

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

## Member & Partner eBulletin – April 2025

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

**Partners** of RAIL are people outside Monash University from various types of organisations/background across rehabilitation, ageing and/or independent living, including academics from other Australian and international Universities, industry leaders, clinicians and other health and care providers, service providers and those involved in policy and planning.

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## A message from the Director

**To all our Members and Partners, the RAIL Research Centre has had a great start to 2025.** Examples of the teams' major achievements include promotion to Associate Professor for RAIL's Dr Christina Ekegren and Dr Natasha Layton (effective the 1<sup>st</sup> of July)! In addition, Dr Deb Mitchell joined the RAIL team as the inaugural Each-Monash Senior Research Fellow; Dr Aislinn Lalor commenced as the Stream Lead of Ageing; Dr Christina Ekegren commenced as the Stream Lead of Rehabilitation; Dr Em Bould was successful in a major tender to lead the Early Evaluation of the National Centre of Excellence in Intellectual Disability Health; Associate Professor Libby Callaway led a major University-wide response to the Department of Social Services, to conduct research and assessment reports; Dr. Raphaëlle Guerbaai has transitioned from being a RAIL visiting research fellow, into a RAIL Senior Research Fellow on the Community Health First project; Dr Angel Lee was selected to present at the 2025 Australian Dementia Research Forum in Western Australia; Dr Em Bould and Dr Jon Foo commenced as Health Economic Fellows; Karine Fortin led the development of a cost-recovery model for the Each-Monash Clinical School; Professor Keith Hill concluded 2½ years as the Director of the Allied Health Research and Knowledge Translation Leads program across multiple public health services in Victoria; and we bid farewell to Associate Professor Takashi Iguchi, a visiting scholar from Japan. Finally, Dr Sara Whittaker, Dr Michelle Shannon, Megan Clark-Ash, Pek Hill, Lisa Licciardi, Alicia Devlin, and Emma Dorward all continued to provide valuable input and leadership to RAIL projects and initiatives. **Congratulations to all of the RAIL team on a fantastic start to 2025.**



## Member profile



Fiona McAlinden is a Social Worker by background, who originally trained in Northern Ireland. Her career commenced in Child Protection and moved into Disability, followed by two decades in Healthcare. The position of Allied Health Director at Monash Health, which she held from 2012 to 2021, afforded many research opportunities which eventually led to a specific interest in aged care.

Early published research topics include Social Workers perceptions of Complexity, Models of Care in rehabilitation, workforce redesign and integrated leadership capability.

In 2012, Fiona completed a Master of Business and used her thesis as an opportunity to develop a comprehensive policy response to Elder Abuse across Monash Health, using an Action Research, Action Learning approach.

This work led to another major multi partner project that sought to address the problem of patients waiting for long periods in hospitals for the appointment of Guardians. An intended one-year project turned into a 3-year project, and ultimately resulted in successful lobbying to the Department of Health who, for the first time ever, granted funding to the Office of the Public Advocate for 8 full time Guardians specifically dedicated to patients in healthcare networks in Victoria.

Professor Terry Haines AM, as the Director of Allied Health Research at Monash Health for several years, was a persuasive influence and positive supporter of many of the research initiatives that Fiona was involved in.

Fiona joined Monash University in October 2023 as a Project Manager, to work as part of a team on [National Centre for Healthy Ageing](#) (NCHA) projects, with a main focus on the development of the Healthy Ageing Clinics and student led activities at the [Healthy Futures Hub](#). This work has provided a great opportunity to work with a team of Senior Research Fellows, and collaborate with a range of educators across multiple disciplines as well as colleagues in RAIL. With multiple projects in the pipeline, we look forward to future research developments.

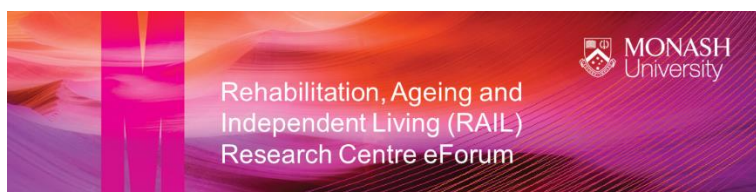
## RAIL Research Centre eForum



On February 27, RAIL hosted an eforum entitled: "Hospital or home? The knowns and unknowns of trauma rehabilitation". The eForum attracted over 50 audience members from around the world. The two presenters, Dr Lara Kimmel and Professor Justine Naylor, spoke about the evidence for trauma rehabilitation in the acute setting and at home, and the need for future research in this area.

Our next forum scheduled on Tuesday 29th April 12-1pm EAST, will focus on the use of 'design' thinking in health research. Visit our [RAIL eForum web page](#) to download the event flyer.

## Select here to register for this RAIL eForum



### Creative solutions: Embracing 'Design Thinking' in health research

All are welcome at this eForum on design thinking in health research, where we'll describe its core principles and frameworks. Learn how this innovative approach fosters empathy, creativity, and collaboration to address complex healthcare challenges. We'll also showcase recent research projects that have successfully employed design thinking to co-design and co-produce tools aimed at empowering health consumers.

**Date:** Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> April 2025

**Time:** 12.00pm – 1.00pm AEST

**Venue:** Online Via Zoom

**Register:** [Select here to register for this RAIL Research Centre eForum](#)



Or scan the QR code

### Associate Professor Leah Heiss - Co-design at scale - Global convening to improve health outcomes



In this presentation Leah will discuss approaches to co-designing at the global scale. She will draw from her work with the WHO, Unicef, and the Australian Living Evidence Collaboration to develop co-design principles, guidelines and tools for global application.

Associate Professor Leah Heiss is the Eva and Marc Besen International Research Chair in Design at Monash University, co-chair of the new Technologies Grand Challenge at the Victorian Heart Institute. She has a background in the development of wearable technologies and for the last decade has focused on co-designing health systems including for global health, transfusion medicine, cancer care, mental health and addiction.

### Dr Christina Ekegren - Co-design and co-production of 'Tools for ageing well with traumatic brain injury'



In this presentation, Christina will describe a project which used a five-stage design thinking model to co-design an 84-page guide and consumer story videos with older people with brain injury, families and clinicians.

Christina is the Rehabilitation Stream Lead within the Rehabilitation, Ageing and Independent Living (RAIL) Research Centre. She is a globally recognised expert on healthy ageing and injury outcomes. Christina has a clinical background in physiotherapy and has worked in teaching and research at universities in Australia, the UK and Canada.

### Professor Nicola Kayes - Optimising telerehabilitation practice in Aotearoa New Zealand



In this presentation, Nicola will share research which set out to co-produce tools to support the delivery of people-centred and culturally responsive telerehabilitation, integrating Kaupapa Maori, Western Science, and co-design methods.

Nicola Kayes is a Professor of Rehabilitation, and Co-Director of the Centre for Person Centred Research at AUT in New Zealand. Her research uses creative and participatory methods to co-design tools and resources to optimise outcomes that matter to people and families accessing rehabilitation. This has led her to some exciting collaborative opportunities with design researchers.

### Contact us

Rehabilitation, Ageing and Independent Living (RAIL) Research Centre

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## RAIL short courses 2025 - save the dates!

The RAIL Research Centre will be hosting four short courses in 2025, each of them developed and delivered by expert leaders in the relevant field. Registrations will open in the coming weeks and more information will be circulated! Stay tuned!

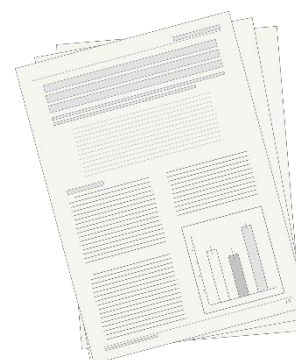


[Select here for more information and to express your interest](#)

Short course title	Date	Venue
<b>Designing health economic evaluations</b>	Friday 27th June 2025	In person on the Monash University Peninsula Campus in Frankston, Vic
<b>Designing accessible research, education and services (DARES)</b>	Thursday 24th July 2025	In person at the Healthy Futures Hub in Seaford, Vic
<b>Exercise to optimise balance, mobility and fall outcomes for older people</b>	7th and 8th August 2025	In person on the Monash University Peninsula Campus in Frankston, Vic
<b>Understanding and evaluating the measurement properties of outcome measures</b>	13th and 20th August 2025	Online delivery

## Highlighted publication

Hill AM, Moyle W, Slatyer S, Bryant C, Hill KD, Waldron N, Aoun S, Kamdar A, Grealish L, Reberger C, Jones C, Bronson M, Bulsara MK, Jacques A, Loo CY, Maher S. Nurse Telephone Support for Caregivers of Older Adults at Hospital Discharge: A Randomized Clinical Trial. *JAMA Netw Open*. 2024;7(10):e2441019. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2024.41019



### Abstract overview

**Importance:** Informal caregivers who provide home-based care frequently experience stress and burden that adversely affect their health-related quality of life (HRQOL).

**Objective:** To evaluate the efficacy of the Further Enabling Care at Home (FECH+) program for the HRQOL of caregivers of older adults discharged home from the hospital.

**Design, Setting, and Participants:** This multicenter, parallel, 2-group randomized clinical trial, with blinded baseline and outcome measurements, was conducted at 3 hospitals in 2 states in Australia. Recruitment took place between August 2020 and July 2022, and follow-up was performed for 12 months after hospital discharge. Participants were dyads

of caregivers and patients. Eligible caregivers were aged 18 years or older who provided informal home-based care at least weekly for a patient aged 70 years or older. Caregivers were enrolled when their patient was discharged from the hospital. Dyads were randomly assigned to either the intervention or control group. Data analysis followed an intention-to-treat approach.

[Select here to visit the journal page and read the full abstract and article](#)

### RAIL award



Congratulations to RAIL Director A/Prof Tarsh Brusco and her son George, the Waverley Gymnastics Centre and the George's Gymnastics Program team who received the Gymnastics Victoria Inclusive Leader of the Year award, 2024!

In 2024, the five-week gymnastics program for 160 children across five Victorian special schools, **George's Gymnastics Program**, provided an inclusive environment where children developed key skills, gained confidence, and enjoyed meaningful physical activity.

Our partners at Waverley Gymnastics Centre are continuing to support the program in 2025 and 2026 to enable the children at the five Victorian special schools, and two additional schools, to continue to enjoy the program.

To know more about the George's Gymnastics Program, please visit the following pages:  
[Waverley Gymnastics Centre/Inclusion program](#)  
[RAIL/George's Gymnastics Program](#)

### Grant success



**Department of Health and Aged Care - Early Evaluation of the National Centre of Excellence in Intellectual Disability Health**

**Bould E**, Cadby JM, Forster A, **Callaway L**, **Brusco N**, **Hill KD**, Hayward B, Morgan P, Taylor-Hall A, Taylor-Hall C, **Layton N**, Barclay L, Bourke-Taylor H, Bhopti A, Simpson A, Templeton M, Stewart M.

RAIL team member Dr Em Bould (Senior Research Fellow with RAIL and the Occupational

Therapy Department) along with disability lived experience experts and health professionals across nursing, paramedicine, physiotherapy, podiatry, and occupational therapy, and the Centre for Developmental Disability Health at Monash Health (i.e. audiology, medicine, nursing and speech pathology) were recently successful in securing a tender from the Department of Health and Aged Care (Australia) to conduct an early evaluation of the National Centre of Excellence in Intellectual Disability Health.

### ARC Discovery project DP25 - Disability and Digital Citizenship

Goggin G, Ellis K, Smith-Merry J, Darcy S, Harpur P, Hadley B, Kent M, Wadiwel D, **Layton N**, O'Donovan M, Avery S, Soldatic K, Dalvit L, Zhuang KV, Alper M.

RAIL team member Dr Natasha Layton (Senior Research Fellow with RAIL) is a chief investigator on a recently awarded ARC Discovery project titled "Disability and Digital Citizenship" led by Professor Gerard Goggin from Western Sydney University. This project investigates people with disability's full participation in the digital age by advancing a new conceptualization of digital citizenship.

### NDIA peer reviews

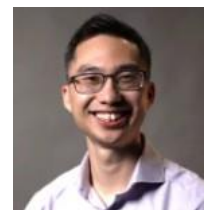
Independent Living Stream Lead A/Prof Libby Callaway was invited by Prof Peter Bragge and team from the Monash Sustainable Development Institute to join two RFQ responses submitted to the National Disability Insurance Agency to deliver peer review work for the Agency. These applications were successful, and work will be completed by mid 2025.

Congratulations to all the investigators for their success!

## New RAIL Health Economic Fellows

A few weeks ago, RAIL was pleased to announce and welcome the two inaugural 2025 Health Economic Fellows within the School of Primary and Allied Health Care:

[Dr Jonathan Foo](#) (he/him), is a physiotherapist, researcher, and lecturer within the Physiotherapy Department. He is primarily interested in exploring how to make best use of limited healthcare resources to achieve optimal population health.



[Dr Em Bould](#) (they/them) is a Senior Research Fellow within the RAIL Research Centre and the Occupational Therapy Department. They have a diverse background of research experience which is underpinned by quantitative methodologies and analysis.

Over the coming 12 months Jon and Em will be exposed to writing a health economic protocol, completing a health economic analysis, and writing a health economic paper.

Welcome Jon and Em!

## Appointment of Dr Deb Mitchell as the Inaugural Senior Research Fellow within the Each-Monash Partnership

In a significant milestone for the recently announced partnership between [Each](#) and Monash University, Dr Deb Mitchell has been appointed as the inaugural Senior Research Fellow.

Dr Mitchell brings a wealth of experience and expertise to her new role with an impressive background in healthcare leadership, research, and education.

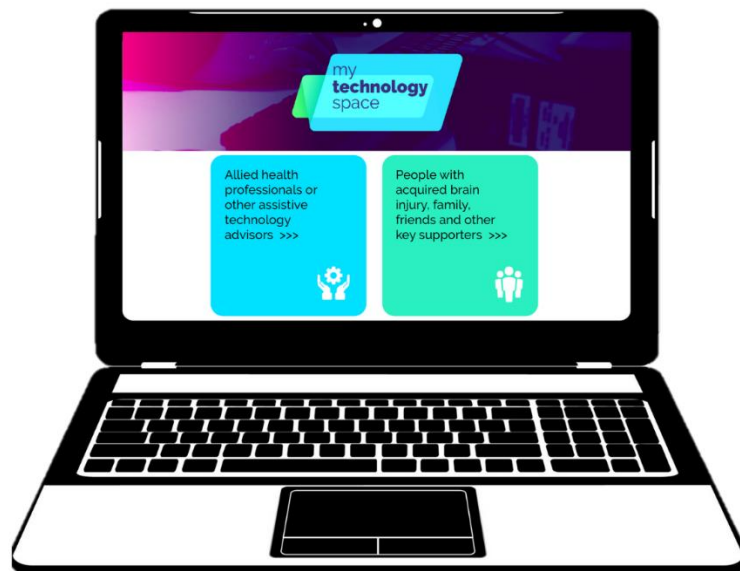
Dr Mitchell's journey to this esteemed position is a testament to her dedication and passion for advancing healthcare. With a rich background in research and a proven track record in leadership, she is well-equipped to spearhead the development and implementation of an organisational Research Strategy at Each.

[Select here to read the full article and know more about Dr. Mitchell's role with the Each and Monash Partnership](#)

## My Technology Space



A digital education resource on assistive technology used for cognitive support in everyday activities after brain injury.



In late 2024, RAIL Independent Living Stream Lead Associate Professor Libby Callaway, Senior Research Fellow Dr Em Bould and Research Fellow Lisa Licciardi – along with colleagues from the Ingham Institute, University of Sydney, and the University of Melbourne, community based allied health professionals, and three lived experience experts with acquired brain injury – launched My Technology Space ([www.mytechnologyspace.org](http://www.mytechnologyspace.org)).

My Technology Space is a website for people with brain injury, their families, and allied health professionals working with them to assist in planning the use of technology for cognitive support following brain injury. My Technology Space was officially launched during the 2024 National Brain Injury Conference in Adelaide. This free web-based resource is the final deliverable in a joint TAC and icare NSW funded project scoping, evaluating and building education resources on the use of technology for cognitive support after brain injury. Since its launch, My Technology Space has already had over 1,100 active users engage with the website, from countries including Australia, New Zealand, Germany, Ireland, Pakistan and the United States of America.

In December 2024, ABC National News Radio showcased My Technology Space on both their national breakfast program and NewsRadio Drive via an interview with TAC client Josh Taylor, who was one of the lived experience experts with acquired brain injury working on the project.

## **We Are Well - A Digital Gallery Exhibition**



Presented as part of Monash University's 2025 Library digital exhibition program, We Are Well: Art-Moving-Wellbeing explores how art education, wellbeing, histories, and cultures of Australian First Nations Peoples can create dynamic learning experiences in primary schools, universities, and senior groups. This exhibition represents a collaborative project led by Dr Geraldine Burke from the Faculty of Education, Monash University, in conjunction with Dr Aislinn Lalor and Professor Keith Hill from the Rehabilitation, Ageing and Independent Living (RAIL) Research Centre. Workshops were led by Indigenous artists and knowledge holders: Aunty Karan Kent, Kylie Colemane and Nikki Browne.

[Select here to explore the digital gallery capturing the breadth of activities, learnings and interactions](#)



[Select here to explore the TeachSpace linked with this research](#)

## Healthcare Special Issue - Health Promotion and Long-Term Care for Older Adults

RAIL Research Fellow, [Dr Raphaëlle-Ashley Guerbaai](#) along with colleague [Dr. Kornelia Kotkowski](#) are guest editing a [Special Issue](#) in [Healthcare MDPI](#) on Health Promotion and Long-Term Care for Older Adults.

This special issue will focus on:

- Preventive health strategies
- Integrated care models
- Person-centered approaches
- Dementia care, fall prevention, nutrition & more
- The role of technology in supporting healthy ageing

Deadline: December 31, 2025

### Special Issue

#### Health Promotion and Long-Term Care for Older Adults

##### Message from the Guest Editors

As global populations age, the intersection of health promotion and long-term care has never been more critical. This Special Issue will explore innovative strategies, policies, and interventions aimed at enhancing the well-being, autonomy, and quality of life of older adults in various care settings. We welcome contributions that address preventive health measures, integrated care models, rehabilitation strategies, and person-centred approaches to long-term care. Topics of interest include, but are not limited to, dementia care, fall prevention and management, nutrition, mental health support, and the role of technology in fostering health promotion. By bringing together evidence-based research and practice insights, this Special Issue will advance our understanding and inform best practices with regard to sustaining health and dignity in ageing populations.

##### Guest Editors

Dr. Raphaëlle-Ashley Guerbaai  
School of Primary and Allied Health Care, Monash University, Frankston,  
VIC 3199, Australia

Dr. Kotkowski Kornelia  
Gesundheitszentren für das Alter, 8050 Zürich, Switzerland

##### Deadline for manuscript submissions

31 December 2025



### Healthcare

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## About the Journal

### Message from the Editor-in-Chief

*Healthcare* is an international, scientific, peer-reviewed, open access journal on health care systems, industry, technology, policy, and regulation, and is published semimonthly online by MDPI. Ocular Wellness & Nutrition Society (OWNS) is affiliated with *Healthcare* and its members receive discounts on article processing charges.

### Author Benefits

#### High Visibility:

indexed within Scopus, SCIE and SSCI (Web of Science), PubMed, PMC, and other databases.

#### Journal Rank:

JCR - Q2 (Health Care Sciences and Services) / CiteScore - Q2 (Leadership and Management)

#### Rapid Publication:

manuscripts are peer-reviewed and a first decision is provided to authors approximately 20.3 days after submission; acceptance to publication is undertaken in 2.6 days (median values for papers published in this journal in the second half of 2024).

## Member and Partner contributions

We would love to showcase current research from our members and partners. 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](mailto: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](mailto: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:**

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