



**Hervey Bay  
Neighbourhood Centre**  
*The Heart Of Our Community*

ABN 34 683 873 965

Dear Secretary,

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

The Hervey Bay 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.

Across our centres we offers the Community Visitors Scheme (CVS), Seniors Legal and Support Services (SLASS), Transport Services, Multicultural Respite, Community Action for a Multicultural Society (CAMS), Comfort Kitchen (200+ free meals per week), Local Learning Network (LLN – intergenerational skills sharing and networking), Play with your Kids – Playgroups, Youth Centre, Youth Mentoring and currently under construction a new Wellness Centre. We have over 20,000 community engagements every year through various services and events that are delivered by our programs and activities.

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:

- o **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
- o **Strength Based Awareness Campaign emphasising the key role of NCC's**, creating increased awareness of centres as hubs of connection for social isolated individuals
- o **Enhance Neighbourhood Centre Digital and Physical Infrastructure** to connect isolated individuals in communities using hybrid online and in-person methods
- o **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

Tanya Stevenson  
Chief Executive Officer