



May 2026

### Fun Fact

Dr Petrina on the radio!

When she's not working at Merri-bek Family Doctors, Dr Petrina Barson devotes a lot of time to her voluntary role as Director of the [Centre for a Compassionate Society](#). The Centre holds biannual 'Equinox Talks', and in March Petrina interviewed the wonderful Kon Karapanagiotidis – Founder and CEO of the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre, about 'Compassion in action'. ABC Radio National recorded the talk for their Big Ideas program, so you can hear Kon and Petrina live this Thursday May 21 at 8pm on ABC RN (AM 621), or via [this link](#) from 5pm that day.



Dr Petrina Barson and Kon Karapanagiotidis

### Health Promotion



Have you heard of RSV? RSV or Respiratory Syncytial Virus is a virus that predominantly affects the chest with severe chesty cold symptoms. It can lead to pneumonia, bronchitis and bronchiolitis and is potentially deadly for babies and the elderly. A new RSV vaccine has been developed and is now funded by the Australian Government for adults from the age of 75, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

from the age of 60, and pregnant women to protect their newborn babies (at 28-36 weeks gestation). Book in with your doctor for your free RSV vaccine if eligible; or discuss with your doctor the option of a purchasing the vaccine if you are in another high-risk group, such as adults over 50 with severe, ongoing medical illnesses.

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### Did you Know?

What's good for the planet is good for your health!



Australian households generate about 538,000 tonnes of soft plastic each year. Since the collapse of Australia's soft plastic recycling system in 2022, almost all of that has gone into landfill. Soft plastics do not biodegrade, and take hundreds to thousands of years to break down, all the while releasing toxic chemicals, microplastics and greenhouse gases. Now that a new recycling system is being established again via [selected supermarkets](#), Merri-

bek Family Doctors is collecting all our soft plastics for recycling. If you haven't already, consider getting back on the soft plastics recycling horse. Of course, even better for your health is to avoid plastics as much as possible, especially around your food!

### Heart Food



Enjoy with us this beautiful poem by 13thC Persian mystic Jalaluddin Rumi.

#### Let Go of Your Worries

Let go of your worries  
and be completely clear-hearted,  
like the face of a mirror  
that contains no images.  
If you want a clear mirror,  
behold yourself  
and see the shameless truth,  
which the mirror reflects.  
If metal can be polished  
to a mirror-like finish,  
what polishing might the mirror  
of the heart require?  
Between the mirror and the heart  
is this single difference:  
the heart conceals secrets,  
while the mirror does not.

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