

Submission
No 126

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

Organisation: South Asian Research and Advocacy Hub (SARAH)

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Committee Chair: Hon. Dr Sarah Kaine

Standing Committee on Social Issues

New South Wales Legislative Council

8th November 2024

Submission to the Inquiry into the Prevalence, Causes and Impacts of Loneliness in New South Wales

To whomsoever it may concern,

The South Asian Research and Advocacy Hub (SARAH) greatly appreciates the opportunity to submit to the Inquiry into the Prevalence, Causes and Impacts of Loneliness in New South Wales. SARAH is a volunteer research group formed last year as part of the Law Reform and Social Justice Department (LRSJ) at the Australian National University College of Law. We are run by South Asian students who aim to research and advocate for South Asian communities, and are assisted by academics, community associations and other non-government organisations.

This submission will be based on pre-existing research, knowledge within our communities and our own lived experiences. We all belong to communities that are deeply affected by social isolation and loneliness and hope to give our perspective on how best to mitigate these issues within our communities. We hope to see a prioritisation of cultural inclusivity, which would address the points which we discuss throughout our submission. We wish to recognise the diversity of our communities, and that no single submission can capture our intellectual, spiritual and cultural diversity. Therefore, we in no way mean to represent the perspectives of all South Asian communities, only a section backed by academic literature and our own lived experiences. This submission will address terms of reference 1B, 1C, 1I, 1J and 1K. We will provide a summary of our submissions, along with a table of contents, and then explain our submissions in detail, with examples from our local communities. We welcome the opportunity to answer any questions from the committee regarding this submission. We can be contacted at

Kind regards,

The South Asian Research and Advocacy Hub (SARAH): Ashmith Sivayoganathan and Harshitha Peddireddy

Contents

Inquiry into the prevalence, causes and impacts of loneliness in the New South Wales.....	3
Summary of Submissions:	3
Introduction:	4
Factor 1: Language Barriers.....	5
Factor 2: Differences in Social Lifestyle	7
Factor 3: Cultural Differences.....	9
Submission 1:	11
Submission 2:	13
Submission 3:	15
References.....	17

Inquiry into the prevalence, causes and impacts of loneliness in the New South Wales

Summary of Submissions:

1. The NSW government should consider implementing a cultural board to organise, oversee and orchestrate the running of cultural events in NSW.
2. This board should run events and functions tailored to cultural communities within a particular region, to facilitate engagement and interaction amongst otherwise isolated individuals.
3. This board should consider the benefits that the release of international movies has on regional communities and look to organise foreign (particularly Indian) film screenings in cinemas in regional NSW.

Introduction:

In 2019, the Australian Government introduced the new Visa Subclass 870. This Visa enabled settled Australian citizens to bring their parents from overseas into the country for up to five years. In the year immediately after the introduction of this Subclass, 1065 parents were brought over from their home nations to join their children in Australia (Department of Home Affairs, 2021). While the data has not been released for the following years, it is reasonable to assume that the number of subclass 870 migrants has increased. This inevitably leads to an increased senior migrant population throughout New South Wales, a population that has a heightened propensity for social isolation owing to three major factors:

- 1) Language barriers
- 2) Differences in social lifestyle
- 3) Inaccessibility of cultural and traditional celebrations

This submission will explore each factor individually, considering statistics, interviews and personal experience, before delivering suggestions on how best to mitigate social isolation amongst this aged population. The analysis will take a primarily South Asian approach, in line with our area of interest at the South Asian Research and Advocacy Hub. However, many of the issues discussed could be extrapolated to other immigrant communities. Moreover, these submissions, while tailored to the aged migrant population, would also pose considerable benefits to the migrant demographic as a whole, particularly in regional NSW.

Factor 1: Language Barriers

The 2016 Australian Census results indicated that in New South Wales, a third of people, speak a language other than English at home and nearly one in 20 does not speak English well or at all (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021). Despite being a nation that prides itself on its multicultural inclusivity, Australia is inherently inaccessible for those unable to fluently speak English. Almost every service in the nation is provided in English, restricting those that cannot communicate in the language, this is more pronounced in rural, regional and remote areas. This, coupled with the fact that only around 10% of South Asians reported being fluent in English, leads to a vast majority of South Asian migrants feeling isolated from society as a result of a language barrier (Census of India, 2011).

Throughout South Asia, there are almost 30 official languages, each with a native population that speaks the language (Center for South Asia Outreach, 2024). With dedicated linguistic communities who engage and interact in their native tongues in their home countries, migrants are often jarred when faced with the vast linguistic homogeneity of Australia. We see more diverse linguistic communities form in larger cities such as Sydney and Newcastle, however in regional NSW English fluency is essential for social engagement. This experience is demonstrated by the fluency with which the Indian language Marathi is spoken in India and in NSW. In the 2011 Indian Census, there were 77,461,172 fluent Marathi speakers in the state of Maharashtra, amounting to 69% of the population of the state (Government of India, 2011). Should migrants from this state move to New South Wales, they would be met with only 9753 fluent speakers of their language (Cancer Institute NSW, 2023). This accounts for simply 0.1% of the NSW population. As a result, fluent Marathi speakers, who have grown up knowing and communicating solely in Marathi now struggle to communicate in a manner that is easy and accessible to them. This ultimately leads to the elderly migrant population becoming vulnerable to social isolation, with little connection to a linguistic community they are comfortable in. Considering the sheer number of native linguistic communities that migrants can belong to, the formation of such communities within Australia is prevented, especially in regional NSW. Migrants moving to regional towns often struggle to form linguistic communities as there are very few native speakers residing there. While several migrant families may settle in these regional towns, not all migrants are from the same linguistic background ultimately hindering the construction of linguistic communities.

Oftentimes, elderly migrants are accommodated by their families who have settled in Australia. This usually means that they have a full-time job, through which they fund the migration process. What this also means is that often when migrants come to Australia when visiting their family, the only people with whom they can fluently communicate are working for significant portions of the week. As such, migrants are left at home, often struggling to keep themselves occupied and unable to make any social connections due to a language barrier. Furthermore, with the majority of services offered in Australia being through an English medium, elderly migrants are unable to get any help and assistance that they may require. Fundamentally, they are entirely dependent on their families and this institutionally enabled language barrier is obstructing the self-determination and autonomy of these communities.

In a report published by the Refugee Council of Australia, it was revealed that the NDIS requirements for accessibility of information had not been “successfully implemented for people with limited English proficiency” (Refugee Council of Australia, 2019). This, coupled with the severe lack of interpreters in the government system, leads to migrants being unable to access important services to help support them through their social isolation. This is particularly dangerous for elderly migrants who often lack the technological knowhow to gain their own answers, instead relying on government services, or their family members to gain answers to their issues. As a result, many migrants suffering from social isolation will often

leave it unreported and not seek help for their issues owing to the difficulty they face when attempting to gain access to resources.

Hence, a language barrier constitutes both the creation and an exemplification of social loneliness amongst an elderly migrant population. They find themselves unable to communicate with the community around them, and unable to engage with resources which would help them through this isolation. Ultimately, Australia is an English-speaking nation, however, as will be addressed later, some linguistic inclusivity within a social context would help migrants with socialisation, giving them an avenue through which they can communicate in their preferred language.

Factor 2: Differences in Social Lifestyle

Despite both having British heritage, the ways in which South Asian society and Australian society function are alienatingly different. Historically, Australia and South Asia were colonised for different purposes, with Australia being used as a 'dumping ground' for convicts and South Asia being used to facilitate trade, industry and labour (Mokashi, 2014). This led to a divide in the way that the two regions were treated, with the British emphasising the pre-existing class divides of South Asia, while treating all convicts in Australia equally, albeit poorly. As a result, South Asian nations have struggled to this day with class and caste-based divides, a mindset that people struggle to leave behind when they migrate later in life. In a discussion with a North Queensland based Hindu community leader, she explained that "oftentimes migrants struggle to socialise outside of their social brackets, exemplified by doctors only socialising with other doctors. (Community, 2024)" These preconceived biases make little difference in their South Asian nations of origin, as most people would have grown up and carved out a social niche for themselves, however uprooting from this comfort zone and coming to Australia challenges these biases, often leading to serious experiences of isolation. Attempting to maintain the perceived social order from their home countries in Australia, where the migrant population from South Asian countries is smaller, decreases the opportunities for socialisation and community building that would be considered valid by migrants. Ultimately, social biases manifest themselves in two equally concerning ways once migrants move: class divides permeating South Asian Australian society, with similar trends of class socialisation just with a lesser population, or these class divides breaking down in society, however still being strongly held on an individual level. One such example is the lived experiences of an aunty in the Townsville Sri Lankan community.

Aunty migrated from Sri Lanka to Australia and lived in Ingham for two years, where she carved a social niche for herself and enjoyed her time. This changed, however, when her husband gained employment as a doctor in Cooma, moving the entire family accordingly. Aunty struggled to make friends in Cooma, as among the already small South Asian community present in the regional town, the class divides present in India carried over, and she was unable to socialise with anyone below her assumed social rank. Her husband thrived in the doctor heavy social landscape, however aunty struggled with making friends, having never been accustomed to interacting with doctors. This led aunty into a depressive state, where she was diagnosed with depression and was instructed by psychiatrists to move to a more welcoming environment. For them, this environment was Townsville, where they have happily lived since. Aunty was unable to live happily in Cooma due to these societal differences that exist between South Asian and Australian society (Kanthi, 2024). These differences can severely isolate people from society, particularly an at-risk group like elderly migrants.

This is also exemplified by testimony received from Westfield Local Hero for Paramatta, Saraswathi Sashi Aunty. Saraswathi Aunty is a life coach who runs workshops designed to help elderly members of the Indian community socialise. These workshops have been such a heavy success owing to the isolation that this demographic naturally faces. Aunty reported that some participants were so keen to join her sessions that they willingly caught multiple buses to participate, despite their elderly age. This eagerness to socialise illustrates how isolated elderly migrants truly are, with many going so far as to break the social structure they have grown accustomed to in South Asian society. As Aunty reports, many participants actively disobey their children to join the sessions, breaking the 'doctors socialise only with doctors' rule (Sashi, 2024). This illustrates how socially isolated the elder generation is, willing to break their social norms for one day of socialisation, however, without Saraswathi aunty as a catalyst these biases would still stand severely limiting the social interactions and exposure that elderly migrants can have.

Along with this, there are many unique elements of South Asian society which are not present or socially acceptable in Australia. One such example of this is roadside grocery vendors. For many aged South Asians, a main form of exercise and socialisation comes from the walking trip to and from roadside grocery vendors, strewn across the suburbs of South Asia. This practice does not exist in Australia, and for groceries, one must make their way to a grocery store, which is usually not close enough to walk to. This societal difference removes an integral manner through which elderly populations socialise, developing close relations with their local vendor. The lack of these purposeful trips leads to elderly migrants being shut away within their homes, unable to get outside and socialise, since groceries are usually bought by family members with their cars.

In this regard, it is evident that the ways in which society functions can alienate elderly migrants, leaving them extremely susceptible to social isolation and loneliness. Whether it be through preconstructed biases which the decreased population cannot support, or through breakdowns in factors that change the daily routine of elderly migrants, the lifestyle differences which accompany life in Australia are jarring for those who have lived in different nations and within different societies. This makes it difficult for elderly migrants to effectively assimilate into Australian society, instead being left within their homes, unable to communicate or socialise with anyone outside of their family. The isolation that this creates among an elderly generation of migrants is not limited to these societal differences but is also exemplified by the cultural differences between Australian and South Asian society.

Factor 3: Cultural Differences

The cultures of South Asia and Australia are fundamentally extremely different. Short of playing cricket, the two regions share very few cultural similarities, with Australia deriving most of its culture from Indigeneity and colonisation, while South Asia derives its culture from religion and tradition. These differences can be extremely isolating for incoming migrants, often having to change integral parts of their life in order to function in Australia. This is particularly prevalent in a religious context with Australian life making non-Christian religious piety extremely difficult for migrants.

Australian life, particularly in regional, rural and remote areas, places heavy emphasis on many elements that would be considered socially taboo in South Asia. Things like social drinking and eating meats are commonplace and are encouraged in regional Australia, but these cultural practices are actively discouraged throughout South Asia. Only around 2.4% of the Indian population reported drinking in 2019 which is contrasted with the 76.9% of Australians who reported drinking in the last 12 months (Ministry of Health and Welfare, 2019) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2022). Australia's drinking habits permeate throughout society, making it extremely difficult for non-alcoholic gatherings to run effectively in the nation. This becomes an isolating issue when elderly migrants, who are often more traditional, attempt to integrate themselves into such a different culture. In discussions conducted with the North Queensland Hindu Community, it was revealed that the community struggles heavily with integrating the elderly population into community events as "the cultural beliefs that they grew up with are so different from Australian society (Community, 2024)." The subsequent struggle to fit into the Australian community is an extremely isolating experience, leaving the elderly migrant population extremely vulnerable to loneliness as a result of these cultural differences.

This can further be seen with the struggle to maintain religious devoutness in Australia. South Asia has a large vegetarian population, who all maintain this practice for religious purposes. As per certain traditional Hindu practices, one cannot eat food that has been made in a kitchen that cooks non-vegetarian foods. In a discussion I had with a recently migrated grandfather, he discussed the consumption of non-vegetarian foods in almost every restaurant as a barrier for him in socialising with family and friends (Subramaniam, 2024). This clash of cultures diminishes the ability for elderly migrants to socialise, with their cultural values and beliefs opposing those that operate in Australia today. These differing cultural paradigms alienate elderly populations who have grown accustomed to their cultural norms. With the society that surrounds them seeming to be different, migrants are less inclined to participate in social events, choosing instead to isolate themselves at home. Cultural practices like drinking and meat-eating are omnipresent in Australia, hanging over almost every social event. Even advertising heavily favours alcohol and meat, particularly in rural areas. Coming from a culture where these aspects are considered taboo, the sudden shift into a more accepting culture creates a culture-shock that isolates migrants from wanting to understand and participate in Australian events. This, coupled with the more Christian focus of Australia makes adjusting to life in Australia extremely difficult, with migrants struggling to create a social life as a result.

Despite being officially secular, the remnants of colonisation have left a Christian mark on Australia. Many of the public holidays that the nation observes are Christian festivals, with Easter and Christmas accounting for six of the nine National Public Holidays within Australia (Fair Work Ombudsman, 2024). This often leaves important festivals for other religions to be during the working week, with important cultural festivals like Hannukah, Diwali and Eid not being observed on a national level. This leaves members of these communities to observe these festivals on a smaller, often individual scale. Diwali, one of the most important Hindu festivals fell on a Thursday this year. As such, many Hindu migrants were at work and the festival was observed on a very small scale. This strongly contrasts the way the festival is

observed in India, where the public holiday means that the festival takes the whole day and is filled with light, colour and joy. These festivals are an integral part of socialisation in South Asia, with communal Diwali celebrations bringing together the whole community for a day of festivities. These practices are much harder to observe in Australia, and hence they get relegated to an individual family level, robbing elderly migrants of an avenue of community and socialisation. Much like how celebrating Christmas alone is considered saddening in Australia, elderly migrants feel the same about the smaller scale with which they must practice their festivals, further isolating them from society.

Whilst these elderly populations migrate to Australia at the promise of a better quality of life, there are some elements of Australian life that alienate the elderly migrants who move here. The cultural attitudes, values and societal beliefs of Australia severely differ from those that inform life in South Asia. These differences can affect the lives of many incoming migrants, many of whom will subsequently struggle to maintain any social connections, instead being isolated from society. To address this issue, Cambridge University researchers created an interview process, surveying the best manner for elderly populations to socialise. They concluded that the far and out “preferred to socialise [is] with people from similar cultural backgrounds where they shared taken-for granted social customs and knowledges (Morgan, 2019).”

In theory, this addresses the issues that elderly migrants face in Australian society, enabling them to socialise with people of similar cultural, social and linguistic backgrounds, however the sparsity of said populations in New South Wales makes such a solution difficult to impose. To best address this, the following submissions have been created. They seek to create a universal platform through which cultural groups can develop their own social groups, enabling migrants to socialise amongst people with similar cultural backgrounds. Despite the second and third submissions seeming dependent upon the completion of the first submission, they can be implemented independently and still pose significant benefits within cultural communities around New South Wales.

Submission 1: The NSW government should consider implementing a cultural board to organise, oversee and orchestrate the running of cultural events in NSW.

With much of the isolation faced by migrants when arriving in Australia arising from the societal, cultural and linguistic differences that exist between Australia and their home nations, it stands to reason that an effective way to solve this issue is to create a cultural board whose purpose is to facilitate community connection.

We recognise that isolation among the elderly migrants is more pronounced in regional NSW, though it is an issue that is prevalent across NSW. To address this, we believe it would be prudent for the proposed cultural board to have multiple branches, focused on specific regions in NSW. Moreover, considering that towns in regional NSW often have smaller populations of migrants, creating a board that accommodates a larger region with multiple towns within its jurisdiction will allow migrants to make more connections. These cultural branches would aim to facilitate engagement within their region and provide accessibility services to support their events where a region spans multiple towns. We posit that a regional, branch-based system will allow the board to provide more dedicated and tailored services to their region and be better able to accommodate the demographic of their region.

While our submission has focused on the South Asian migrant community specifically, it holds that these submissions will ultimately be of benefit to the multicultural community of NSW as a whole. The proposed cultural board should aim to provide services and events that cater to the major cultural groups that exist and those that will appeal to the largest number of residents. This, of course may vary from region to region. According to the 2021 Australian Census, some of the largest cultural groups in NSW are Irish, Scottish, Chinese, Italian, Indian, German and Lebanese (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021). Naturally, the cultural board would aim to cater for these groups and any others which are particularly prominent in their region.

We would envision the focus of the board to be in two main areas: language and translation services and cultural events. The first factor we identified as a significant contributor to loneliness and isolation among elderly South Asian migrants was language barriers. To combat this, it would be prudent for the cultural board to provide translation and interpretation services for the community. This could include translated brochures, pamphlets and guides to the region, public transport and other government services. Additionally, it would be beneficial for the board to train and accredit interpreters or at the very least provide access to interpretation services for the region. This would be particularly useful for individuals trying to access healthcare or legal services. Ultimately, these functions and services would work to combat the language barrier factor that contributes to the isolation of the aged migrant population and would be a step toward integrating them in their community.

The second focus area of the board we envision, cultural events, are the most important to implement into the NSW community. Often cultural events are organised by large cultural groups who are already interconnected. This is concentrated in cities but does not provide smaller, regional communities with cultural engagement. By making it a responsibility of the cultural board in a region to run such events, it ensures that such events are run and bring individuals together to form connections. As this is a vital element to combating loneliness in the elderly migrant population, we will consider this as a separate submission and will provide a more thorough description in submissions 2 and 3.

Finally, advertising of the board's services and events is crucial to the effectiveness of the board. Isolated individuals will not be actively attentive to what may be going on in their communities. As such, the board must find innovative and effective ways to reach these individuals. Advertising should be a multifaceted approach utilising social media, physical adverts like posters, TV advertising and targeted advertising in social hotspots. For example, having translated pamphlets and info about interpreter services available at legal aid offices, hospitals, the ATO and post office. Local TV advertising may also be effective in reaching the elderly population who do not frequently leave their houses. Advertising of their services is fundamental to the effective function of the board, without which their services would be inaccessible by those who need them most.

In sum, we submit that a cultural board with region-based branches would be a critical body in combating loneliness and isolation in the aged migrant population of NSW, especially in regional areas. By providing translation and interpretation services alongside planned cultural events that cater to major cultural groups, the board will be able to foster community wide connection and engagement. A focus on advertising will further aid this goal and integrate isolated individuals into the community. Our next two submissions will be focused on cultural events and their importance to combating loneliness. While they are currently phrased as responsibilities of the cultural board outlined in this submission, they have the propensity to be implemented at whatever level may be appropriate and effective. This is to say that the events are not integrally tied to the existence of the multicultural board. Their function as catalysts for community engagement is their most important feature and can be viewed independently of the cultural board.

Submission 2: This board should run events and functions tailored to cultural communities within a particular region, to facilitate engagement and interaction amongst otherwise isolated individuals.

Following on from Submission 1, the cultural board we submitted should also consider the benefits of organising certain events, tailored to specific cultural and linguistic groups to be effective amongst migrant populations. For instance, events like Tamil New Year or Onam which are very specific and very important to particular cultures would be events that the board would consider running to appeal to those communities. In doing so, the board would be able to draw a much larger crowd, allowing them to create a better environment for socialisation amongst migrant communities. This could further be undertaken through partnering with local cultural organisations, allowing them to publicise their events on a much larger scale while achieving the same purpose of increasing culture-based socialisation. One thing the board would need to consider when implementing this submission is the demographic within their local area. For instance, board members operating in suburbs like Wentworthville should be acutely aware that approximately 10% of the local population are Tamil and should act accordingly, running more Tamil focused events (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011). Running events tailored to specific communities would aid in lowering rates of migrant isolation as it enables communities to come together and socialise in their own way, allowing people who are not comfortable with Australian culture, language and social norms to participate too.

One further example of the type of events which we envision the board to endorse is a continuation of the excellent work which Saraswathi aunty has been doing within New South Wales already. Aunty has created an extremely effective program for aged migrants to socialise for a day and overcome the loneliness that otherwise affects them in their day-to-day lives (Sashi, 2024). These senior camps can be extremely transferable and stand to help many migrants overcome their social isolation, and as such, would be an effective starting project for the board to consider. Furthermore, the vast majority of feedback received from participants in the was extremely positive, maintaining that attending the workshop was extremely beneficial for them, as it helped them socialise for a day (Sashi, 2024). Such events can be held throughout the state and stand to help many aged migrants. Furthermore, adapting this workshop model can aid with its appeal in certain areas. For instance, developing culture specific variations of these programs would help personalise the experience and would maximise the impact of the workshop upon participants. Creating a different program for the main cultural groups that coexist in New South Wales would also maximise the outreach of the program, enabling more people to discover the program and subsequently join in.

Also, the running of these events does not rely upon the presence of a cultural board as suggested in Submission 1, rather it can be accomplished in multiple different regards. Local councils can consider incentivising the running of the cultural events, publicising and funding events that they identify as having strong potential for attracting the otherwise isolated elderly migrant population. For instance, those in the Wentworthville local government area should consider funding and supporting local Tamil events as they should attract a large Tamil population, creating a communal environment where people with similar cultural background can socialise. Along with this, local councils can identify populations that would benefit from senior programs like those run by Saraswathi Aunty and subsequently can fund the running of said events.

As such, we submit the need for the board to consistently run programs and events that have a strong cultural focus, particularly targeting participation from particular communities. In doing so, there is a significantly higher chance for participants to join in as the programs are more specific to the language, culture and social background. As a result, aged migrants

are able to participate in social activities without having to leave their cultural comfort zone, enabling them to socialise and free themselves from isolation. One further example of such an event is the 'seniors camp' as run by Srimathi Saraswathi Sashi Aunty. Such events are extremely beneficial and popular among aged populations and should be continued with greater support and larger publicity. In publicising and supporting such events, it makes it much easier for isolated individuals to discover and attend these events. This aids in preventing social isolation amongst the aged migrant populations of New South Wales, as they are able to discover specific events that appeal to their cultural background, prompting them to attend and subsequently socialise, developing relationships within the community.

Submission 3: This board should consider the benefits that the release of international movies has on regional communities and look to organise foreign (particularly Indian) film screenings in cinemas in regional NSW.

Despite sounding like a trivial matter, the role which cinema provides in community building, particularly amongst South Asian migrants cannot be understated. India as a nation is consistently among the top film producing nations globally, and India has carved themselves a niche type of cinema, the masala movie (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2019). Named after garam masala, these films gained their name from the combination of many cinematic genres into one film. Indian films routinely have action, comedy, romance and music all within the same film, marketing themselves towards the lowest common denominator. These films appeal to all audiences, as there is always something in the film that will attract everyone. As a result, the release of Indian films has become a massive cultural celebration. Massive star-led films often begin screening at 4:30 in the morning, where the avid fan will wait outside for hours to celebrate before watching the film. This phenomenon is not simply held to a Hindi audience either, as every state has its own industry with its own stars. Most all South Asian languages have their own film industry, and have their own fans, however there are some which garner audiences from around India. Large scale Hindi film releases from stars like Shah Rukh Khan create immense buzz throughout the country and even into neighbouring countries. These massive cultural events are community building, through which Indian communities can socialise.

Oftentimes, going to the movies in India entails going in large groups, creating a communal watching experience. Implementing the release of these Indian films in Australia would not only create this communal watching experience, but it would also have much stronger benefits, mitigating the factors which lead to migrant isolation. First of all, the release of Indian films in New South Wales would create a mini community within the theatre with a similar cultural background. This would mitigate the cultural issues faced within New South Wales society broadly, creating a community with similar cultural beliefs. This would allow migrants to find people within a local community who are of a similar background, allowing them to socialise effectively without having to leave their cultural comfort zone. As a result, migrants who struggle with the cultural and societal differences between Indian and South Asian society would be able to socialise effectively, mitigating the risk of social isolation amongst this population. Allowing people of similar cultural backgrounds to assimilate enables people who would otherwise not socialise to feel more relaxed, and more open to the idea of socialising. This is particularly relevant for the elderly migrant community as they would be able to socialise within a smaller community that resembles their home. This would provide an easy starting point, allowing them to be more comfortable, and subsequently integrate themselves slowly into the wider community.

Another benefit that the release of films would have is the linguistic community that would form surrounding film releases. It stands to reason that the main market and audience for a Tamil language film would be native Tamil speakers. As a result, the linguistic homogeneity of Australia can be overcome through the formation of small linguistic enclaves, where people can communicate in their own native languages. This not only allows for people who are not fluent in English to socialise, it also enables for communication in another language to convey any important information that people might need to know. By creating a linguistic enclave through which people from different backgrounds can communicate, any important information can slowly trickle down through these groups, allowing for people to understand any materials that they require. This, coupled with the benefits of allowing people an avenue through which they can communicate in their own language prevents social isolation as

elderly migrants can socialise through these linguistic groups that form from the release of Indian cinema.

Along with this, by releasing Indian movies in Australia, elderly migrants who were born and raised in India can have a chance to reminisce about what their home life was like before migration. There are two manifestations of this nostalgia, with either the experience itself triggering memories of going to the cinema in India, or the depictions of India and Indian life within the film allowing elderly migrants to reminisce about India. In a study by Zhou et al, it was found that the feeling of nostalgia was enough to decrease social loneliness. By allowing people to access a cultural depiction of their home nation, nostalgic feelings surrounding this stage of their life arise as a result. This then can slow down any feelings of loneliness that may affect them, allowing them to remember a more social time in their lives. Also, this bubbling of nostalgia gives elderly migrants a discussion point, allowing them to talk to their family, or friends, about how their life was like before migration. As a result, they engage in increased levels of socialisation, while also decreasing their own social loneliness through nostalgia.

As such, the release of other language movies can be extremely beneficial towards preventing social isolation amongst migrants. The release of foreign films creates cultural, social and linguistic enclaves, where people of similar cultural backgrounds can gather for an event. This mitigates the factors through which migrants commonly find themselves isolated, allowing them to form a community with people of similar cultural attitudes, values and social beliefs. Along with this, it is significantly easier to communicate, as the majority of people within the screening will speak the same language. This enables those who cannot fluently speak English to communicate with people and socialise. Also, the films can create feelings of nostalgia for their past lives. In doing so, elderly migrants can reduce their feelings of loneliness, while also developing a 'conversation starter' to allow them to socialise more easily and effectively.

Furthermore, this submission is extremely easy to implement even without the cultural board as submitted in Submission 1, as it can be done in two main ways. The first is through public screenings, either in public places or through a cinema of Indian and other foreign films. This could be performed as a free public service, or even in conjunction with cinemas to accompany their regular film screenings. The second manner in which this could be implemented is through the subsidising of foreign film screenings. With the vast majority of cinema halls in New South Wales being privately owned, it is highly improbable that there can be any changes made to what they screen through governmental intervention. As such, one way in which they could be influenced is through subsidising any foreign film screenings, allowing them to be showed for a higher profit for the cinema. This would encourage theatres to screen more foreign films, creating larger opportunities for socialisation amongst migrant communities that would otherwise find themselves isolated. Not only is this an easy to implement solution, it is also unobtrusive upon any Australian customs, allowing migrants an avenue to partake in cultural practices without impeding upon any traditional Australian practices. In this manner, this submission presents a high reward, low risk solution to the issue of migrant isolation within New South Wales as it is easily implementable and poses great potential to decrease levels of social isolation amongst an at-risk population of migrants, particularly in regional communities.

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