not resuming the level of physical activity they were doing prior to the pandemic, and that this has potential over time to increase people's risk of falling. Additional, somewhat hidden impacts included greater social isolation and loneliness associated with these changes. Strategies to help address these issues were highlighted, including:

- Health professionals to encourage and support appropriate and safe increases in physical activity for older people at all interactions
- Health professionals to anticipate increased risk of falls (assess and manage) in community and in hospital settings
- Encourage optimal management of chronic disease
- Encourage strategies to increase social connectedness and facilitate social engagement at and away from home
- Media and other communication strategies to ensure older people and their families are aware of these issues

- Develop and implement specific booster programs to improve physical activity and reduce sedentary time among older people that have been negatively impacted by the covid pandemic

Website to promote physical activity during COVID-19 lockdowns: <https://www.safeexerciseathome.org.au/>

- Developed as COVID-19 lock down was occurring
- No funding
- Group of experienced researcher / clinician / academic physiotherapists nationally
- Focus on safe exercise at home
 - 3 levels
 - Safety and motivation tips
 - Resources for older people, and practitioners
 - Success stories of older people at the three levels
- Aust Physiotherapy Association endorsed
- Launched May 5 2020
- In 6 weeks:
 - 26,850 sessions; 20,205 users
 - Australia 80.8%; Denmark 5.2%, USA 3.8%



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Image: Website developed by a group of Australian physiotherapists (including Professor Keith Hill) early in the pandemic to help older people to remain active at home (<https://www.safeexerciseathome.org.au/>)

Publications and resources that may be of interest

New Self-advocacy toolkit booklet



The [Older Persons Advocacy Network](#) (OPAN) comprises [nine state and territory members organisations](#) which offer free, independent and confidential support and information to older people seeking or already using Australian Government-funded aged care services across the nation, along with their families and carers.

OPAN has developed a self-advocacy toolkit to equip people with the skills, information and resources they need to speak up for better aged care.

To know more about this Self-advocacy toolkit and to access it, please visit the [OPAN's website/toolkit page](#).

Friend Contribution and Feedback

At RAIL, we are committed to conducting research that occurs with the community and would love to hear from you. If you would like to share a story related to your experience of rehabilitation, ageing and independent living, be involved with RAIL research, share a top tip with Friends of RAIL or provide any feedback that you may have on the format/content of the Friends eBulletin, please contact us at spahc.rail@monash.edu or call 03 9904 4557.

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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