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MURILLA COMMUNITY CENTRE INCORPORATED

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Submission to Parliamentary Inquiry into Loneliness and Social Isolation.

Submission prepared by:
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Introduction

Murilla Community Centre Incorporated has been providing Information and Support to Families and Individuals for the past 30 years. Miles is situated in Western Downs and assistance is provided to people within the surrounding geographic rural areas including Wandoan, Taroom, Condamine, Chinchilla, Meandarra, Drillham, Dulacca and Jackson. Our Centre plays an important role in reducing social isolation for members of the community by providing a welcoming place for people to connect and develop friendships.

Murilla Community Centre sponsors the following programs: Family Support, Community Development, Murilla Community Newsletter, Centrelink/Agency, Medicare & Child Support, NILS (No Interest Loan Scheme), Emergency Relief, Centre-Based & In-Home Respite, Community Bus with Wheel-chair Lift, Mens & Womens Shed, Family Day Care, Child Care Centre & Kindergarten & Outside School Hours Care/Vacation Care, Second-hand bookshop which is operated by volunteers.

Social Isolation in the Miles and outlying rural areas

Murilla Community Centre provides quarterly reports to Department of Communities and our reports always include comments on Social Isolation, Loneliness and Homelessness as we provide ongoing support to clients in these situations.

Shortage of Housing and the increased cost of rentals in the suburbs and larger regional centres, has seen individuals and families seeking lower rentals in the smaller rural communities which has really impacted on our Centre.

Sponsoring body for:

Rural Family Support Office
 Murilla Family Day Care Scheme
 Murilla Respite Service
 Community Development Program
 Rural Business Advisor
 Murilla Long Day Care Centre
 Outside School Hours / Vacation Care

Our Rural Family Support staff also provide support and encouragement to rural people living on isolated farming properties. This contact is often maintained via phone and email, especially during the COVID-19 shut-downs.

Our Centre-Based Respite and In-Home Respite Care fosters connection to the frail aged people who feel lonely and socially isolated.

Community & Neighbourhood Centres, Loneliness and Isolation

Community & Neighbourhood Centres offer a soft entry point of contact and are committed to delivering a high standard of service to consumers regardless of age, gender, sexuality, race, creed, language, ethnicity, cultural background, religion, disability, socio economic disadvantage or geographic location.

Unfortunately Community & Neighbourhood Centres are under resourced despite the fact that we provide so many opportunities for our communities and play a central role in reducing loneliness and social isolation on a Statewide basis.

Community & Neighbourhood Centres have the knowledge to respond with more solutions which are unique to individual communities and will benefit everyone in the long term. Increased support and building self-esteem enables people to find a purpose, and make connections which ultimately leads to employment.

Conclusion

Members of the Board of Management of Murilla Community Centre Incorporated are happy to participate in the Parliamentary Inquiry into Loneliness and Social Isolation. This has long been an issue and huge concern for our organisation, as it affects so many and has been compounded by the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Our purpose is to support, connect and empower our communities and are very well placed to participate in the solutions. We are a member of QFCA and support their recommendations which positions Community and Neighbourhood Centres as the ideal community-based vehicle for addressing social isolation and loneliness.

