

SEPTEMBER 2021

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Happy Wednesday!

In today's newsletter we have great information and articles including:

- staff wellness forum – last chance to register!
- keeping young minds active and engaged
- lunch and learn sessions
- cultivating wellbeing to flourish
- seeking solace, comfort and laughter with books
- real talk - have the conversation
- making exercise a habit

We encourage you to continue accessing the [Health and wellbeing web page](#) for resources and the [Mental health and wellbeing information guide](#) for supportive strategies to allow you to thrive.

Stay well and have a great Wednesday.

p.s. Don't forget to check out the [September edition of the Flourish e-magazine!](#)

Staff Wellness Forum – last chance to register

The online Staff Wellness Forum will be held this Thursday 23 September, 12:30 – 1:30pm and is in acknowledgement of the many challenges that we are facing presently as individuals and as a collective. The Vice-Chancellor will host the forum, featuring:

- Professor Stuart Berzins – Professor of Immunology, School of Science, Psychology and Sport. Professor Berzins will look at the lifecycle of a pandemic – where we are now, what's next and what does the end of the pandemic look like.
- Associate Professor Dixie Statham – Clinical Psychologist, School of Science, Psychology and Sport. Associate Professor Statham will focus on the psychology of the pandemic, what people are feeling, what is normal during the various stages of the pandemic – and provide some coping mechanisms to help you get through.

Comedian and television entertainer Jimmy Rees will be our very special guest at the forum. Anyone with young children will know him as Jimmy Giggle from ABC's Giggle and Hoot, but he is also well-known for his theatre and musical work, and his incredible 'pivot' to comedy during the pandemic. In response to COVID-19, Jimmy has developed unique characters that provide a light-hearted take on these challenging times.

This event aims to be informative, positive and fun to support all Federation University Australia staff during this time of uncertainty.

[Register for Staff wellness forum now.](#)



Keeping young minds active and engaged

We know spending the school holidays at home can be tough. But thanks to a host of organisations and initiatives, there are more options than ever before.

If you are looking for ideas to keep the kids active and engaged, check out these top school holiday activities to do at home.

- [VicHealth school holiday activities](#) – six great school holiday activity ideas to get you moving and having fun.
- [Playdate at the Library](#) – join in every Wednesday morning for a free and invigorating learning sessions hosted by Science for Preschoolers. You can also [catch-up on past episodes on the Playdate at the Library YouTube channel!](#)
- [23 free ways to get kids active](#) – The name says it all! Check out this Queensland Health web page for lots of great ideas.
- [State Library of Queensland](#) – Free activities the whole family can enjoy, from family movie screenings to stories, songs and hands-on crafts.
- [Kids home publishing](#) – A series of fun, interactive online lessons a series of experts take you through the various steps for writing, creating, illustrating and publishing

your own book at home.
• Scienceworks Play – Explore our range of family-friendly activities inspired by items in Museums Victoria's collections and exhibitions!



Image: State Library Victoria website

Lunch and learn sessions

The 'lunch and learn' sessions are designed to provide staff with information and assistance in a range of areas that support their personal and professional needs and interests.

We encourage you to check out and register for the upcoming session below.

[Register here for any 'lunch and learn' session](#). A Microsoft Teams link will be sent following registration.

Upcoming sessions include:

29 September 2021 How can we feel safe in our homes?...I'm asking for a friend
12:30pm – 1:15pm *Associate Professor Elisa Zentveld, Chair, Academic Board and Dr Jess Cadwallader, Principal Strategic Advisor, Central Highlands Integrated Family Violence Committee*

Remember, if you miss a 'lunch and learn' session you can access recordings and resources from the [Health and wellbeing web page](#). These are generally made available within a few days of the session.



Cultivating wellbeing to flourish

Think of a garden filled with growth; plants and shrubs bursting with life, the sap flowing freely through flowers, straining to fill every bud, stretching every leaf, saturating the air with scent, each with its own unique blooming self. **They are flourishing.**

Each of us too has the same instinctive urge to grow and thrive, to feel our life energy stretch and fill every corner of ourselves, to reach some high point of self-realisation. When we manage to do that we feel happy. We are able to love more fully, do good work and feel like the world is a better place than we found it. **We are flourishing.**

As part of the University's professional development offering to staff, you are invited to enrol in the upcoming 'Cultivating wellbeing' programs for staff or managers.

The last of these two very popular programs will be held in October and offers both staff and managers the opportunity to build skills that enable **you to flourish.**

[Cultivating wellbeing - employee program | 14 October 2021, register now](#)

The employee program covers the following areas:

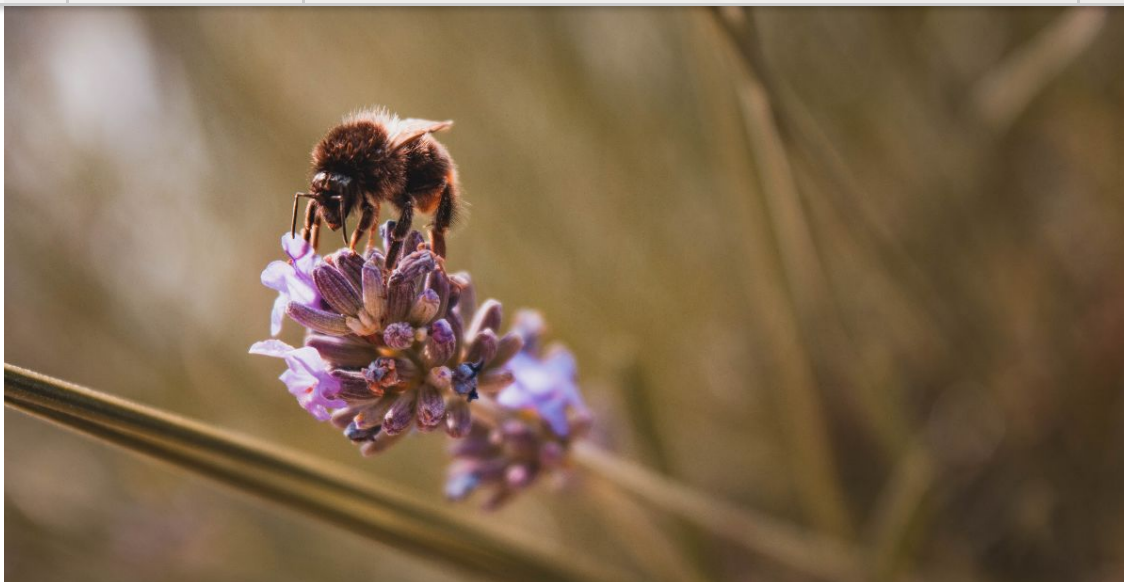
- the neuroscience of optimal performance;
- stress related growth including stress management strategies and the new science of sleep; and
- our best possible self.

[Cultivating wellbeing – manager program | 12 & 13 October, register now](#)

The manager program covers the following areas:

- the neuroscience of change including the role of mirror neurons, role modelling and priming;
- enhancing personal flourishing (energy management, circle of control and science of sleep); and
- quietening our inner critic, self-compassion, growth vs fixed mindset, tapping into character strengths to enhance flourishing.

Register for either program by selecting the link in the program title above. Please contact od@federation.edu.au if you have any questions.



Seeking solace, comfort and laughter with books

Indulging in a good read can provide an escape from everyday stresses. Through the pandemic, reading has been an effective strategy for some people in reducing stress. In fact, the therapeutic application of reading books and poetry, 'bibliotherapy', was first documented by the Ancient Greeks, who saw libraries as places for 'healing of the soul'.

A 2009 study conducted by the University of Sussex in the United Kingdom, found that reading can reduce stress levels by as much as 68 percent, even more than listening to music or going for a walk.

Books and stories can expand our own senses and experiences by teaching us about the experiences of others, in other countries, eras or universes. Through indulging in the humanity of others, books increase our own compassion, empathy and emotional intelligence.

In these times when travel seems to be an impossible notion, a well-researched fiction can take us to other countries and immerse us in other cultures so much more than a short, tour-guided holiday. Books can provide insight into the fears, emotions and triumphs of others.

With books and stories available in so many forms, be it paper, electronic or audio, they provide a perfect way to wind down when going to bed, or simply relaxing when the weather is not conducive to outside activities.

Reading is not an indulgence but rather, a wonderful way to seek solace, comfort, laughter and support. How can someone not smile when seeing someone laugh out loud from the book they are reading?

If this has inspired you to pick up a book but you don't know where to start – go to the recommendations at your local library. You can also use the websites below to explore more.

- [Library Thing](#) – a home for your books and community of book lovers.
- [Modern Mrs Darcy](#) – a blog, podcasts and book club.
- [Readings](#) – an independent retailer of books, music and film.

For more information about bibliotherapy or if you are interested in listening to the [bibliotherapy podcasts through State Library Victoria](#).

Looking for a book recommendation? Why not try...

Phosphorescence: On Awe, Wonder And Things That Sustain You When The World Goes Dark by Julia Baird. Winner of the Australian Book Industry *Book of the Year Award, 2021*.



Real talk - have the conversation

As COVID-19 continues to affect our communities, it is important now, more than ever, to check in on each other.

To support university staff to 'have the conversation' about mental health and wellbeing at work and in your personal life, Universities Australia and headspace have partnered to bring free training to all university staff members.

This two-hour online workshop will help you:

- notice changes in a person's mood or behaviours that may indicate mental health difficulties;
- start a conversation to ask if someone is ok; and
- provide timely and appropriate support.

The workshop will take you through newly developed resources and tools and demonstrate how to apply these in your daily practice. Every member of the university community has a

There are a range of sessions available between October and June next year.
[Register now to reserve you place in one of these valuable sessions.](#)

Supporting you to start a conversation

You are encouraged to use the following tip sheet and conversation guide to assist you in having a real conversation. The Universities Australia 'real talk' training will help you put this guidance into practice.

- [AP Psychology and Consulting Services tip sheet book](#)
- [R U OK? Day 2020 conversation guide](#)



Making exercise a habit

We know exercise is good for us. Whilst it can assist in preventing chronic medical issues, it is also great for building and maintaining good physical and mental health. For adults, the benefits of exercise can help:

- reduce the risk of, or help manage, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease;
- maintain or improve blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar levels;
- reduce the risk of some cancers;
- prevent unhealthy weight gain and help with weight loss;
- maintain strong muscles and bones;
- create opportunities for socialising and meeting new people; and
- help develop and maintain physical and mental wellbeing.

It can feel like a challenge at times in getting into, or back into, a healthy exercise routine and aiming to meet the recommended weekly physical activity levels for adults of either:

- **1.25 to 2.5 hours** of vigorous intensity physical activity – such as jogging, aerobics, fast cycling, soccer or netball an equivalent combination of moderate and vigorous activities.

Here are a few easy tips that you can apply to help make your exercise regime stick.

- **Make it fun** – you are more likely to stick to your exercise routine if you find it enjoyable. Try using music, a workout partner, and keep the exercise challenge but not to the point that it becomes a put off.
- **Remove Barriers** – don't make it too hard on yourself! Exercise is more likely to become a habit if it fits into your schedule.
- **Put it in your Diary** – treat your exercise no different to a work meeting and put it into your diary.
- **Achievable Goals** – habits don't form overnight, it is a journey! Setting realistic goals assists in making exercise a habit and having a sense of achievement.
- **Mix it Up** – variety is the spice of life! Keep your workout fresh and new to ensure it remains an enjoyable challenge.

Remember, getting some exercise is better than none. On days where you are unable to commit to your full workout routine, modify your approach and do a little exercise rather than skipping it completely.

[Read the article 'Making exercise a habit'](#) in the latest edition of the Flourish e-magazine for further information. You can also access these great resources:

- [Get Active Victoria](#) – A series of exercise challenges for all the family!
- [Yoga With Adriene](#) - free yoga videos every week
- [UniSports](#) – free weekly group fitness classes



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[Mental health and wellbeing information guide](#)

[Health and wellbeing resources](#)

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