INQUIRY INTO PREVALENCE, CAUSES AND IMPACTS OF LONELINESS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Organisation: St Vincent de Paul Society NSW

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Committee Chair
NSW Legislative Council Standing Committee on Social Issues

Send via email: socialissues@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Committee Chair,

The St Vincent de Paul Society NSW (the Society NSW) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the NSW Legislative Council Standing Committee on Social Issues' Inquiry into the prevalence, causes and impacts of loneliness in New South Wales.

The Society NSW are on the frontline of the loneliness epidemic and through our services we are seeing loneliness grow as an issue impacting the communities we assist. The work of this Committee is critical to highlight what has been dubbed as the "silent epidemic".[1]

Loneliness and social isolation are pervasive across NSW, leaving people feeling empty, hopeless, and alone.

The ongoing cost of living crisis, compounded by economic and social pressures, has increased demand for the Society NSW's services. We have seen a dramatic increase in the demand for our services over the last few years. The people we support are often those who experience profound social disconnection due to factors such as housing instability, poverty, disability, or mental health challenges.

The Society NSW provides critical support through programs and services aimed at fostering social connections and addressing the economic stress and uncertainty that can lead to loneliness and social isolation.

About the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW (the Society NSW)

The Society NSW is a member based organisation that has been assisting people experiencing disadvantage and hardship in NSW for 140 years.

The Society NSW currently has close to 5,000 members and 6,000 volunteers across the state, giving tirelessly of their time. In total, we have 368 local member networks, referred to as conferences, present in communities across NSW.

Our members, volunteers and employees assist people experiencing disadvantage with resources including food parcels and vouchers, financial assistance, help with energy bills and other expenses, budget counselling, school items for children, and the provision of other material items such as furniture, clothing, bedding and any other household items.

The Society NSW is also a leading provider of frontline services, with over 100 local services and programs across the state. These deal with a range of issues including homelessness, domestic and family violence, disability, disaster relief, youth wellbeing, refugee and migrant inclusion, alcohol and other drug addiction.

By offering a hand-up, we help people regain their dignity, and independence. We work with individuals to identify sustainable solutions, empowering them to rise above their challenges.

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[1] Hong, J., Nakamura, J., Sahakari, S. et al. (2024). 'The silent epidemic of loneliness: identifying the antecedents of loneliness using a lagged exposure-wide approach', Cambridge University Press. https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/psychological-medicine/article/silent-epidemic-of-loneliness-identifying-the-antecedents-of-loneliness-using-a-lagged-exposurewide-approach/ED398236B312F47EB56BCB9A6A1BC1FF.

Through person-to-person services, we help the people we assist meet their basic needs while guiding them toward self-sufficiency, whether it is a family on the verge of losing their home or a single parent struggling to provide for their children.

Uniquely, the Society NSW is proud to create and foster vital social connections that address loneliness, whilst utilising referral mechanisms to ensure essential needs are addressed as we help people on their journey to self-sufficiency.

The Loneliness Epidemic in New South Wales

Loneliness in NSW is a widespread issue with nearly 1 in 3 people regularly feeling isolated.[2] It can affect anyone, at any age. The problem is particularly severe among young adults aged 18-24 and middle-aged individuals, with 22% and 18% respectively reporting frequent loneliness.[3] Rural and regional residents are also disproportionately affected, with 35% feeling isolated compared to 30% in metropolitan areas.

Loneliness poses significant mental and physical health risks, making individuals 4.6 times more likely to experience depression,[4] and increasing the risk of early death by 32%.[5]

Vulnerable populations, especially young people facing homelessness, are acutely impacted, with 47% of homeless youth reporting chronic loneliness, compared to 18% of their housed peers.[6] Without a system of social supports, more and more cohorts risk slipping into homelessness and entering a recurring cycle of crisis.

Loneliness as a Continuum

Loneliness is not a one-time event but a continuum that can occur at any stage of life and affect all demographics. It is often a recurrent experience, requiring ongoing management rather than a one-time solution. While certain groups, such as young people or those living in regional communities, may be more vulnerable, data from Ending Loneliness Together (ELT) in their *State of the Nation Report 2023* indicates that loneliness is becoming more common across all demographics and regions in Australia.

Because loneliness exists as a continuum, we must challenge preexisting assumptions about who is at risk of loneliness. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare found that groups who transition out of crisis situations, such as homelessness, are still at high risk of experiencing loneliness even after their immediate needs are met.[7] This highlights how loneliness can exist beyond a period of acute crisis. Loneliness can even persist when an individual is surrounded by others, as pointed out in the *Australian Loneliness Report (2018),* which highlights that loneliness can continue even when someone is physically surrounded by others, suggesting that factors like quality of social connections and sense of belonging are crucial throughout life, not just during crises.[8]

Loneliness is pervasive, it can linger, and it can strike without clear warning. Recognising this helps service providers create programs and spaces that are prepared to intervene at all stages of a person's journey, regardless of their life circumstances.

By acknowledging loneliness as a continuum, service providers can design more adaptable and responsive interventions, capable of supporting individuals through various stages of their lives for sustained periods of their life.

[2] Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2023). *Australia's welfare 2023: Data insights*. AIHW. https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/d86bae1e-ddc8-45b6-bb85-6e85380d041f/aihw-aus-246.pdf.
[3] Ending Loneliness Together. (2023). *State of the nation report on social connection in Australia*. https://www.lonelinessawarenessweek.com.au​:contentReference{index=1}.
[4] Ibid.
[5] AIHW. (2023).
[6] Brennan, N., Boon, B., Di Nicola, K., Christie, R., & V. Baird. (2024). *The unfair divide: Disadvantage faced by young people who are homeless – A Mission Australia Youth Survey Report (Report Summary)*. Mission Australia.
[7] AIHW. (2023).
[8] Australian Psychological Society. (2018). *Australian Loneliness Report*. Swinburne University of Technology. https://psychology.org.au/getmedia/d985b431-6908-4363-81f7-6f9ac4437245/psychology-week-2018-australian-loneliness-report-1.pdf.

Shane's Story

Shane has attended the Society NSW's Ozanam Learning Centre (OLC) for almost 10 years (see further details about the centre below). He has mostly engaged with soft entry social activities such as playing pool. Two years ago, following the recommendation of a staff member who had build rapport and trust, Shane began a cooking class at OLC. He subsequently engaged in gardening program and while initially reluctant, he became the most engaged and committed member. During the COVID lockdown periods, Shane proactively volunteered to join community management of the Bourke Street Community Garden's Sunday working bee. Following a long period of unemployment, Shane hopes to enter a new career in horticulture, by first enrolling in a TAFE introductory course offered at OLC. Shane's journey with OLC and his involvement in various programs over the course of 10 years reflect the significance of maintaining trust and engagement over the long-term. Offering individuals a range of supports to encourage personal development and community involvement ensures that the risk of loneliness and social isolation is reduced and people are linked with supports when needed.

Poverty

The Society NSW regularly sees how disadvantage and hardship can exacerbate or contribute to experiences of loneliness. Access to the internet, the ability to travel, the ability to leave the house (whether because of accessibility or affordability), and even having a home all comes at a cost. For those experiencing hardship, their choices are extremely limited, if they have any at all. This can create and compound experiences of loneliness. Through our services we provide a point of human contact for those experiencing hardship, and those at risk of chronic loneliness. Hardship can create barriers to society, but service providers have a role in tearing down those barriers by creating a sense of community and providing ways in which people can once again engage with each other.

We also know that volunteering is a way in which people can avoid and manage their loneliness. Our membership offers a pathway for those who want to contribute through volunteering, and for those who have a vocation to help. The act of volunteering provides a dual benefit to both people who may be experiencing loneliness.

David, 28 years old *Vinnies NSW Volunteer*

"For me it's about doing what feels right and giving back by helping those in need. I enjoy the interactions with the different people who you meet, all of whom have their own interesting stories to tell. [It's] an opportunity not only for personal growth but also to support an organisation which operates amazing community programs."

The importance of the "Third Place"

Third places are those where people interact outside their first place (home) and second place (work).[9]

The response to the COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted people's abilities to access third places, as we saw the closure of public spaces. We also saw the merger of first and second places, as work and school transitioned online.

Third places are one way in which loneliness can be combatted and treated, as they create a space where individuals can meet new people, build new relationships, and have new social experiences.

It is crucial when considering third places that we prioritise the creation of culturally safe spaces. This includes considering accessibility for those living with disability, cultural safe protocols for First Nations people, and inclusive practices for other minorities such as the LGBTQIA+ community and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities. Successful third spaces bring people in and do not intentionally or unintentionally exclude them.

While we reference the third place, it is important to note many of the people who interact with our services may not have first or second places, contributing further to their social isolation and loneliness.

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[9] Oldenburg, R. & D. Brissett. (1982). 'The third place', *Qualitative Sociology*, vol. 5, pp. 265-284. https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/BF00986754.

Benefits to Addressing Loneliness

Addressing loneliness would provide a direct economic benefit to the Australian economy. Already, loneliness costs the Australian economy approximately $2.7 billion each year, or $1,565 for each person who becomes lonely.[10] These costs are incurred through increased access to healthcare, sick leave, absenteeism, presenteeism, and lifestyle behaviours.

Lonely people are more likely to engage in substance misuse to cope with their situation.[11] In some cases, their substance use causes the loneliness, in other cases their loneliness prompts the drug use. Regardless, loneliness remains to be a common factor when addressing lifestyle choices which have negative impact on an individual's health. Addressing loneliness would provide a benefit to a range of other societal issues which loneliness interacts with, such as substance use and homelessness, but also the challenges that can be caused by addiction.

People experiencing loneliness are more likely to have other poor health outcomes that can further isolate them, prevent them from working, or require healthcare interventions. People experiencing loneliness are 2 times more likely to have a chronic disease, this may be a cause of the loneliness but also a contributing factor or result of it. They are 4.6 times more likely to be depressed and 5.2 times more likely to have poorer wellbeing. Through early intervention and support, many people at risk or experiencing loneliness can be identified and assisted through their experience, which will reduce their likelihood of poor health outcomes and other comorbidities.

Yvonne's Story

Following the death of her partner, Yvonne experienced a severe case of post-traumatic stress disorder. Yvonne's partner had been very social and with his passing, her social contact was significantly reduced, with her elderly mother living further away and not having any children. Following referral from a health specialist, Yvonne joined the Vinnies Connect Program (see further details below). Yvonne was eventually matched with a mentor who had similarly lost a life partner. Developing a friendship, Yvonne and her mentor, walk their dogs together and participate in local arts and crafts programs. Yvonne's self-confidence has grown, and she is now in the process of looking for part-time employment again and writing children's stories. She attributes much of her growth and ability to move forward to meeting her mentor.

By investing in programs that address loneliness, the NSW government will receive strong returns and those at risk of loneliness will have improved health outcomes. We know that for every $1 invested in programs that address loneliness, there is a return on investment between $2.14 to $2.87.[12]

Our Experiences and Services

The Society NSW members and volunteers provide emotional support and companionship to people in need, along with the provision of welfare services. Our professional services are also a place where people can seek help and build their social capital. These services include homelessness engagement hubs, drop-in centres, assertive outreach, community participation programs, and social inclusion services. People we assist through our professional services report increased social connectedness and inclusion, with rates of feeling part of the community and satisfaction with personal relationships.

Ozanam Learning Centre in Woolloomooloo

The Society NSW provides a third place for our participants through the Ozanam Learning Centre in Woolloomooloo. The inner city has a disproportionate population of people experiencing homelessness and at risk of homelessness. The 2016 Census identified the City of Sydney as the NSW Local Government Area (LGA) with the highest population of people experiencing homelessness across New South Wales. In addition, there are a considerable number of social housing residents in the inner city. This population frequently experience isolation

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[10] Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre. (2021). *Stronger Together: Loneliness and social connectedness in Australia*. https://bcec.edu.au/assets/2021/11/139532_BCEC-Stronger-Together-report_WEB.pdf.

[11] Bragard, E., Giorgi, S., Juneau, P. & B. Curtis. (2022) 'Daily diary study of loneliness, alcohol, and drug use during the COVID-19 Pandemic', *Alcohol Clinical & Experimental Research*, vol. 46(8), pp. 1539-1551, https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9429816/.

[12] Ending Loneliness Together. (2021). *Pre-Budget Submission 2021-2022: A National Strategy to Address Loneliness and Social Isolation*. https://treasury.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-05/171663_ending_loneliness_together.pdf.

and exclusion from the broader community. The Centre is located adjacent to the Matthew Talbot Hostel (MTH), which provides accommodation to men aged over 21 experiencing homelessness.

The community centre works with community members to support meaningful learning and personal development, and to create lasting connections. The Centre provides a safe space for everyone to connect and grow, whilst running programs that focus on personal development, creativity, health and wellbeing, Programs include living skills, cooking, art, and vital recovery support such as SMART recovery and Narcotics Anonymous.

Acting as a hub for community and practical skills, the centre plays an important role in increasing social participation and reducing loneliness People who have engaged with OLC have noted:

"I wouldn't be alive if it wasn't for this program."

"It's so great to have an email address now. I feel like I'm much more connected to everything."

"Doing art at the OLC has helped me feel better about myself and helped me to make friends. I am very happy when I am doing art at the OLC."

Sam's Story

Sam is a 52 year old man who has previously suffered from depression, suicidal ideation and long-standing alcohol dependency issues. He was referred by one of the Society NSW's alcohol and other drug services, Continuing Coordinated Care Program, to OLC. Sam had a new phone and microwave purchased for him. He is now living a higher quality of life and is pursuing new goals and plans in partnership with his caseworker.

Robert's Story

Robert was a resident of MTH for four months following a break down in his domestic relationship. During his stay at MTH, Robert engaged with the OLC and joined the centre's cooking and gardening programs. Through these programs he was able to become debt free by paying some fines via a Work Development Order (WDO). Beyond the WDO, Robert participated in Social Touch Footy, joining a 'Walk and Talk' program semi-regularly and submitting some poetry to a public art project. He secure long-term housing but returns to OLC to participate in social sporting activities. Robert reflected: "This place is like a second home to me. The support from both the Matthew Talbot and the OLC have been out of this world. I feel forever indebted to everyone here".

Men's Sheds

Haberfield Men's Shed (the Shed) is one of our ongoing successful partnerships and another third place where our participants can engage in a safe social environment.

The Shed provides activities including woodwork, manual arts, upholstery, gardening programs and social interaction opportunities for retired men, war veterans and persons with a disability or mental illness residing in the local area.

It also provides woodwork and upholstery programs for people with disabilities in partnership with St Vincent de Paul's Mary Mackillop Outreach.

Some of the individuals supported by the Men's Shed are vulnerable, marginalized and working towards overcoming personal adversity and isolation.

Vinnies Vans

Vinnies Vans are a mobile outreach service that provide meals and snacks, blankets, toiletries, hot beverages, and, most importantly, companionship and referrals where needed to people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. They comprise a fleet of 12 vans operating across Sydney and Greater Western Sydney, the Central Coast, Wollongong and the Shoalhaven, Orange, Lismore, and Coffs Harbour ensuring we reach highly at-risk communities with our companionship and supports.

On average 4-6 volunteers attend per night on each van run to offer the service and build relationships with visitors or as we prefer 'companions'. These volunteers are trained in communication, managing challenging behaviours, child safe training, WHS, service delivery and referral pathways. Other services include hosting community BBQ events on housing estates and local council parks to encourage connection, socialisation with fellow locals and to

give opportunities for support if needed. To build a sense of community and solidarity, our Vinnies Van attended the Sydney Homeless Memorial Service this year to acknowledge those most vulnerable who have lost their lives due to homelessness and to build relationships and connect with their loved ones offering support.

Developing the Vinnies Vans fleet into a full mobile wrap-around support service that not only meets peoples' needs but alleviates social isolation and loneliness is a high priority project for the Society NSW.

Selena's Story

Selena is a 26 year old First Nations woman who arrived in Sydney with no social connections, having relocated from South Australia. Without social supports, she began a period of sleeping rough. Through interactions with Vinnies Vans volunteers, Selena was referred to the Women's and Girls' Emergency Centre, where she was provided with crisis accommodation and case management to pursue next steps.

Vinnies Connect

The Vinnies Connect program is a mentorship initiative that matches people experiencing loneliness and a diagnosed mental illness with volunteer mentors. Through regular meetups, phone calls, or virtual check-ins, the program facilitates social connection, goal achievement, and increased self-confidence for participants over the course of 12 months. This structured support helps individuals rebuild social networks and engage more fully in their communities. Most participants in the program are not in active employment and in receipt of an Age or Disability Support Pension or have individualised NDIS plans. Some referrals to the program include students.

The mentorship program has led to increased self-confidence and goal achievement among participants, who benefit from regular social interaction and support. Among volunteers, 87% stated that being involved in the program had a positive impact on their lives. The program maintains ongoing connections with alumni events including regular newsletters and social events. One of the primary strengths of the program is that it is designed around fostering companionship through everyday engagement rather than a welfare model.

Participants in the Vinnies Connect program have reflected:

"I feel that I've learned so much from Natasha and I hope that she has also learned from me."

"Our relationship has been humbling, enriching and rewarding for both [of us]."

"Life is definitely richer now and I feel confident to reach out in other directions…we have a great relationship."

"Our conversations are open, and I feel honored and grateful that [my mentee] has found trust in me."

"My world had fallen apart, and I felt deserted. My volunteer was a sudden light in a seemingly endless dark tunnel. These days, I am so much better, and she is a huge part of that."

"I've learned to be her mentor- not her fixer. We've formed a genuine friendship where we bounce ideas off each other as friends and equals."

Loneliness and Other Vulnerable Cohorts

Certain groups are disproportionately affected by loneliness and social isolation, many of whom are central to the work of the Society NSW. We have identified the following cohorts as particularly high risk:

Young People

As identified in the ELT *State of the Nation Report 2023*, people aged 18-24 experience the highest rates of loneliness.[13] While we know social media plays a huge role in why younger people may be feeling lonelier, it is our experience additional factors, such as poverty or interaction with the legal justice system can exacerbate this loneliness.

Regional Australians

Regional Australians face unique challenges when it comes to loneliness. We know that those living in more regional and remote areas were more likely to be lonely than those living in metropolitan cities.[14] This is due to

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[13] Ending Loneliness Together. (2023). *State of the nation report on social connection in Australia*.
[14] Ibid.

factors such distance, lack of services, and poverty. For example, someone living regionally experiencing poverty is less likely to be able to afford internet connection, they are less likely to be able to afford to travel to see friends and loved ones, and are less likely to be able to meet in third places.

First Nations People

First Nations Australians face significant risks of loneliness, with many of our First Nations clients affected by the ongoing effects of intergenerational trauma and a loss of connection to country and culture.[15] Many First Nations people experience systematic inequality. Over-policing, disproportionately high rates of incarceration and the removal of children, as well as being forced off country, disempowers First Nations people and isolates them from family, country, and broader society. This can exacerbate feelings of loneliness. Anecdotally, clients tell our volunteers and case managers that they encounter numerous barriers to accessing help and wrap-around services, which in turn resulting in loneliness and profound social isolation.

Other Groups

It is important to note a range of other groups are likely to experience loneliness because of their circumstances in life. People with disabilities, older Australians, people experiencing homelessness, people with substance use issues, and migrants and refugees all are at heightened risk of experiencing loneliness of social isolation.

By treating loneliness as a continuum, and by providing frontline workers capacity to screen and support those experiencing it, all demographics should be captured.

What is the solution to loneliness and isolation?

There is no one solution to ending isolation and loneliness in our communities.

The Society NSW is seeing firsthand the toll that the loneliness epidemic is taking on our participants. We know how hardship can create and compound loneliness, and that loneliness can strike at any time.

Service providers have a key role to play in addressing loneliness in New South Wales, and the Society NSW already does through initiatives outlined above. However, there is more than can be done, and through partnership with government, together we can turn the tide of loneliness and rebuild or local communities.

Recommendations

We propose six solutions which can be implemented to address the loneliness epidemic:

1. **Normalise conversations about loneliness and acknowledge that it is something that people will experience throughout their lives.**

While we know that 1 in 3 people report feeling affected by loneliness, people are not comfortable to openly talk about their feelings of social isolation and disconnection[16]. This impacts the ability of services to identify and support those at risk. We need to change the perception that there is something wrong with people who are lonely – we need to lift the stigma associated with it. In 2023, Australia had its first Loneliness Awareness Week,[17] which began a campaign to end the stigma of loneliness across workplaces, communities, schools, and families. The peak body for loneliness, Ending Loneliness Together, also provides resources to combat

stigma and barriers to addressing loneliness on their website. Traditional stigma-reducing campaigns—like those used for other mental health conditions—should be expanded, with collaboration between government, community groups, and frontline service providers to create a culture of open dialogue.

2. **Standardised Data Collection and national guidance for loneliness**

As with any health crisis, data is critical for understanding it and developing policies to address it. Currently, the absence of standardised data limits the capacity to assess and address the problem. However, if you were to

[15] Groundswell Foundation. (2022). *Connections Matter: A Report on the Impacts of Loneliness in Australia*. Groundswell Foundation.

[16] Ending Loneliness Together. (2023). *State of the nation report on social connection in Australia*.

[17] Ending Loneliness Together. (2023). 'Australia's first Loneliness Awareness Week (7-13 August)'. https://endingloneliness.com.au/australias-first-loneliness-awareness-week-7-13-august-and-the-release-of-australias-first-and-largest-state-of-the-nation-report-on-social-connection/.

compare it to any other disease, State and Federal health bodies would have standardised methods of collection this information.

Ending Loneliness Together has developed guidance for loneliness,[18] which outlines definitions and measurements options, such as the UCLA-Loneliness scale, 4-item version, and the single-stem measurement.

A single-item measure of loneliness has been adopted by the United Kingdom[19] and was a recommendation in the Ending Loneliness Together 2023 Federal Treasury submission[20].

In the absence of a federal definition, guidelines, and data collection, we recommend NSW Health develops its own, based on the Ending Loneliness Together guidance, or work with the Federal Department of Health to set national standards.

3. **Government-supported training and education for frontline staff on loneliness and how to support those experiencing it**

Frontline workers play a crucial role in identifying and addressing loneliness. To improve their effectiveness, the NSW Government should support training programs like the world's first Pharmacist Training Program on Loneliness developed by the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia. All frontline workers—healthcare providers, social workers, and community volunteers—should receive training on how to recognise loneliness and offer appropriate support. This could involve developing a standardised training module in collaboration with the health and social services sector and funding organisations to implement this training widely.

4. **Creation of a Centralised Referral System or Helpline**

Establishing a central referral system for individuals experiencing loneliness and social isolation will enable proper follow-up and connection to services. This could be a standalone system or integrated into an existing helpline, such as Lifeline or NSW Health's Mental Health Line. Supported by a public awareness campaign to reduce stigma, the helpline could direct individuals to localised services and community spaces across NSW to provide longer-term support and essential social connections.

5. **Promote Cross-Sector Collaboration**

Addressing loneliness requires a coordinated, multi-sector approach, given its intersection with health, housing, and social services. The NSW Government should lead efforts to strengthen partnerships between government agencies, healthcare providers, non-profits, philanthropic organisations and private businesses. This includes sharing best practices, pooling resources, and developing integrated intervention strategies that address the root causes of loneliness.

6. **Integrate Social Connection into Public Services**

Embedding social connection strategies into healthcare, aged care, and housing can prevent and reduce loneliness and social isolation and foster a more resilient society. NSW Health could incorporate social prescribing allowing GPs to refer patients experiencing loneliness to community-based activities, like successful programs in the UK.[21] Expansion of the Community Visitors Scheme would also ensure isolated seniors are regularly engaged. Public housing services could also promote social connection through designed communal spaces and supporting tenant-led community activities. Embedding these strategies across NSW public services can improve health outcomes and reduce the social isolation that leads to long-term economic and social costs.

7. **Investment in social programs that combat loneliness**

Investing in evidence-based programs that combat loneliness offers significant returns to government and benefits the wider community. By identifying and scaling successful initiatives, NSW can mitigate the negative economic impacts of severe loneliness, such as increased healthcare costs and reduced productivity. Programs that have

[18] Ending Loneliness Together. (2021). *A Guide to Measuring Loneliness for Community Organisations*. https://endingloneliness.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/A-Guide-to-Measuring-Loneliness-for-Community-Organisations_Ending-Loneliness-Together.pdf.
[19] Office for National Statistics (UK). (2018). *Measuring loneliness: guidance for use of the national indicators on surveys*. https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/methodologies/measuringlonelinessguidanceforuseofthenationalindicatorsonsurveys
[20] Ending Loneliness Together. (2023). *Measuring what matters: loneliness (Treasury Submission 2023)*. https://treasury.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-03/c2023-379612-ending_loneliness_together.pdf
[21] Groundswell Foundation.(2022).

demonstrated effectiveness in other regions should be piloted and evaluated, with a focus on those that foster meaningful social connections and long-term engagement. Part of the Homelessness Innovation Fund could be allocated to encourage innovative models of care to address loneliness and allow organisations to implement new and innovative ways to address this issue.

Conclusion

We thank the committee for the opportunity to make a submission on the prevalence, causes and impacts of loneliness in New South Wales. If you have any questions relating to this submission, please contact Veronica Newman at

Yours sincerely,

Yolanda Saiz
CEO