



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL ISSUES

Inquiry into the prevalence, causes and impacts of loneliness in New South Wales

TERMS OF REFERENCE

That the Standing Committee on Social Issues inquire into and report on the prevalence, causes and impacts of loneliness in NSW, and in particular:

- (a) the extent of loneliness and social isolation in NSW and how this is measured and recorded, including opportunities for additional and/or improved data capture
- (b) the identification of populations most at risk of loneliness and social isolation
- (c) evidence of the psychological and physiological impacts of loneliness on people, including young people, the elderly, those living with a disability, those living in regional areas and the bereaved
- (d) evidence linking social connection to physical health
- (e) factors that contribute to the development of transient loneliness into chronic loneliness
- (f) the financial costs of loneliness to the NSW budget and the state economy and steps that can be taken to reduce the financial burden of loneliness
- (g) the identification of existing initiatives by government and non-government organisations to mitigate and reduce loneliness and social isolation
- (h) developments in other jurisdictions regarding the implementation of policies and initiatives relevant to the treatment of loneliness as a public health issue
- (i) steps the State Government can take to reduce the prevalence and impacts of loneliness in the community
- (j) steps that community, technology/social media companies, organisations, and individuals can take to reduce impact of loneliness on individuals and the community; and
- (k) any other related matters.

The terms of reference for the inquiry were referred to the committee by the Hon Rose Jackson MLC, Minister for Water, Housing, Mental Health, Youth, Homelessness and Minister for the North Coast on 10 July 2024, and adopted by the committee on 6 August 2024.

Committee membership

Hon Dr Sarah Kaine MLC	Australian Labor Party	<i>Chair</i>
Hon Natasha Maclaren Jones MLC*	Liberal Party	<i>Deputy Chair</i>
Hon Scott Barrett MLC*	The Nationals	
Dr Amanda Cohn	The Greens	
Hon Anthony D'Adam MLC	Australian Labor Party	
Hon Bob Nanva MLC	Australian Labor Party	
Hon Emily Suvaal MLC	Australian Labor Party	
Hon Taylor Martin MLC*	Independent	

- * The Hon Natasha Maclaren-Jones MLC substituted for the Hon Rachel Merton MLC from 14 August 2024 for the duration of the inquiry.
- * The Hon Taylor Martin MLC replaced the Hon Jeremy Buckingham MLC as a substantive member of the committee from 24 September 2024.¹
- * The Hon Scott Barrett MLC substituted for the Hon Sarah Mitchell MLC from 26 September 2024 for the duration of the inquiry.

¹ *Minutes*, NSW Legislative Council, 24 September 2024, p 1550.