

Date: 22/02/2024

University of Canberra – Health Research Institute submission to the Legislative Assembly ACT Committee’s inquiry into loneliness and social isolation

Dear Chair,

I am pleased to send the Health Research Institute’s submission for the above. This topic is becoming a serious public health risks affecting a significant number of people putting them at risk for poor mental health and other chronic conditions. Our research in the ACT shows that it is not only older adults who suffer from loneliness and social isolation, but younger adults. Our recent finding show that the highest rates of loneliness are reported by those aged 18-29 years of age. Findings from our ACT Living Well surveys suggest that addressing loneliness requires interventions that target those who have a disability or are informal carers, single parents, renters, those living in units/apartments, and those living alone. Those who have recently moved to the ACT are at high risk of loneliness, as are younger adults compared to older adults. In addition, the National Social Fragmentation Index that we developed, shows there are ‘hot spots’ of social fragmentation within particular suburbs in the ACT, in particular in the Belconnen District (e.g. Belconnen, Bruce, Lawson).

As part of our MRFF grant, we are currently undertaking community consultation with communities in Belconnen to develop a co-designed intervention using Link Workers to help address loneliness and social isolation in these target sub-groups. Please see attached further information.

Yours sincerely,



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