



6-10 Mowbray Street, Port Douglas, Queensland, 4877

Phone: 07 4099 5518 Fax: 07 4099 4041

Email: [REDACTED]

Web: www.portdouglascommunityservicenetwork.org.au

Towards an Empowered, Resilient and Sustainable Community

Dear Secretary,

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

The Port Douglas Neighbourhood Centre 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.

The Port Douglas Community Service Network's mission is to nurture the existing strengths and future wellbeing of the community, to relieve poverty, distress and misfortune and to support and advocate for our local community with a priority for those with limited opportunities and choices. We undertake a number of weekly social activities such as Art and craft, Games Group, Men's breakfast, Ladies Brunch, Community Lunch, community services (No Interest Loans, Emergency Relief, Advice Information and Referral and Centrelink Access), Child and Parent Programs (Playgroup and New Parents Group). We run one-off activities and special events aimed at Seniors, new parents and the vulnerable and isolated in our community. We have Port Douglas' only Opportunity shop which saves many items from landfill and provides the community with low cost homewares and clothing.

A number of external service providers also use our premises, these include Cairns Regional Domestic Violence Service, Busy at Work and Workways (Employment Services), Uniting Care financial counselling, Oticon and Australian Hearing (Audiology services, Cairns Regional Women's Legal Service as well as a Child and Maternal Health Nurse and ATODS (alcohol and other drugs counselling).

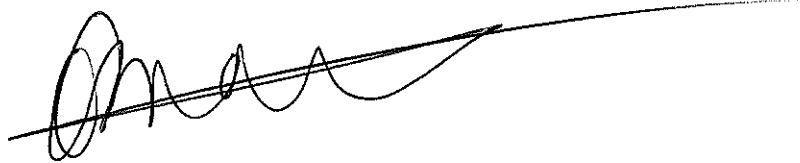
In considering how to reduce loneliness and social isolation in Queensland, the Queensland Government needs to adequately resource Neighbourhood Centres as the key pieces of social infrastructure they are.

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Emma Travers', written over a horizontal line.

Emma Travers

Manager

Port Douglas Community Service Network

Ph: [REDACTED]

Fx: [REDACTED]

E: [REDACTED]

W: www.portdouglascommunityservicenetwork.org.au

Facebook: www.facebook.com/PortDouglasCommunityServiceNetwork