Council on the Ageing Queensland

SENIOR SOCIAL ISOLATION PREVENTION PEAK

SSI-Provider Network: Minutes of Meeting 2025

Date	Wednesday 21 May 2025 (2.00pm – 3.00pm)
Title	SSI-Provider Network Community of Practice (Meeting No. 2)
Topic	Health and Wellbeing in Later Life
Location	MS Teams: Meeting ID: 414 237 017 82 | Passcode: JA2Uo6iG
Facilitator	Karen Wilson, Executive Officer, Seniors Social Isolation Peak Services Program, Council on the Ageing Queensland
Guest Speakers	• **Dr Daniel Wadsworth**, Senior Lecturer, School of Health, University of the Sunshine Coast and Postdoctoral Fellow at Manna Institute Health and Wellbeing in Later Life (HWLL) • **Associate Professor Belinda Cash**, School of Social Work and Arts, Charles Sturt University and University Lead | Manna Institute Health and Wellbeing in Later Life (HWLL)
Recording	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1uP4oDsLMpc

Attendees – Guests (*n* = 3)
- Department of Families, Seniors and Disability Services and Child Safety: Jean Lagan, Principal Advisor – Strategy and Reform, Seniors and Carers, Community, Seniors and Carers,
- Lockyer Valley Regional Council: Neil Meiklejohn, Community Engagement Officer
- Debra Melvin (tbc)

Attendees - SSI funded orgs (*n* = 24)

Far North Queensland
- Cooktown District Community Centre 60 & Better: Chanelle Oldaker, Program Coordinator
- Torres Strait Older People Program Thursday Island: Aletia Twist, Mura Kosker Sorority Inc, Chief Executive Office, Administration
- TransitCare Social Support - Paramatta Park: Amanda Mather, Chief Executive Officer

North Queensland
- BCA Older Persons Action Program – AYR: Debra Cochran, Chief Executive Officer, Burdekin Community Association Inc
- Proserpine Intergenerational Storytime Program: Sue Evans-Atherton, Program Lead, Whitsunday Regional Council

Central Queensland
- Barcaldine 60 & Better Program, Jean Williams, Coordinator (60 & Better Program), Barcaldine Regional Council

South West Queensland

- Elder Power: Dionne Connolly, Programs Consultant, Goondir Health Services
- Senior Social Connection Program (SSCP): Jocelyn Courtney, Case Management and Community Engagement, Relationships Australia Queensland
- Somerset Seniors Connect: Carole Labran, Tourism & Community Outreach Officer and Lyn Buchanan, Community Development Officer, Somerset Regional Council
- South Burnett Stronger Together Program: Kirsten Firman, Service Manager, Youth and Family Services, South Burnett Contributing to Community (CTC) Inc

North Coast

- Hervey Bay Sixties and Better: Sherie Riley, Coordinator, Hervey Bay Sixty & Better Healthy Aging Program Inc
- Noosa Seniors Connect Program: Kelly de Visser, Community Connection Manager (Acting) and Kenzo Sugaro, Community Laision Officer, Noosa Shire Council
- Pets for Life Program: Shirley Hammill, Caloundra Community Centre

Brisbane & SEQ

- Acacia 50 & Better Program: Hayley Kiata, Service Manager and Anushka Abeyewarde, Seniors Program Coordinator, Inala Community House
- Bribie Island Seniors Wellbeing Service, Elissa Nelson, Community Development and Administration Worker, Bribie Island Neighbourhood Centre
- Centacare - Disability Services - Active Lifestyles - Stones Corner: Rebecca Naumovski, Regional Operations Manager, and Marina Ene.
- Encircle Redcliffe Older Persons Action Program: Jenny Reid, Case Manager, Encircle Redcliffe Neighbourhood Centre
- Older Women's Network – New Farm: Niura Martinez Casas, Program Coordinator, Older Women's Network Queensland Inc.
- Positively Ageing Program: Mark Doyle, Aged Care Navigator, Queensland Positive People (QPP)
- YMCA Cannon Hill Seniors: Deborah Gliddon, Y-Care (SEQ) Inc

Statewide

- Men's Shed Cassowary Coast (FNQ), Etheridge (NQ), Longreach and Livingstone (CQ), North Burnett (North Coast), and Maranoa, Paroo and Murweh (SWQ): Frank Pearce, Regional Coordinator, Queensland Mens Shed Association (QMSA).

Discussion, Key Points and Actions

	Key Discussion Points	Actions

1	**Acknowledgements and Introduction**
	• Acknowledgement of Country
	• Joined by Jean Lagan, Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety.
	• Overview of today's Agenda
	    o About COTA Qld and our role as the Seniors Social Isolation Prevention peak body
	    o Insights from "*Age Well, Stay Connected*" Brisbane Event (31/3/25)
	    o Guest speakers Dr Dan Wadsworth and Associate Professor Belinda Cash, Manna Institute, Health and Wellbeing in Later Life (HWLL).
	• Thank you everyone for taking the time to join us today.	

2	**Previous Minutes and Actions** • Minutes from previous meeting have been circulated (no amendments) • Noted the resourcing and technical issues re uploading the videos from the previous meetings to YouTube.	Add COP recordings to an online hub (*completed*)
3	**COTA Queensland and Seniors Social Isolation Prevention Peak** ***About COTA Queensland*** • For purpose charity amplifying the voices of older Queenslanders. • Evolved from the need to combat age discrimination and address social and economic disadvantages. • We ensure older Queenslanders rights are respected and valued. • We work in collaboration and partnership to ensure older people are at the centre of the work we do. • We work with all levels of Government, community groups and organisations to drive systemic change and create a more age-friendly Queensland. • We are part of a National Alliance (COTA's in other states). • Our vision is that ageing is a time of possibility, opportunity and influence. ***Seniors Social Isolation Peak Services Program*** • Emerged from 2021 Inquiry into Loneliness and Social Isolation. • Funded by the Queensland Government and established in October 2024. • Our aim is to strengthen the work of 65+ SSI-funded providers across Qld. ***Age Well, Stay Connected Brisbane Event (31/3/25)*** • Attended by 107 participants (older people, carers, community leaders, service providers, sector stakeholders and government representatives), including from First Nations and multicultural communities. • Focus on raising awareness of social isolation, knowledge sharing, strengthening partnerships, and generating ideas for local action. • Keynote Speaker: Dr Catherine Barrett, Founder/Director, Celebrate Ageing talked about "*Ageism, Loneliness, and the Wellbeing of Older People*". • Panel Discussion: featured older man with lived experience and community representatives discussing a range of topics (e.g., older men, mental health, caregiving, digital inclusion, community programs and supports).	See links below **Qld Government List** [Staying connected in your community | Seniors | Queensland Government](#) **Our website** [Social Isolation Prevention Peak – Council on the Ageing Queensland – COTA QLD](#)

	Key Discussion Points	Actions
	• World Café conversations, workshops, connection circles, and Wisdom Tree activities explored a range of topics, including diverse voices, older women, online platforms, carers, libraries as hubs, and wellbeing of older men. • It was acknowledged there is an abundance of information in the community, which can be overwhelming. The challenge is how we can connect older people to programs without them feeling overwhelmed. • The findings will be shared with all contributors and participants. • An SSI Collaboration Network was established for those who wanted to stay informed to explore future partnership opportunities.	Summary report to be uploaded to COTA Qld website
4	**Manna Institute Health and Wellbeing in Later Life (HWLL)** **Presenters** • Dr Daniel Wadsworth, Senior Lecturer, School of Health, University of the Sunshine Coast and Postdoctoral Fellow at Manna Institute • Associate Professor Belinda Cash, School of Social Work and Arts, Charles Sturt University and University Lead, Manna Institute • See Health & Wellbeing in Later Life — Manna Institute **About the Manna Institute HWLL** • Collaboration with Noosa Seniors Connect (SSI-funded program) underway, as part of the Healthy Ageing Partnership on the Sunshine Coast. • Commonwealth-funded collective of regional universities: CQU, CSU, SCU, UNE, USC, UniSC, and Federation University. • Each university contributes funding. • The Institute focuses on growing mental health research and training capacity in rural and regional Australia, with an emphasis on supporting health and wellbeing in later life through a holistic, multidisciplinary, place-based approach. • HWLL program includes the Regional Universities Network, community and industry partners, people with lived experience, First Nations representatives, and foundation partners. • Approach prioritises co-creation of solutions. listening to communities rather than imposing ideas and aims to build on the knowledge and work of people living, working, and ageing in regional and rural areas. • Led by Professor Myfanwy Maple in Armidale, and connects a national virtual network of academic leaders, from PhD and master's students to professors and Heads of Research across all seven universities. • Lived Experience Advisory Group, and a First Nations Advisory Group, with a focus on supporting First Nations students. • Foundation partners include Everymind and the Centre for Mental Health Research (ANU). • Industry partners span regional and rural areas, including local health districts, aged care providers (both residential and community-based), and initiatives such as an inclusive choir in a regional community. • Referred to themselves as "Cup of Tea" researchers actively engaging with communities in informal, approachable ways.	Share Presentation and papers with SSI-network (completed) Links Health & Wellbeing in Later Life — Manna Institute

Key Discussion Points	Actions
• In rural areas, individuals often wear multiple hats (e.g., an industry partner may also be a key community member, highlighting the importance of recognising varied roles and contributions). • The complex dynamics of rural communities were acknowledged, especially the overlap between service provision and community support roles. • Social visibility in small communities can be both a strength and a challenge for older adults, requiring sensitive, context-aware approaches in both research and service delivery. • The HWLL Stream adopts a holistic approach, recognising that the mental health and wellbeing of older adults is a shared responsibility. No single person or organisation can address the issue alone. • Manna Institute HWLL also focuses on the impact of chronic illness and disability in later life, alongside the unique social and geographic complexities of living in regional, rural, and remote communities. **Project Profiles** • **The ROAM Project: explores the mental health experiences of rural older adults and how to actively involve them in research.** It emphasises embedding lived experience in the research design and does not require participants to have a formal diagnosis. Many people preferred sharing their stories via online Zoom meetings, as this was seen as a safe space. The project also helps people navigate the social challenges of seeking mental health support, highlighting issues like social visibility and the multiple roles ("dual hats") individuals hold in rural communities. • **The RURAL-ist Project: larger-scale project to improve the design and delivery of health programs for older people in rural, regional, and remote Australia** through co-creating a Rural Implementation Support Toolkit. Many partners involved, including COTA, the project collaborates directly with rural communities to develop an accessible toolkit. The goal is to help health and wellbeing programs become more effective, sustainable, grant-ready, and adaptable from metropolitan to rural settings. • **CHAI Project: aims to increase health literacy and improve service access for priority populations through co-created Community Health Ageing (CHAI) hubs, operating under the Healthy Ageing Partnership.** Partners: University of Newcastle, Western Sydney University, LiveUp, and others. The hubs draw on local community knowledge via community connectors who translate health information in ways that help people understand its relevance and learn about regional supports and services. These community-led, co-designed hubs could be in accessible places like shopping centres. Currently, there are four hubs across the Sunshine Coast, Newcastle, Albury-Wodonga, and Western Sydney, with a focus that also includes culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) populations. • **Sing Out Project: Social connection for people living with dementia and their carers through an inclusive choir.** A passion project of the Dubbo Dementia Council, designed as a social activity to foster connection. 180 members from Dubbo and surrounding areas, including informal carers, addressing the need to increase social connection opportunities in regional and rural communities. For more info see: singoutchoir.com.au	Link to ROAM Findings

	Key Discussion Points	Actions

	• **Photography Project:** Sunshine Coast where participants took photos, culminating in an exhibition to foster pride in their work.
	• **GROW Cooroy: Co-designing green prescription pathways in partnership with Noosa Permaculture and Cooroy Gardens**. Connects people to nature-based settings and involves local service providers and GPs in the design process.
	• **PhD projects:**
	    • Designing tailored dementia risk reduction programs for rural settings (i.e., Kilkivan)
	    • Tech-based solutions to social isolation in older adults
	    • Factors contributing towards healthy ageing in rural, regional and remote Australia
	    • Access to Voluntary Assisted Dying for people living with dementia (Australian first study)
	    • Lived Experience leadership in mental health - *how can organisations better support people who have lived experienced when they are working in mental health systems and services.*
	
	Contact details
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5	**Q&A Session** • Mark Doyle (QPP) talked about their program supporting people living with HIV. He works as a Care Navigator supporting older adults living with HIV, many are now in their 60s and 70s. He also works with the Queer community. Social isolation is a major issue, especially in regional towns. In Brisbane, more people are emerging through program. • Mark mentioned they are incorporating intergenerational contact programs, connecting people in their 30s with older adults, highlighting the power of these initiatives. He shared a powerful intergenerational connection story related to the law reform journey in the UK. • Dan shared info about Manna's work on an Intergenerational Home Share program on the Sunshine Coast. • Belinda talked about the importance of effectively communicating research to those who need it most (i.e., service providers). • Belinda reported that the ROAM project findings have been published on Party line for wider accessibility. For more information go to: Manna Institute	**Belinda** to share link to research capturing stories from the LGBTIQ+ community. Link to Partyline Article about the ROAM project
6	**AOB and Meeting Close** • Karen will be on Jury Service from 23 May – 30 June 2025. Email to follow re contact details in her absence.	
7	**Date of Next Meeting** • **COP No. 3. Wednesday 16 July 2025 (2-3pm)** - "*Supporting Healthy Ageing: Digital Tools and Community Connections*".	

Prepared by
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