



Speech By  
**Corrine McMillan**


**MEMBER FOR MANSFIELD**

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**ADJOURNMENT**

**Mount Gravatt Community Centre, Social Isolation Project**

 **Ms McMILLAN** (Mansfield—ALP) (6.28 pm): I rise in the House this evening to speak about the growing problem of loneliness and isolation and how a local organisation, the Mount Gravatt Community Centre, is tackling this issue. Loneliness and social isolation have serious consequences for individual health and wellbeing, with studies finding that it is associated with a 29 per cent increase in the risk of coronary heart disease and a 32 per cent increase in the risk of stroke. The combined effects of loneliness and social isolation are recognised as pressing issues facing societies around the world. A former US surgeon general warns of an 'epidemic of loneliness', and the newly appointed Minister for Loneliness in the UK is rolling out a nationwide multiagency loneliness strategy.

Supported by the local community, the Mount Gravatt Community Centre and the University of Queensland have partnered to address social isolation and loneliness in Mount Gravatt through the 'Journey to Wellness' social isolation project—the first of its kind in Australia. This is an important project and by providing one-off funding of \$100,000 this government made it possible. The project will run for 12 months and is being implemented and managed by the Mount Gravatt Community Centre.

The project has engaged a community link worker whose role is to connect socially isolated members of the community to meaningful group programs and activities through social prescribing. Social prescribing is a way of linking patients in primary care with sources of group support within the community. It provides medical professionals with a non-medical referral option that can operate alongside existing treatments to improve the health and wellbeing of my constituents.

The link worker will receive client referrals from numerous sources including GPs, members of the community and self-referrals. They will then meet with the clients to discuss their health and wellbeing goals and identify groups or activities in the local area which align with their interests. A community led approach has the potential to ease the pressure on our primary health system at the same time as meeting the social needs of individuals. The project has also committed to developing a community resource book, which will detail the groups and activities available in our local area.

In parallel with the 'Journey to Wellness' social isolation project, the team from the University of Queensland who are leading academics in this area will drive a research project on the effects of social prescribing. One of the expected benefits of the research project is that it will include a validated social prescribing model that can be implemented in multiple settings across Australia. It is my absolute pleasure to once again work with the Mount Gravatt Community Centre and the University of Queensland as together we lead this project for the benefit of many vulnerable people in my community.