

Nerang Neighbourhood Centre



17 August 2021

Dear Secretary,

Re: Neighbourhood Centres and the Parliamentary Inquiry into Loneliness and Social Isolation

The Nerang Neighbourhood Centre is one of 140 Neighbourhood and Community Centres around Queensland responding to loneliness and social isolation in our local communities. Neighbourhood Centres exist to foster connection, belonging, participation and inclusion for their communities and we have been doing this here in our community for over 30 years.

Neighbourhood Centres welcome everyone, regardless of race, gender, sexuality, religion, age or social status and by their very nature build connections between individuals and organisations, particularly those who are isolated, vulnerable and disenfranchised.

Our centre presently offers a suite of community programs and services all identified by our community as much needed. We provide;

- a weekly food aid service
- a youth employment program
- a youth support program
- counselling & case work
- free tax return help
- drug and alcohol support
- bulk billed psychologist
- advocacy
- support groups
- a community space to meet & greet

In considering how to reduce loneliness and social isolation in Queensland, the Queensland Government needs to adequately resource Neighbourhood Centres as the key pieces of social infrastructure they are.

Our centre supports the Queensland Families and Communities Association (QFCA) submission to this inquiry. QFCA is the peak body of Neighbourhood Centres in Queensland and recommend:

- **Increase Neighbourhood Centre Investment** to a minimum of 2.5 workers plus overheads per centre to ensure adequate resourcing of place-based pro-connection responses
- **Strength Based Awareness Campaign emphasising the key role of NCC's**, creating increased awareness of centres as hubs of connection for social isolated individuals
- **Enhance Neighbourhood Centre Digital and Physical Infrastructure** to connect isolated individuals in communities using hybrid online and in-person methods
- **Resource QFCA to deliver additional NCC sector support** including implementing a NCC Reporting Framework which measures social isolation and loneliness.

Additional resourcing by the Queensland Government can further enhance the Neighbourhood Centre sector's capacity to invest in community-led, place-based solutions to the problem of loneliness and social isolation in our state.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vicky Rose', written over a light blue rectangular background.

Vicky Rose
Centre Coordinator