

Inquiry into Social Isolation and Loneliness

Submission Template - Individual Experience

The Committee invites submissions addressing any aspect of the terms of reference, from all interested parties.

Submissions don't need to be perfectly formatted, it can be as simple as sending an email. It's basically anything written or recorded about your experience or story. The most important part is that the Committee hears from people who are socially isolated or lonely, and those who support them.

To make it easy we've put together a few guide questions below to help you formulate your submission. You can simply answer the relevant questions provided, or use the questions to guide your own story.

The closing date for written submissions is **5:00pm, Wednesday 18 August 2021**.

1. What has been your experience of being socially isolated or lonely? What were the circumstances around becoming socially isolated or lonely?

I am mother of two little children and share house with my husband and kids. My family is overseas, and my husband's family lives out of Queensland. We have been in lockdown on and off since 2020. Even the lockdown has been for short duration, it has impacted me badly. My second child was born in 2020 and border restrictions forced me not to see my parents or in laws during the crucial time of motherhood. It was a very hard journey for me to deal with a new baby and a toddler mostly on my own. I was depressed most of the time and I did not enjoy my baby as much I did first time when I was allowed to see my family.

2. What sort of support do you think would be helpful to you when you are experiencing loneliness and isolation? Has anything you tried worked to reduce feelings of isolation? *This can be any kind of support eg Family, Friends, Community, Government support, guidance, advice etc?*

QLD government blocked any visitors during lockdown, so I was not even to see any local friend or even my neighbours and talk over a coffee. I think having a chat with my friend face to face would have helped me better than locking us against our wish. I understand the government's intention was to keep us safe, but it is against human rights to keep us locked and not see our family or friends. Motherhood comes with lots of challenges, and I had to put on my strong face and deal with all my worries alone because we were all forced to stay home.

3. Do you feel there are barriers to overcoming feelings of social isolation and loneliness? If so, can you explain what they are for you? *Please write as many as you like and it can be any kind of barrier you feel such as personal, social, technology, cost, access.*

People need human contact and technology such as skype, or video call can never make for the feeling you get when you see your family and friend in person. Virtual

contact can never replace the joys of seeing your parents in person. I cry almost every day thinking that I will not be able to see my parent any time soon and show them their grandkids, who are growing so fast. Closed borders are the biggest barrier for me. I have seen in news that rich people are allowed to travel and see their family, but I do not have that kind of money and this double standard makes me more depressed.

4. Did the COVID-19 pandemic affect you and your situation with social isolation and loneliness? Can you explain how it affected you?

Covid-19 had affected me deeply. I used to be a happy and easy-going person but now I get panic and depressed easily. Lockdown gives me anxiety and last week lockdown in QLD forced me to work from home with two kids. I am not sure how government officials expect people to work while caring full time two little kids. Covid-19 lockdown has not only caused loneliness, but it has also reduced my working hours and work output. I am not able to devote to work with a depressed and isolated mind.

Are there any other experiences you'd like to share?

Hard lockdown restrictions that you should not be leaving home meant no park time and day care for my kids. Kids need to play outside, and they also need day care. No matter how hard I try I cannot replace the teaching my kids receive at day care. My toddler missed his friends and going to park/beach, and this broke my heart to see him upset during lockdown. I would prefer that government think about family like us who do not have any other family support before they impose such restrictions. We should be allowed day care and visit to parks during lockdown.

With kind regards,

Kavita Bisht


Email: CSSC@parliament.qld.gov.au

OR POST TO:

Committee Secretary
Community Support and Services Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000