



Speech By  
**Hon. Leanne Enoch**


**MEMBER FOR ALGESTER**

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Record of Proceedings, 27 May 2021

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Social Isolation and Loneliness**

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Alger—ALP) (Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts) (10.11 am): As Queensland continues to unite and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to recognise the effect the pandemic has had on many Queenslanders. We know that for many people the pandemic has been an isolating and lonely experience, particularly for some of the most vulnerable people in our community. In fact, the Australian Bureau of Statistics reported that loneliness was the personal stressor most experienced by Australians during the height of the pandemic, with one in five people experiencing feelings of loneliness and social isolation.

That is why during the 2020 state election the Palaszczuk government committed to examining the issue of social isolation and loneliness in our communities through a parliamentary inquiry. Today I am pleased to announce that we are delivering on that commitment. Today the government will move a motion that the parliamentary Community Support and Services Committee conduct an inquiry into social isolation and loneliness in Queensland. The parliamentary inquiry will consider the drivers and impacts of, and effective responses to, social isolation and loneliness in our communities.

Across the world, we are seeing growing awareness and recognition of the issue of social isolation and loneliness. This is an issue that has a significant impact on the physical and mental health and wellbeing of many people. We know that Queenslanders such as seniors, people with disability and their carers, people with mental illness and young people can be among the most susceptible to experiencing social isolation and loneliness, but social isolation and loneliness are not just experienced by these particular groups of Queenslanders. This is something that can be experienced by anyone. That is why we are providing opportunities for all Queenslanders to provide input into this parliamentary inquiry. In particular, people who have been impacted by social isolation and loneliness will be encouraged to contribute their stories and experiences. We want everyone to be able to have their say.

This is just one of the actions we are taking as a government to address social isolation and loneliness in our communities. Through the Care Army, our investment in neighbourhood and community centres and various other initiatives, we have been working hard to connect Queenslanders and make sure they are engaged and included in their communities. We have also positioned our frontline housing and homelessness services to work directly with people to help develop tenancy and support connections. These areas go hand in hand with addressing social isolation and loneliness, ensuring that Queenslanders are able to stay digitally connected in their communities and socially connected in their neighbourhoods. This inquiry will further complement our work and aid us in developing and implementing a strategy to further address social isolation and loneliness in Queensland. I encourage all Queenslanders to take part in this inquiry.