



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY INCLUSION  
Mr Michael Pettersson MLA (Chair), Miss Laura Nuttall MLA (Deputy Chair),  
Ms Nicole Lawder MLA (Member)

## Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into Loneliness and Social Isolation in the ACT

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## **INQUIRY INTO LONELINESS AND SOCIAL ISOLATION IN THE ACT**

Thank you for the opportunity to address the problem of loneliness and social isolation in the ACT.

I am a qualified psychologist and in 2021 I conducted a series of workshops into the greater problem of isolation and loneliness through U3A in Canberra.

I conducted the workshops to explore how experiences in people's lives may contribute to feelings of loneliness and isolation. These experiences might include family culture, school upbringing, religious beliefs, social influences and economic status.

For example, not being invited to a function, being overlooked in promotions, being excluded from a group you have an affinity with are examples of situations that can create a feeling of loneliness or isolation.

Although the cohort attending the workshops was an older one, the same underlying triggers generally apply across any age or any demographic in our community.

Often people do not realise that their loneliness is in part caused by barriers they consciously or unconsciously build for themselves. These barriers are usually the result of life experiences mentioned earlier.

Once people remove these perceived barriers they create a different mindset which in turn could lead to them changing their approach and attitude to life.

I am attaching the speaking notes and results from my workshops which highlight the myriad of drivers leading to social isolation and loneliness. I would be happy to discuss my findings with the committee.

Dr Gunter Brandstetter.