

Submission
No 28

INQUIRY INTO PREVALENCE, CAUSES AND IMPACTS OF LONELINESS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Name: Mrs Keummi Joo-Short

Date Received: 30 October 2024

Individual Submission to the Inquiry on Social Infrastructure Funding for Lonely Individuals Like Me

Introduction

As an engaged Inner West community member, I am writing to express my support for sustainable funding of Neighbourhood and Community Centres (NCCs) in NSW. For example, the Newtown Neighbourhood Centre serves as a space for Inner West individuals to connect and share. These centres play an essential role in fostering social connectedness and supporting people across diverse communities. I believe this inquiry is a valuable opportunity to advocate for core funding that will enable NCCs to continue their impactful work.

The Value of NCCs: Personal Perspective

From my experience, NCCs are more than just service providers; they act as vital hubs of social connection. These centres bring people together, foster friendships, and provide a sense of belonging. Whether through organised programs or informal gatherings, NCCs help individuals feel supported and become part of a community.

The work of NCCs also goes beyond programs specifically targeting loneliness and social isolation. They promote inclusion and create opportunities for people to engage, share knowledge, and contribute to their local areas. In my own interactions with an NCC, I have seen how small community activities—like morning teas, workshops, or support groups—can make a meaningful difference in people's lives.

Why Core Funding Is Critical

The social impact of NCCs cannot be sustained without adequate and reliable funding. As community needs grow, it becomes increasingly important to ensure these centres have the resources to continue delivering meaningful programs. Core funding would allow NCCs to:

- Maintain stable and consistent services for people who rely on them

- Attract and retain skilled staff and volunteers

- Build the capacity to respond to new social challenges

- Continue fostering social cohesion at the grassroots level

Without this financial support, many centres may struggle to operate effectively, putting essential community connections at risk.

Conclusion

I urge the government to recognise NCCs as essential social infrastructure and provide core funding to support their operations. These centres are the foundation of strong, connected communities, and investing in them ensures that everyone has access to opportunities for social connection and support.

Thank you for your consideration of my submission.