



18th August 2021

FASSIFERN COMMUNITY CENTRE

4 Little High Street,
Boonah QLD 4310

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Dear Secretary,

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

The Carinity Fassifern Community Centre, located at 4 Little High Street Boonah is one of 140 Neighbourhood and Community Centres (NCC's) around Queensland responding to loneliness and social isolation in our local communities. Neighbourhood Centres are place-based social infrastructure that foster connection, belonging, participation and inclusion.

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 offers the following services:

- Drug & Alcohol Counselling
- Centrelink Agency
- Financial Assistance – Hardship/NILS loans
- U3A computer courses
- Volunteer resource agency
- Support groups, carers groups (ASD & FASD)
- Youth services – Get Set for Work Programs
- Skilling Queenslanders for Work Programs
- Home of RIM FM radio
- Information and referral
- Free Friday community BBQ
- Counselling and mediation services
- Social activities/Community Café 11
- Rural Women's Group
- Courses training and opportunities program
- Job Training services
- NDIS Capacity Building Services
- NDIS Support Coordination
- Social Enterprise Hairdressing salon
- Speech Pathology/Access to Allied Health Professionals
- iHear Audiologist

Carinity is a not-for-profit charitable organisation and its mission is to provide high quality care and services, making a real difference to people in need. Our organisational values – compassion, respect, excellence, accountability, teamwork and engaging positively guide our behaviour at work. Carinity provides around forty services to 16,000 clients in Queensland every year. Carinity has over 1,700 compassionate employees and volunteers statewide who provide a range of services including supported aged care, retirement and lifestyle, home care services, emergency accommodation, counselling to young families and youth, respite, chaplaincy, and education for disengaged youth.

Although Carinity Fassifern Community Centre is part of a larger organisation, a small team of dedicated staff and their local knowledge has fostered networks and forged relationships to be recognised as leaders of community development and innovative services, providing many benefits for our region. The Community Centre is place based in West Moreton and is the state's fastest growing region, with a population that is expected to double to 587,600 by 2036. Our community has higher than average rates of chronic disease and premature death. One in two people are considered to be socio-economically disadvantaged. As the population grows and ages, so too does the demand for health and human services.

Walking alongside those in need, we strive to ensure that no one is denied the chance to live a happier life because of adverse circumstances. We also help to change lives for the better by linking people with activities and opportunities to enhance stronger connection and inclusiveness in their local communities, reducing social isolation and mental health issues.

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.

Kind regards,



Samantha Caves
Carinity Fassifern Community Centre
4 Little High Street Boonah

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