

OCTOBER 2021

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Happy Wednesday!

We hope today's newsletter finds you well as we head into the start of October. There is a bumper issue of articles and information including:

- upcoming staff forums
- gardens are for all to enjoy
- Mental Health Month - with articles on:
 - 'Time for Change' program
 - Real talk - have the conversation
 - Family Assist
 - WorkSafe health and safety initiatives
- for the love of coffee
- VicSuper wellbeing webinars
- STEPtember - 15 million steps of support
- active ageing - move your way

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.

Upcoming staff forums

Future Research at Federation

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) and the Research and Innovation team will also be hosting the 'Future Research at Federation' Staff Forum on Monday 11 October, 10:30am to 11:30am.

The forum is open to all staff interested in

finding out more about our Research Strategy, Research Centres, our Graduate Research School and the important work our researchers do to benefit our communities. The forum will also feature an exploration of the work of the Future Regions Research Centre.

[Register for the online Research Forum.](#)



VC Staff Forum

The next VC Staff Forum will be held on Thursday 28 October, 12:30pm to 1:30pm. It will provide a good opportunity to receive updates on the priority projects helping us to build a strong and sustainable university, which are a key objective of our strategic plan, as well as other developments across the organisation.

[Register for the VC Staff Forum.](#)

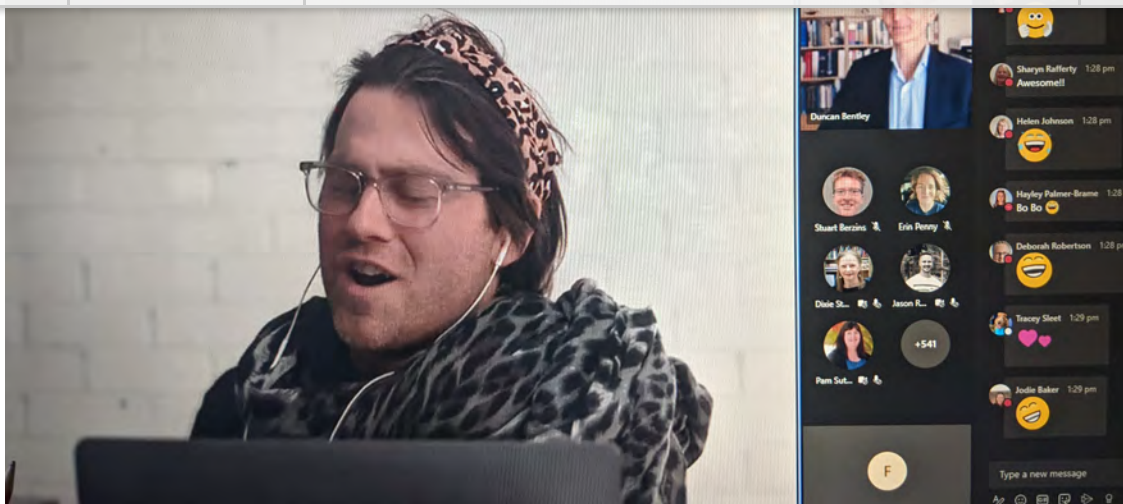


Staff Wellness Forum in review

Our recent Staff Wellness Forum was a much-needed lift before the Grand Final long weekend. If you missed this event, you can [watch the Staff Wellness Forum recording on FedFlix](#).

The forum was held in acknowledgement of the many challenges that we are facing presently as individuals and as a collective and featured:

- **Professor Stuart Berzins** – Professor of Immunology, School of Science, Psychology and Sport, looked at the lifecycle of a pandemic and what the end of the pandemic looks like.
- **Associate Professor Dixie Statham** – Discipline Leader, Psychology, School of Science, Psychology and Sport, focused on the psychology of the pandemic and coping mechanisms.
- **Our very special guest was comedian and entertainer Jimmy Rees and his good friends from Brighton!**



Gardens are for all to enjoy

Whether you are a home gardener, a community gardener or a visitor, a garden can be a source of exercise, stimulation and relaxation.

Most people enjoy being outdoors and digging in the soil, creating and watching plants grow. People with disabilities, people who are unwell, older people and children can find it especially rewarding to spend time in the garden tending plants and growing their own food.

Working in the garden provides benefits that include:

- enjoyment - from the physical activity;
- exercise - improves your endurance, strength, mobility and mental health;
- relaxation - helps you relax and reduce stress levels; and
- fresh food - provides you with a healthy variety of inexpensive fresh food.

With a little planning, garden beds, equipment and tools can be modified to make gardening accessible for children, older people and people with disabilities.

Spring is the perfect time to enjoy and spend time in our gardens. Gardening with others in a community garden can give you a sense of purpose and drive to achieve an end goal. It also provides a sense of belonging and acceptance for those who may otherwise feel isolated.

If you are looking for ideas, inspiration and information for gardening, why not search for community gardens in your area or check out these great resources:

- [Gardens for all - a health activity](#). (Better Health Channel web page)
- [Watch the 'Eat, learn, live and grow - spring gardening' lunch and learn session](#)
- ***Coming soon*** The lunch and learn session '**Gardens are shared spaces - enhance habitat and create havens**' will be available on the [Health and wellbeing web page](#) in the coming days.



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:

13 October 2021 **Reading as an essential self-care strategy**
12:30pm – 1:15pm *Associate Professor Dixie Statham, Discipline Leader, Psychology, School of Science, Psychology and Sport and Sonya Tsakalakis, Bibliotherapist.*

You can [watch last week's session 'How can we feel safe in our homes?...I'm asking for a friend'](#) on FedFlix.

Previous 'lunch and learn' sessions and resources are also available on the [Health and wellbeing web page](#). These are generally made available within a few days of the session date.



Mental Health Month

Mental Health Month runs throughout October and aims to improve awareness and interest in mental health and wellbeing. According to the [workplace mental health organisation 'HeadsUp'](#), the term 'mental health' is frequently misunderstood.

Mental health is often used as a substitute for mental health conditions – such as depression, anxiety conditions, schizophrenia, and others. However, the World Health Organisation, defines mental health as 'a state of wellbeing in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community'.

Ultimately, mental health is about being cognitively, emotionally and socially healthy. If we begin to reflect on our mental health as being on a 1 to 10 continuum, where 1 is needing support and 10 is thriving, and how we might move up and down that scale, depending on events and circumstances, it is easier to understand how a person without a mental condition may still require support. We can also see how it is possible to feel well in many aspects of life and be diagnosed with a mental health condition.

To help support you in being able to thrive, you are encouraged to use the below Mental Health Month resources to create positive change for yourself.



Time for Change program

During October, you are invited to register and join the 'Time for Change' program. This program provides you with access to information, resources and tools to help increase your understanding of mental health, how you can contribute to creating a psychologically safe workplace, strategies and supports for your own self-care and educates on how you can support others.



There are short 'badge' modules as well as challenges. Why not aim to complete a module and a challenge each week – either by yourself or with your team!

[Register for the 'Time for Change' program on the Applied Mental Health web page.](#)

Badge modules

- Understanding mental health
- Understanding psychological safety
- Self-care: Putting on your oxygen mask first
- We are all in this together

Challenges

- Five days of mini mindfulness
- Moments of gratitude
- Recharge your energy levels
- Five days of applying the 'RUOK spirit'

Real talk – have the conversation

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.

hour online workshop on how to talk to others about their mental health.



[Register now to reserve your place in one of these valuable Real Talk sessions.](#)

Every member of our University community has a role in making the University a safer and happier place to work and study. Be part of the conversation, because real talk equals real change.

Family Assist

During the pandemic, we have recognised that there is a need for counselling and support to be available not just for our staff but also to their immediate family.

The 'Family Assist' helpline is a counselling service that can offer support for adults and children in the immediate family of our staff, in dealing with their own issues. The Family Assist helpline can be used for up to three sessions per family per annum.



[You can access further detail on the various Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\) helplines via the 'Counselling and other support' tab on the Health and wellbeing web page.](#)

Our EAP Support services include Employee Assist, Career Assist, Manager Assist, Family Assist and a range of specialist helplines including:

- First Nations
- Domestic and family violence
- LGBTQI+
- Disability and carers
- Eldercare.

workSafe health and safety initiatives

As part of their Health and Safety Month initiatives, WorkSafe Victoria are hosting 16 free, online seminars to support employers and staff in maintaining safe, healthy and connected workplaces during the pandemic and beyond.



The 45-minute sessions will be held from 20 October and cover a broad range of topics with some relating to specific risks or industries.

Mental health is a major focus, with a panel presentation on how different organisations are promoting wellbeing through the pandemic.

[View and register for any Health and Safety Month events that might interest you.](#)

For the love of coffee

Melbourne is known around the world as a coffee capital. So, why do Melburnians love their coffee?

It all started with Melbourne's magnificent coffee palaces of the 1880s, when the temperance movement urged Melbournians to ditch booze, and drink morally superior coffee instead. Happily, we no longer need to choose one or the other – but something big had begun.

[Watch the video 'A history of coffee in Melbourne'](#) and join the State Library of Victoria Senior Curator Linda Short as she basks in our city's long-term affinity with the latte, which has not only cured countless cases of morning fogginess, but has also influenced local innovation and culture.

More to explore

- [Take a closer look at the history of coffee in Melbourne in the State Library Victoria online gallery.](#)
- Check out the [Changing face of Victoria exhibition online](#)



Image: State Library Victoria website

VicSuper wellbeing webinars

2021 has been a long year and taking time to focus on your wellbeing, both physically and mentally, can help you recharge and prepare for the new year.

Over three weeks, 25 October to 12 November, VicSuper and Aware Super are offering all staff access to free wellbeing webinars. These 45-minute webinars include topics for personal and professional development to help you realise your full potential inside and outside of work.

The 'Workplace Wellbeing Series' program has been created to empower you to reach for a better future. Every aspect of life influences our state of wellbeing, including financial security.

[View and register for any of the Workplace Wellbeing sessions.](#)



STEPtember – 15 million steps of support

During September a number of staff participated in STEPtember, which was about staying active and also raising money for research and support for those with cerebral palsy.

With the aim of being active or walking 10,000 steps per day, we are proud to say that Federation University staff 'stepped up' to the challenge with an impressive **15,426,723** steps across September!

Watching the step ladder was like watching the Melbourne Cup with regular jostling for the lead. At the final 'step', the top three steppers were Jacqui Pengelly from the team 'ESS - The Young and the Breathless' clocking up 1,445,589 steps, followed in second and third place by Bec and Logan Davis from team 'Hoppalongs' with 1,267,886 steps and 735,992 steps respectively.

Congratulations to all of the STEPtember participants! An amazing effort in getting active in spring and raising much needed funds for research and support for those with cerebral palsy.

To support the steppers in their efforts to reach their \$10,000 target, [please donate at the STEPtember website](#) (search for Federation University Australia and follow links). Any amount helps!



Active ageing - Move your way

Active Ageing Week 2021! 🧑🏻 🧑🏻 🚴

Active Ageing Week is a week dedicated to encouraging aging Australians to get moving and complete any physical activity they can!

This year's theme 'Move Your Way' encourages everyone to find what activities they like, be active in any way they can, and also seek out new ways to participate!

Some people like to connect to others by being social with their exercise - this might include:

- walking in a group 🧑🏻 🧑🏻 🧑🏻
- playing social sports like tennis or golf 🎾
- doing group Over 55's Pilates classes *

However, other ways of getting active might include:

- gardening 🌻
- walking individually 🧑🏻
- playing with or walking a pet 🐶

Active Ageing Australia are running a broad range of events for those looking for some new ways to get active. [Head to the Active Ageing Australia website for more info or ways to participate!](#)

* Contact your local Pilates studio for suitable class options. [Eureka Osteo in Ballarat](#) offers Over 55's Pilates classes at various times in the week.



Quick Links

[Flourish - health and wellbeing e-magazine - September 2021](#)

[Mental health and wellbeing information guide](#)

[Health and wellbeing resources](#)

[COVID-19 support for staff](#)



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