Council on the Ageing
Queensland

Event Summary Report

Age Well Stay Connected (Brisbane)
BRINGING QUEENSLAND SENIORS & COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

Event Date: 31 March 2025

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24 November 2025

www.cotaqld.org.au

About Us

Council on the Ageing (COTA) Queensland is a for-purpose statewide charitable organisation. We are the state's Seniors Peak and Seniors Social Isolation Prevention Peak and work with and for older adults, advancing the rights, needs, interests, and futures of people as we age.

For more than 60 years, we have worked to influence positive social outcomes for older Queenslanders. We connect directly with older Queenslanders, their families, carers, and organisations, service providers, consumer advocates, special interest groups, and our federal, state and local governments. We engage with all of these groups to understand needs, aspirations, and priorities for older people in Queensland, and partner to achieve the best outcomes for people as we age.

Our work includes policy analysis, community education, representation, evaluation and research, and cross sector collaborations to achieve systemic change. We deliver funded programs directly to older people in need and provide sector support to those organisations who offer aged care and other services to older people.

We seek to eliminate ageism and support healthy ageing and growth of age-friendly communities. There are many areas of policy development needed to achieve this – elder abuse, energy, social isolation and loneliness prevention, climate resilience and disaster preparedness, digital inclusion, health, housing, and transport are just a few.

Our vision is that ageing is a time of possibility, opportunity, and influence.

With the number of older people expected to double by 2050, ensuring their voices are heard has never been more important.

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Acknowledgement
Council on the Ageing Queensland acknowledges Australia's First Nations Peoples as the original custodians of this land.

Acknowledgements

Council on the Ageing (COTA) Queensland acknowledges the Jagera and Turrbal Peoples, the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which this event took place and pays respect to Elders past, present and emerging. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Toni Janke, celebrated First Nations singer-songwriter and businesswoman for delivering the Opening Performance and Acknowledgement of Country and sharing her cultural knowledge.

Our gratitude extends to Tina Bramley, EdgeWise Illuminating Counselling and Psychotherapy, for facilitating the event, and to all contributors and participants for generously sharing your time, stories, and insights. Your lived experiences and local knowledge have truly deepened our understanding of how older Queenslanders stay connected, cared for, and celebrated across their communities.

We also extend our sincere thanks to our partners, ADA Australia and the Queensland Public Advocate, and to the Queensland Multicultural Centre (QMC), located directly under the famous Story Bridge on the historic Yungaba site, for hosting the event. Your collaboration, support, and hospitality made this event possible and ensured a welcoming space for meaningful engagement.

A special thank you to Celsie Mead, COTA Queensland Volunteer Champion, for her valuable contribution to the co-design and delivery of the events, and for providing thoughtful feedback on the reporting. We also extend our thanks to Stan Burnyeat, Musician, for generously volunteering his time to perform throughout the day and create a welcoming atmosphere.

We are grateful to everyone who contributed to the success of the event, helping to create a welcoming and inclusive space for meaningful connections and conversations.

Photography
Only photographs for which participants provided consent are included in this report.

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Executive Summary

On 31 March 2025, Council on the Ageing (COTA) Queensland, in partnership with ADA Australia and the Queensland Public Advocate, hosted the *Age Well, Stay Connected – Brisbane* event, the first in a three-part series. The event was held at the Queensland Multicultural Centre, a welcoming hub for diversity, inclusion, and community engagement.

The event aimed to raise awareness of social isolation among older Queenslanders, including First Nations, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD), LGBTIQA+, and other under-represented communities. It celebrated local strengths and diversity, valued lived experience, and created a safe, inclusive space to share ideas and strengthen social connections for older people. The event was an inclusive, community-led gathering, bringing together older people, carers, Elders, volunteers, local service providers, and sector professionals from aged care, health, social, community, and support services.

The event was promoted through direct emails to providers and stakeholders, posts on partner websites and social media, and printed flyers were shared in local cafes, libraries, and at the venue. A total of 107 people attended, representing community members (*n* = 16), and sector stakeholders from a diverse range of organisations (*n* = 91), including First Nations and multicultural groups, with people travelling from across South East Queensland (SEQ).

The program was co-designed and delivered, in partnership with Tina Bramley, Holistic Counsellor and Psychotherapist, who also facilitated the event. Tina brings decades of experience across corporate, not for profit and government settings. Contributions from partners, ADA Australia and the Queensland Public Advocate, with input from an older volunteer, helped shape the program to meet community needs and priorities. Accessibility and inclusivity were central to the event, ensuring that everyone could participate fully, regardless of mobility, cultural background, or familiarity with technology.

Queensland Government-funded [Seniors Social Connection Services](#) — including The Older Men's Network (TOMNET), Older Women's Network, Queensland Positive People (QPP), and World Wellness Group, actively participated as panelists, World Café table hosts, and/or stallholders. Their involvement contributed to strengthening connections, building trust, and fostering collaborative ideas and actions beyond the event itself.

The program combined storytelling, live music, information sharing, interactive workshops, and open conversations to create an engaging and inclusive environment where participants could learn from one another and share their experiences. Local organisations and sector professionals led hands-on sessions and presentations, that highlighted practical tools and approaches grounded in real community practice. Participants gained insights into current initiatives that improve social connection for older people and considered how place-based approaches could be tailored and strengthened within their own communities.

Throughout the day, participants networked and connected with eachother. They also contributed to a *Wisdom Tree Activity*, sharing ideas to reduce social isolation in their communities. Live music by a local guitarist, an older community member who generously donated his time, added to the welcoming and vibrant atmosphere.

In the afternoon, participants engaged in *World Café conversations*, sharing experiences and ideas for supporting older people to stay socially connected. Participants who preferred working in smaller groups engaged in a *Connection Circle activity*

Six key topics guided the World Café conversations.

- Diverse voices: promoting inclusivity, connection and belonging
- Empowering older women through connection
- Fostering connections through online platforms
- Carers and social connections
- Libraries as hubs for social connection
- Older men, wellbeing and social connection

Six key themes emerged from thematic analysis of all the activities.

- **Barriers to Social Connection:** Ageism, financial, health, digital, and structural barriers can limit people's ability to connect socially.
- **Empowerment through Knowledge and Resources:** Building skills, increasing knowledge, improving service access, and promoting leadership and collaboration.
- **Inclusive and Nurturing Spaces:** Safe, welcoming, and accessible environments that foster connection and engagement for all.
- **Shifting Mindsets:** addressing ageism, challenging stigma around loneliness, and promoting person-centred care and intergenerational connections.
- **Targeted Communication and Outreach:** Engaging vulnerable and isolated older people through strengths-based messaging and diverse communication channels.
- **Valuing Lived Experience:** Recognising and celebrating older people's wisdom and contributions, whilst strengthening volunteering, advocacy, and lifeline learning.

Key outcomes emerging from the event included:

- **Strengthened Collaboration and Community Learning Outcomes:** community and sector stakeholders deepened their understanding of social isolation, learned about available supports, and strengthened connections to enable coordinated, community-led initiatives, fostering ongoing collaboration to enhance engagement and wellbeing.

- **Practical Insights and Future Action:** The event highlighted inclusive, community-led approaches, emphasising diversity, third spaces as hubs, digital and peer mentoring, community champions, and intergenerational initiatives. Storytelling and lived experiences challenged ageism and inspired practical, inclusive approaches to support older adults and carers, including First Nations peoples.

- **A strong foundation for ongoing initiatives:** Learnings will inform upcoming regional events and shape the ongoing work of the Seniors Social Isolation Prevention Peak, expanding reach, awareness, and impact across communities.

The event strengthened social connections for older people, including carers, enhanced community awareness, and fostered cross-sector collaboration. Engaging 107 participants, it produced six insights reports, a lived-experience story, and a summary report, supporting participants to apply learnings locally. By highlighting community-led approaches and raising awareness of available services, the event provided a foundation for ongoing initiatives and will guide the future work of the Seniors' Social Isolation Prevention peak to enhance inclusion, wellbeing, and meaningful participation for older Queenslanders.

Purpose and Context

This section outlines the purpose, aims, and objectives of the *Age Well, Stay Connected – Brisbane* event, and the community members and organisations it engaged.

Purpose

The purpose of the event was to bring together communities in Brisbane and surrounding areas to address social isolation among older people through an inclusive, community-led gathering. It built on local strengths, celebrated diversity, and valued lived experience. Through open conversations and shared insights, participants explored ideas to help shape future approaches for supporting older Queenslanders to stay connected.

Why Brisbane

Brisbane was chosen for the first location in the event series because it is Queensland's largest metropolitan area, with a diverse older population and varied social and cultural needs. The Brisbane workshop addressed urban-specific isolation challenges and provided a platform to connect inner-city seniors with the broader community and surrounding areas.

Aims

- Raise awareness of social isolation and its impact on older Queenslanders, including First Nations, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD), LGBTIQA+, and other marginalised or under-represented communities.
- Strengthen connections and networks across communities.
- Promote inclusive dialogue that amplifies diverse and underrepresented voices.
- Inspire community-led action that reflects the needs and aspirations of older Queenslanders.

Objectives

- Bring together older people, carers, Elders, volunteers, providers and sector professionals to strengthen connections and foster collaboration.
- Explore and celebrate local community strengths and initiatives, providing a platform for storytelling, knowledge sharing, and community-led action.
- Encourage active participation from older people and local providers to generate innovative ideas and identify opportunities and actions tailored to the needs of local communities.
- Capture key insights to reflect community voices, enhance accessibility, and document the findings to guide future actions and collaborative projects.

Target Audience

- Older persons aged 60 years and over, and First Nations peoples aged 50 years and over, who are experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, social isolation.
- Carers and support networks who help older people stay socially connected.
- Sector stakeholders, including service providers, government representatives, and professionals across aged care, health, social, community and support services.

Event Overview

On **31 March 2025**, COTA Queensland, in partnership with ADA Australia and the Queensland Public Advocate hosted the **Age Well, Stay Connected – Brisbane** event. The first in a three-part series, the event was held at **Queensland Multicultural Centre**, a well-established hub for diversity, inclusion, and community engagement. The event was **promoted** through direct emails to providers and stakeholders, posts on partner websites and social media, and printed flyers were shared in local cafes, libraries, and at the venue. Eventbrite registration allowed for the collection of key participant demographics.

A total of **107 participants** attended (see Table 1 for participant summary).

Table 1. *Number of Participants by Category and Organisation Type*

Category/Org type	Number of Participants
Elders	Unknown/not specified
Community members[2]	16 (4 identified as a carer)

Sector Professionals
    Government
        Federal (n = 3)
        State (n = 10)
        Local (n = 9)
        NGOs[3] (n = 59)
    Seniors Social Connection Services (n = 10)
	91 (1 identified as a carer)

Total participants	**107**

Participants were from **diverse backgrounds and organisations**, including those representing First Nations communities and the multicultural sector. They travelled from Brisbane, Moreton Bay, Logan, Ipswich, Redlands, Sunshine Coast, Gold Coast, Toowoomba, South Burnett and the Western Downs regions.

The event **prioritised accessibility and inclusivity**, enabling full participation for all individuals, regardless of mobility, cultural background, or technological skills. This commitment began at the planning phase, with a fully accessible, inclusive venue to ensure all participants could engage comfortably. Our approach was guided by the Queensland Government Best Practice Guidelines for Event Delivery[4], reflecting our dedication to creating an inclusive environment for all.

The program was **co-designed and delivered** in partnership with Tina Bramley, EdgeWise Illuminating Counselling and Psychotherapy, who also facilitated the event. Tina brings decades of experience across corporate, not for profit and government settings. Contributions from partners, ADA Australia and the Queensland Public Advocate, with input from Celsie Mead, an older COTA Queensland Volunteer Champion, helped shape the program to meet community needs and priorities.

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[2] Most community members were likely older adults; however, Eventbrite was not configured to capture this information.
[3] Non-government organisations including peaks, not-for-profits, community groups and organisations or institutions.
[4] www.qld.gov.au/about/events-awards-honours/events-resources-and-guidelines

Queensland Government-funded **Seniors Social Connection Services**[5] — The Older Men's Network (TOMNET), Older Women's Network, Queensland Positive People, and World Wellness Group, actively participated as panelists, World Café conversation table hosts, and/or stallholders. Their involvement helped strengthen connections, build trust, and encourage collaborative ideas and actions beyond the event itself.

The program combined **storytelling, live music, information sharing, interactive workshops, and open conversations** to create an engaging and inclusive environment where participants could learn from one another and share their experiences. Local organisations and sector professionals led hands-on sessions and presentations, that highlighted practical tools and approaches grounded in real community practice. Participants gained insights into current initiatives that enhance social connection for older people and considered how place-based approaches could be tailored and strengthened within their own communities.

See Appendix A for the **Program Agenda** and Appendix B for a list of **organisations represented** on the day.

The event opened with a performance and **Acknowledgement of Country** by celebrated First Nations singer-songwriter and businesswoman, Toni Janke. This offered a meaningful start and established a respectful and inclusive tone for the day. Sandra Nugent, Non-Executive Board Director at COTA Queensland highlighted the Seniors Social Isolation Prevention peak's central role in supporting community organisations to help seniors stay connected. John Chesterman, Public Advocate for Queensland emphasised the importance of knowing your neighbours to help reduce the risk of social isolation.

To **set the scene**, Sarah Walker, Sector Development Manager at QCOSS, shared key insights from the *Social Isolation Best Practice Guide*[6], enhancing our understanding of social isolation among older Queenslanders. She also highlighted how it can help service providers improve outcomes and support social connection.

Keynote speaker, Catherine Barrett, Director and Founder of Celebrate Ageing[7] was a highlight for many, sharing her perspectives on the growing health and policy implications of social isolation and loneliness. She emphasised how ageism, loneliness and the wellbeing of older people is everyone's business and offered valuable insights on ageism, intersectionality, and internalised ageism. She also talked about the #*OldisBeautiful* project[8] and her stories strongly resonated with the audience.

The **panel discussion** featured six contributors, including an older man with lived experience of mental health challenges, alongside sector professionals, who discussed community-led approaches to address social isolation among older Queenslanders. Topics covered men's mental health, digital inclusion, carer supports, disability, intergenerational connections, aged care navigation, council programs, green spaces, social prescribing and collaboration with GPs. These discussions informed the afternoon World Café Conversations, with panelists sharing insights guided by topic-specific questions.

Throughout the morning, participants used the **"Listen, Gather, Share"** tool, a worksheet prompting them to listen, capture ideas, and share, to inform subsequent conversations

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[5] www.qld.gov.au/seniors/recreation-staying-connected/social-connection-leisure/staying-connected-your-community
[6] www.families.qld.gov.au/_media/documents/seniors/social-isolation-practice-guide.pdf
[7] www.celebrateageing.com/
[8] www.celebrateageing.com/beautiful.html

Panelists

1. **Chris Gemmill** – Older person with lived experience of mental health challenges and founding member of a blokes book club
2. **Anthony Hegarty** – Seniors Social Connection Service (TOMNET)[9]
3. **Kayode Akomolafe** – Services Australia, Aged Care Specialist Officer (ASCO)[10]
4. **Isabel Stankiewicz** – Brisbane City Council
5. **Tatia Power** – Inclusee Virtual Community Program (in partnership with Carers Qld)[11]
6. **Jade Cronan-Thompson** – Footprints Community (Social Prescribing)[12]

Table 2. *List of questions that guided the panel discussion*

No.	Question	Directed to
1	What supports you to stay connected in your community as you age?	Chris
2	What unique challenges do older men in regional areas face and how does TOMNET support them to stay connected?	Anthony
3	In your role as an ACSO, you work with people experiencing big life transitions. What are the greatest desires they express and what are the most common challenges they face?	Kayode
4	In your role as Community Development Officer for Seniors at Brisbane City Council, what are the barriers to social connection you are seeing and hearing about?	Isabel
5	Thinking about the digital inclusion program you are delivering with Carers Queensland, what are the barriers to staying connected you hear about from people participating in the programs, and how are these barriers overcome?	Tatia
6	You work closely with GPs in your social prescribing program. What is the current understanding among GPs and the community about social prescribing and what is the vision for how this could look in the coming years.	Jade

Together, the panelists highlighted key initiatives shaping social connection for older Queenslanders. Programs like TOMNET and digital inclusion initiatives delivered by Inclusee and Carers Queensland help people stay engaged, especially older men, people living in regional and remote areas, and those navigating major life transitions. Service navigation and My Aged Care were identified as key supports in helping older people access the right services and overcome systemic barriers. Common challenges included isolation, life changes, and limited digital skills, while gaps in community knowledge of where to get help and support can further hinder social connection. Collaboration with GPs through social prescribing emerged as a promising way to bridge these gaps. Overall, the discussion emphasised both the potential and ongoing work needed to keep older people socially connected.

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[9] https://tomnet.org.au/

[10] https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/aged-care-specialist-officer-my-aged-care-face-to-face-services?context=55715

[11] https://carersqld.com.au/carer-program/inclusee-virtual-community-program/

[12] https://footprintscommunity.org.au/what-is-social-prescribing/

Lived Experience Story

Highlights from Chris' story are provided below:

> I've navigated my own mental health challenges, and being part of a university-led support group through their online platform has been a true lifeline for me. With the loving support of my wife and a dedicated medical team, I've come to appreciate how community connections can nurture my spirit and give my life meaning. Over the past 2.5 years, I've stayed involved in many ways, through the local library, and by coordinating a Men's Book Club, an initiative of the Moreton Bay Library Service, participating in U3A activities, sharing coffee and conversation with my peers, joining a cycling group, and participating in other activities. Programs that connect people and address unmet social needs have given me opportunities to help others, share my experiences, and build friendships across generations. Outside of these programs, I find joy and spiritual nourishment in my church group, motorbike adventures, camping, and bushwalking in nature, enjoying the freedom to disconnect from the internet. For me, these experiences highlight the power of meaningful connections and show how caring for both mind and body can enrich wellbeing and purpose as I continue my journey of ageing. **Chris Gemmill**

Figures 1 & 2. *Dr Catherine Barrett sharing her #OldisBeautiful message and Tina Bramley leading the panel discussion*

Highlights from the Panel Discussion

- **Barriers:** Transport and travel costs, limited access to education and community spaces, housing decisions, cognitive or health challenges, and ageism.

- **Enablers:** Older adults' desire to age in place with timely access to relevant supports and services; targeted programs for men, digital inclusion initiatives, and carer support networks and programs.

- **Solutions:** Provide free, accessible information and foster collaborative approaches that promote social connection and wellbeing, including aged care navigation support, GP collaboration, and social prescribing, with attention to the needs of older men and those in regional communities.

Lunch and Connections

During the breaks, participants connected with eachother and learned more about services and supports available to help older people stay socially connected. The **Lunch and Learn Zone** on Level 2 offered a welcoming space to engage with providers and community organisations, including St Johns Community Care and Support, Inclusee, World Wellness Group, Wellways Carer Gateway, and Carers Queensland. Participants were also invited to contribute ideas to a **Wisdom Tree Activity**, responding to the question: "*What is one thing I can do to reduce social isolation in my community*". Four people participated in an audio interview (Footprints Community, U3A, Caxton Legal and Caloundra Community Centre - Pets for Life Program).

Figure 3. *Participants connecting and actively engaging with providers*

Live music by local guitarist Stan Burnyeat, who kindly donated his time, created a welcoming, vibrant atmosphere.

Figure 4. *Participants connecting in the foyer and enjoying the live music*

World Café Conversations and Connection Activities

In the afternoon, World Café conversations and interactive activities enabled participants to share experiences and ideas for supporting older people stay socially connected, focusing on **key topics**, including:

1. Diverse voices: promoting inclusivity, connection and belonging
2. Empowering older women through connection
3. Fostering connections through online platforms
4. Carers and social connections
5. Libraries as hubs for social connection
6. Older men, wellbeing and social connection

Table hosts captured ideas on post-it notes and flipchart paper and summarised key points to share with the wider group. By guiding and not directing the conversations, they created a welcoming and inclusive space where everyone could contribute. All workshops began with the question: "*What does social connection look like to you*?" and participants were encouraged to brainstorm ideas based on the following questions:

- **What are the accelerators** – the factors that help us connect
- **What are the brakes** – things that slow us down or stop us from connecting
- **What actions can we take** to strengthen the accelerators and remove the brakes

Table hosts were asked to explore the individual, cultural and structural levels, as below:

- **Individual:** how life transitions and health changes affect social connections
- **Cultural:** how our values, beliefs and societal attitudes shape the way we view ageing and social connection
- **Structural:** how service gaps, policies and community structures influence older people's ability to form and sustain meaningful social connections

The aim was to generate actionable ideas to strengthen social connections and help older people stay socially connected. Participants could also join a **Connection Circle**, add ideas to the **Wisdom Tree**, or share reflections through the **Listen, Gather, Share** activity.

Figure 5. *The Older Men's Network (TOMNET) leading a workshop discussion*

Key Insights and Findings

Key Themes

Six key themes emerged from the day's activities, providing insights to guide future initiatives:

1. Barriers to Social Connection

Age-related discrimination, assumptions about digital skills and negative stereotypes of ageing, financial constraints, transport costs, health and cognitive challenges, limited digital access and online navigation challenges, unaware of available supports, caregiving, geographical barriers (remote locations or relocation); structural barriers, such as rigid programs or funding changes; and language barriers and family dynamics.

2. Empowerment through Knowledge, Education and Resources

Empowering women, carers, and underrepresented groups to lead, participate, and access resources and support networks. Strengthening financial and digital literacy, including online safety, home care and maintenance support, recognising libraries as community hubs, greater service awareness, digital mentoring, online support networks, and cross-sector collaboration, alongside provision of stable funding and flexible frameworks.

3. Inclusive and Nurturing Spaces, Programs and Activities

Creating safe, welcoming environments where all voices are heard. Offering adaptable, low-barrier activities, including group sessions, shared meals, digital and peer mentoring, and wellbeing, intergenerational, and spiritual programs. Promoting informal everyday connections, empathy, respect, and person-centred approaches. Streamlining structures to ensure sustainable impact, fostering cross-sector collaboration, expanding volunteer opportunities, and building partnerships to reach underrepresented communities.

4. Shifting Mindsets and Empowering Change

Recognising the value of lived experiences, addressing ageism, and understanding individual needs and preferences. Promoting intergenerational connections to challenge stereotypes and fostering open, understanding mindsets in diverse environments. Encouraging person-centred care, reducing stigma around social isolation, delivering carer awareness sessions in schools, workplaces, and the community, and fostering genuine, curious interactions.

5. Targeted Communication and Outreach

Using uplifting messages that emphasise fun, connection, and the value of older people's contributions. Adopting a strengths-based approach, avoiding deficit- or fear-focused messaging. Clear and transparent communication, with strategies to reach the most vulnerable and isolated. Follow-up calls and actively promoting initiatives via diverse channels, including print, online, face-to-face, and newsletters.

6. Valuing Lived Experiences and Meaningful Contributions

Valuing older people's lived experiences strengthens social connection, wellbeing, and community cohesion. Sharing personal stories alongside data to demonstrate the value to funders and stakeholders. Community champions, volunteers, advocacy, lifelong learning, intergenerational interactions, and recognition of achievements foster participation, empowerment, and resilient, connected communities.

Key Outcomes

The event delivered three key outcomes to enhance social connections for older Queenslanders and inform the future work of the Seniors Social Isolation Prevention peak:

- **Strengthened Collaboration and Community Learning Outcomes:** community and sector stakeholders deepened their understanding of social isolation, learned about available supports, and strengthened connections to enable coordinated, community-led initiatives, fostering ongoing collaboration to enhance engagement and wellbeing.

- **Practical Insights and Future Action:** The event highlighted inclusive, community-led approaches, emphasising diversity, third spaces as hubs, digital and peer mentoring, community champions, and intergenerational initiatives. Storytelling and lived experiences challenged ageism and inspired practical, inclusive approaches to support older adults and carers, including First Nations peoples.

- **A strong foundation for ongoing initiatives:** Learnings will inform upcoming regional events and shape the ongoing work of the Seniors Social Isolation Prevention Peak, expanding reach, awareness, and impact across communities.

Key Outputs

- **Engagement of 107 participants:** Older Queenslanders, carers, volunteers, service providers and sector professionals contributed, including representatives from First Nations communities and the multicultural sector.

- **One lived experience story:** from an older man who is a community connector with lived experience of mental health challenges.

- **Six one-page insights reports:** Summarising key insights and examples from World Café conversations, to inform community-led initiatives, including approaches to engage men and diverse communities.

- **Event Summary Report:** Capturing outcomes and learnings to inform contributors, participants, funders, and future initiatives.

The thematic analysis drew together ideas of what social connection looks like, alongside six insights reports and is included in Appendix E.

Participant Experience

Participant feedback was collected one week after the event via email (see **Appendix C** for details). Only 11 responses were received, but they provided valuable insights on what participants learned, what worked well, and areas for improvement.

What participants learned

- **Ageism Awareness:** The widespread impact of ageism and the need for societal change towards ageing.
- **Fostering Collaboration:** The importance of organisations working together to better support older people in the community.
- **Community Connection:** Building strong local communities to reduce isolation, through formal and informal networks, individual and group interactions, connections with nature and pets, and supportive spaces.
- **Health Implications:** The role of social connection in supporting older people's mental and physical wellbeing and its potential impact on the healthcare system.
- **Valuing Lived Experience:** Actively involving older adults and valuing their stories provides deep insights into ageing, social connection and community needs.

What worked well

- **Exploring barriers:** Discussions around financial constraints, transport and other issues affecting engagement.
- **Diverse experiences:** Rich and insightful discussions highlighting the importance of diverse experiences and voices, with a focus on promoting inclusivity and cultural relevance in community initiatives.
- **Ambience and set-up:** The positive vibe and well-organised set-up.
- **Addressing Ageism:** Keynote speaker insights about ageism resonated strongly and was impactful, prompting reflections on community dialogue and initiating interest in the *#OldisBeautiful* campaign.
- **Networking and Collaboration:** Connecting with peers and service providers to celebrate seniors, understanding ageism and loneliness, and promoting learning and community collaboration
- **Panel Discussion:** The panel on fostering social connection provided practical insights for organisations to collaborate and better support seniors, including ways to engage older men

Areas for improvement

- **Inclusivity and Diversity:** Increased presentations from smaller, non-funded community groups and older people with lived experience, with stronger representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders.
- **Facilitator Briefing:** Some facilitators felt underprepared due to unclear briefings; providing more detailed guidance in future could better set expectations.
- **Case Studies:** Interactive sessions presenting real-world case studies and practical solutions to community challenges.
- **Resources and Take-Home Materials:** Additional materials on successful initiatives, current Australian literature, and grass roots programs.

Overall impact

- Participants felt inspired, informed, and motivated to apply insights in their communities

Direct Quote

"*A number of us were from the multicultural sector and knew that language, cultural beliefs, religion, migration history and health literacy were all contributing factors towards ageing, above and beyond mainstream*" — **State Government representative**

Additional Quotes can be found in [Appendix D](#).

Conclusion and Recommendations

The event engaged 107 participants from diverse sectors and communities, producing six one-page insights reports, a lived-experience story, and a summary report to support local application of learnings. It strengthened cross-sector connections, highlighted community-led approaches, fostered collaboration, and raised awareness of services, providing a foundation for ongoing initiatives and guiding the Seniors Social Isolation Prevention Peak's future work to enhance inclusion, wellbeing, and participation for older Queenslanders.

These insights highlight a shared vision for building connected, inclusive, and empowered communities. They highlight the importance of person-centred, culturally responsive approaches, accessible and stigma-free spaces, and opportunities for participation, leadership, and peer support. Strengthening digital inclusion, expanding social connection initiatives, and enhancing collaboration across sectors will reduce isolation and foster independence. By investing in welcoming environments, practical supports, skilled facilitators, and sustainable programs, communities can create pathways for belonging, wellbeing, and lifelong engagement, progressing the ongoing goals of the Seniors Social Isolation Prevention Peak Services Program.

This report captures key insights, findings, and practical learnings from the first of three events. While formal recommendations will follow the remaining events, initial guidance is provided to inform planning and delivery in Townsville and Longreach, including sharing outcomes with collaborators and participants, actively engaging diverse regional, rural, and remote communities, and strengthening partnerships with Queensland Government–funded seniors social connection services to align efforts and leverage local knowledge.

These preliminary recommendations aim to ensure the remaining events build on the insights and experiences gathered so far, supporting inclusive, impactful, and responsive initiatives that meet the needs of older Queenslanders.

Appendix A — Program Agenda

Time	Topic	Details
GROUND FLOOR, FOYER		
09.00AM	**Registration, Social Connection, Music and Morning Tea**	
IN THE AUDITORUM		
09.45AM	**WELCOME** *Opening performance (song) and Acknowledgement of Country* *Overview of the day, from your hosts*	**Toni Janke** is a celebrated First Nations singer-songwriter and business woman with family connections from Cape York and the Torres Strait. She lives and works in Magandjin (Brisbane). **Sandra Nugent**, Non-Executive Director, Board of Directors, Council on the Ageing Queensland **Dr John Chesterman**, Public Advocate for Queensland
10:20AM	**SETTING THE SCENE** *Understanding social isolation and loneliness among older people*	**Sarah Walker** Manager, Sector Development, QCOSS
10.30AM	**KEYNOTE SPEAKER** *Valuing ageing and older people is everyone's business*	**Dr Catherine Barrett** Founder and Director, Celebrate Ageing
11.05AM	**PAUSE AND SET-UP FOR PANEL DISCUSSION**	
11.15AM	**PANEL DISCUSSION and Q&A** *Community-led solutions to reduce the risk of social isolation among older people, improve health and wellbeing and strengthen links with community*	**Chris Gemmill**, Retiree and Founding Member of the Bloke's Book Club, City of Moreton Bay **Anthony Hegarty**, Counsellor and Volunteer Program Coordinator, TOMNET (The Older Mens Network) **Kayode Akomolafe**, Aged Care Specialist Officer (ACSO), Services Australia **Isabel Stankiewicz**, Community Development Officer, Seniors, Access and Inclusion, Brisbane City Council **Tatia Power**, Strategic Partnerships Manager, Inclusee **Jade Cronan-Thompson**, Chief Service Delivery Officer, Footprints Community
12:00PM	**LUNCH & CONNECTIONS** *Enjoy lunch, networking, and live acoustic music in the Ground Floor Foyer, quiet conversations in the Auditorium, connect with panel members and service providers in the Level 2*	**Music & Networking** (Foyer, Ground Floor) **Wisdom Tree Activity** (Foyer, Ground Floor) **Quiet Connections** (Auditorium) **Lunch & Learn Zone** (Foyer, Level 2)

Time	Topic	Details
	Foyer, or take a leisurely stroll to the local park *The choice is yours! There's something for everyone*	A welcoming space to meet with providers, community groups and organisations, and explore a variety of services and supports **Connect & Share** (Level 2, Multipurpose Room). A supportive space for social connection programs for seniors to meet, exchange knowledge and collaborate **Lunchtime Stroll** to the nearby park to enjoy green space and river views
1.00PM	**WORLD CAFÉ, WORKSHOPS & CONNECTION ACTIVITIES** *Choose the activity and topic that most interests you.*	**World Café** (Auditorium) Collaborative conversations encouraging open discussion and idea-sharing in a relaxed, interactive setting. Topics include: • Diverse voices: promoting inclusivity, connection and belonging • Empowering older women through connection • Fostering connections through online platforms **Facilitated Workshops** (various spaces across venue) • Carers and social connections • Libraries as hubs for social connection • Older men, wellbeing and social connection **Connection Activities** (Foyer, Ground Floor) • Connection circle • Storytelling around the wisdom tree
2.00PM	**GATHER & COLLABORATE**	**Gather to exchange ideas** from the workshops and identify future collaboration opportunities
2.30PM	**SUMMARY & ACTION PLAN** Learn about the next steps and how to stay connected	**Geoff Rowe**, Chief Executive Officer, Aged and Disability Advocacy (ADA) Australia **Karen Wilson**, Executive Officer, Seniors Social Isolation Prevention Peak, Council on the Ageing Queensland
3.00PM	**CLOSE**	Thank you and farewell

Appendix B — Organisations Represented

Government

Federal

- Department of Health and Aged Care
- Services Australia (Aged Care Specialist Officer)

State

- Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety
- Metro South Health
- Office of the Public Advocate
- QAGOMA
- Queensland Health
- Queensland Public Trustee (QPT)

Local

- Brisbane City Council (50 Plus Centre and Community Development – Seniors)
- City of Gold Coast
- City of Moreton Bay (Libraries)
- Logan City Council
- Noosa Shire Council
- Redland City Council

Non-Government Organisations

- ADA Australia
- Aspire4Life
- Australian Association of Gerontology
- Brisbane South PHN
- Carers Queensland
- Caxton Community Legal Centre
- Celebrate Ageing
- Communify Queensland
- Council on the Ageing Queensland
- Cuppa PLUS Inc.
- Ethnic Community Council of Queensland (ECCQ)
- Footprints Community
- Health Consumers Queensland
- Inclusee
- iLA - LiveUp
- Leora Healthcare (disability, aged care and mental health)
- Metropolitan Senior Citizens Centre
- Micah Projects
- Minjerriba Day Respite

- Mount Gravatt Community Centre
- NDS Community Services Gateway to Industry School's Project
- NSI Housing
- Oxley Senior Citizens Club Inc.
- Palliative Care Queensland
- QCOSS
- St John Ambulance Queensland
- Support Groups Queensland
- The Salvation Army
- The Seniors Channel
- UnitingCare's Older Persons Programs
- Wellways (Carer Gateway)
- World Wellness Group
- Your Lifestyle Centre Beenleigh

Seniors Social Isolation (SSI) funded organisations

Brisbane

- Older Women's Network (Qld) Inc.
- Queensland Positive People
- Wynnum 60 and Better Programme Inc.

South East Qld

- Thriving Multicultural Communities (Gold Coast)

North Coast

- Caloundra Community Centre (North Coast)
- Noosa Seniors Connect Program (Sunshine Coast)
- Relationships Australia Qld- Senior Social Connections Program

South West Qld

- Goondir Health services (Dalby)
- The Older Mens Network (TOMNET)
- South Burnett Contributing to Community (CTC) Inc.

University, Learning or Research Institution

- University of Queensland

Appendix C — Participant Feedback Survey

Dear Participant

Thank you to everyone who joined us at our event on Monday! We'd love to hear your thoughts to help us move ideas forward and plan future events. Please take a moment to briefly share your feedback with us.

1. What did you enjoy most about the event?

2. What aspects of the event would you like to see more of in the future?

3. What key messages or insights stood out most for you from the speakers?

4. What did you find most valuable about the panel discussion and why?

5. Which workshop did you attend in the afternoon? Please highlight as relevant:
   - ☐ Diverse voices: promoting inclusivity, connection and belonging
   - ☐ Empowering older women through connection
   - ☐ Fostering connections through online platforms
   - ☐ Carers and social connections
   - ☐ Libraries as hubs for social connection
   - ☐ Older men, wellbeing and social connection
   - ☐ Connection circle

6. What key ideas stood out most from the workshop?

7. What key ideas would you most like taken forward?

8. Overall, what was the highlight of your day and why?

9. Tell us briefly about any new connections or knowledge you gained on the day?

10. Any other comments or suggestions?

Thank you for your valued feedback!

If you're interested in staying connected and exploring future collaboration opportunities, we'd love to hear from you! Please feel free to share your contact details below.
To learn more about the Seniors Social Isolation Prevention Peak and how we help seniors stay connected, reduce isolation, improve wellbeing, and build stronger community ties, visit our website:
https://cotaqld.org.au/social-isolation-prevention-peak/

Appendix D — Participant Voice – Direct Quotes

Based on the Post-Event Feedback

"*It takes all types of opportunities, informal, formal, individual, group, nature, nurture, art, dogs, exercise etc*" — **Community Member**

"*The introduction of 50-cent fares for rail trips emphasised the importance of the travel experience itself, encapsulated in the idea, it's not about what you do, it's the journey*" – **Community Member**

"*A number of us were from the multicultural sector and knew that language, cultural beliefs, religion, migration history and health literacy were all contributing factors towards ageing, above and beyond mainstream*" — **State Government**

" *Congratulations on a great day! It was wonderful to be in a room with so many people who are supporting our seniors in the community. I personally made several important contacts with people in organisations I didn't even know existed*" — **Local Government**

"*What I enjoyed most was coming together physically. I met many people for the first time face to face. It was delightful and meaningful thank you*" — **Local Government**

"*Ageism is deeply embedded in our society. We don't need to lighten up, we need to open up*" — **Local Government**

"*The breakout area was great for me to be able to hear stories from other people and to connect with others that I hadn't had a chance to speak to yet*" — **Service Provider**

"*Opportunities to connect and share what we are doing, and find out what others are doing; finding out what barriers there are to accessing our own services*" — **Service Provider**

"*I would like to start including more positive images and words about ageing in the newsletters to help increase my members feelings of self-worth and improve their confidence*" — **Service Provider**

"*The panel discussion on fostering social connections was incredibly valuable. It gave practical insights into how organisations can collaborate and share resources to better serve the senior community*" — **CALD Organisation**

"*I'd love to see the continued development of community-led initiatives that focus on creating genuine connections, particularly for multicultural seniors*" — **CALD Organisation**

"*Listening to some amazing women talk about struggles of women in the work place and feeling unheard and unseen*" — **First Nations Community Organisation**

Appendix E — Thematic Analysis

World Café Conversations

Themes emerging from the question: "*What does social connection look like to you?*"

1. Belonging and Community
- Feeling part of a group or community
- Sharing stories, social chats, and group activities
- Inclusion across differences

2. Purpose and Identity
- Retaining a sense of self and personal purpose
- Contributing through volunteering or meaningful activities
- Feeling valued and needed

3. Relationships and Trust
- Building friendships and supportive networks
- Trust, empathy, and person-centred engagement
- Relating to others and being listened to

4. Access, Safety and Inclusivity
- Safe, welcoming, and culturally respectful spaces
- Reducing barriers to participation
- Access to information, support, and respite

5. Engagement and Activity
- Social, recreational, and learning activities
- Online and face-to-face participation
- Fun, curiosity, and opportunities to try new experiences

Workshop 1: Diverse Voices: Promoting Inclusivity, Connection & Belonging

Table A1. *Key Insights and Participant Examples*

Key Themes	Participant Examples
Belonging in Difference	• Belonging can be experienced among diverse individuals. • It requires openness, empathy, and willingness to step outside comfort zones to understand others. • Involves challenging stigma around social isolation and ageism.
Individualised, Person-Centred Connection	• Connection is deeply individual; what works for one person may not work for another. • Consider each person's cultural background, lived experience and personal needs when planning programs and supports. • Plan services thoughtfully, reduce practical barriers, and balance meaningful relationship building with program objectives.
Meaningful Connection	• Connection goes beyond everyday interactions; it's about feeling valued, noticed, and part of a community. • Be kind, empathetic and fully present with others. • Build trust through patience, compassion, and culturally competent approaches to support individual social needs.
Safe, Supportive and Welcoming Spaces	• Safe, welcoming, and inclusive spaces strengthen social connection. • Listen patiently and inclusively, allowing space for all voices to be heard, especially when conversations are uncomfortable. • Provide culturally appropriate services, volunteer training, proactive outreach, and ensure physical and psychological safety. • Shared language and understanding are vital for diverse communities, including migrant and Deaf communities. • Building trust is key to engaging those hesitant to accept help.

Ideas generated to inform future initiatives and collaboration included:

- Strengthening Meaningful, Person-Centred, and Culturally Inclusive Social Connections, including outreach and volunteer engagement.

- Creating Safe, Welcoming Spaces and reducing barriers to participation while addressing stigma and ageism.

- Enhancing Collaboration across sectors and communities, using interactive approaches and technology to support connection and independence.

Workshop 2: Empowering Older Women through Connection

Table A2. *Key Insights and Participant Examples*

Key Themes	Participant Examples
Barriers to Connection	• **Ageism:** Feeling unheard, invisible, internalised perceptions of ageing, scepticism toward digital supports. • **Anxiety:** Divorce, fear of unfamiliar environments, navigating change. • **Communication:** Use uplifting messages, strengths-based language, check-ins to maintain connections, and flexible, tailored approaches. • **Digital Exclusion:** Support to safely access technology safely; need for printed materials and guidance. • **Elder Abuse and Financial Pressures:** Early or pressured decisions from family, housing stress, and cost of living. • **Limited Autonomy and Practical Challenges:** Mobility, transport, and logistical barriers affecting independence.
Enablers to Connection	• **Agency and Empowerment:** Autonomy, decision-making, advocacy • **Skills and Support:** Access to programs, resources, digital literacy, and intergenerational activities. • **Creativity and Wellbeing:** Joy, self-expression, health, quality of life • **Social and Practical Supports:** Flexible programs, supportive spaces, volunteering, recognition. • **Resilience and Problem-Solving:** Adaptability, confidence, and skills development.
Action Steps	• **Advocacy and Activism:** Participation in community initiatives and policy consultations. • **Celebrating Women and Challenging Stereotypes:** Campaigns promoting achievements and reducing ageism. • **Education and Skills:** Financial, digital, lifelong learning programs. • **Employment and Leadership:** Skills training, equitable pay, mentorship, pathways to governance. • **Networking and Connection:** Workshops, events, and online platforms • **Resources:** Fair access to community, historical, and informational supports

Ideas generated to inform future initiatives and collaboration included:

- **Access to Skills, Opportunities and Resources:** Promoting education, digital literacy, financial skills, fair employment, and equitable access to programs and services to strengthen independence and capacity.

- **Connection, Peer Support and Positive Representation:** Building networks, fostering social inclusion, providing peer-to-peer mentoring, celebrating achievements, challenging societal norms, and creating supportive spaces that value women's contributions.

- **Empowerment and Participation:** Supporting women to exercise agency, engage in leadership and governance, advocate for their rights, and take part in meaningful community initiatives.

Workshop 3: Fostering Connections through Online Platforms

Table A3. *Key Insights and Participant Examples*

Key Themes	Participant Examples
Collaboration and Partnerships	• Partner with trusted providers and experienced organisations offering digital mentoring to expand impact and reach underserved communities.
Funding and Sustainability	• Limited funding restricts availability of digital social support.
Mentoring and Support	• One-to-one digital mentoring is highly needed but not always available.
Negative Messaging	• Negative, deficit-based messaging around loneliness and isolation can deter participation. • Reframe as connection, learning and participation. • Highlight strengths and resilience, people want to feel valued and have fun.
Reach and Awareness	• Isolated and vulnerable individuals often lack awareness of available online programs and how to access them.
Myths, Assumptions and Stigma	• Assumptions are often made that older adults are uninterested in or unable to use technology. • These assumptions can limited opportunities. • Provide safe, supportive access and allow people to learn at their own pace. • Shame and stigma around using online programs to stay socially connected can create barriers.

Ideas generated to inform future initiatives and collaboration included:

- **Positive Engagement and Awareness:** Focus on positive messaging that shows how people can contribute, have fun, and be appreciated, and proactively reach out to those who need support the most.

- **One-to-One Digital Mentoring:** Increase availability of one-to-one digital mentoring and advocate for sustainable funding to support online social connection initiatives.

- **Accessible Digital Programs:** Provide safe, flexible, user-friendly platforms and challenge stigma around older adults using technology.

Workshop 4: Carers and Social Connections

Table A4. *Key Insights and Participant Examples*

Key Themes	Participant Examples
Accessible and Coordinated Support	• Face-to-face and phone outreach • Clear and accessible information • Broad support systems not reliant on a single person • Pre-planning for contingencies to improve social connection.
Awareness and Outreach	• Expand awareness to raise understanding of carers' needs • Increase knowledge in schools, workplaces, and community centres, and provide flexible work arrangements and support • Focus programs and resources on carers supporting people with high needs to ensure equitable access
Barriers to Connection	• Limited respite and support for carers • Fragmented services and complex government systems • Rural or remote isolation • Burnout among carers and professional
Belonging, Identity and Wellbeing	• Social connection helps carers maintain purpose, identity, and a sense of self beyond their caring role • Connections with family, peers, and community, online or in person, enhance carers' belonging, wellbeing, and sense of value • When connections match carers' interests and values, it further strengthens enjoyment and overall wellbeing.
Education, Support & Advocacy	• Access to services and programs, such as Carers Queensland and local community resources is essential. • Pre-planning (Ensuring Powers of Attorney, Wills) and respite support help prevent burnout and promote independence.

Ideas generated to inform future initiatives and collaboration included:

- **Expand Accessible Social Connections:** Provide carers with both online and in-person opportunities to connect, fostering purpose, identity, and mental wellbeing.

- **Improve Awareness and Information Access:** Ensure carers have clear, easy-to-access information about services, support networks, and respite options.

- **Strengthen Community and Workplace Support:** Develop targeted outreach, carer awareness programs, and flexible workplace policies to reduce isolation and burnout.

Workshop 5: Libraries as Hubs for Social Connection

Table A5. *Key Insights and Participant Examples*

Key Themes	Participant Examples
Barriers to Access and Participation	• Limited knowledge, low literacy, or lack of digital skills. • Socio-economic constraints and transport challenges. • Resistance to accepting help and fear of change. • Limited trust in online or unfamiliar services.
Spaces and Places for Connection and Wellbeing	• Libraries serve as vital hubs for social connection, offering spaces and programs that foster belonging. • Support both in-person and online engagement. • Promote connection, wellbeing, and access to reliable information. • Provide informal, low-pressure opportunities that build trust, purpose, and a sense of belonging. • Regular, meaningful engagement strengthens individuals' sense of value and inclusion.
Strengthening Connection and Belonging	• Provide social, recreational, and educational activities that help reduce hesitation and build confidence. • Offer programs that support personal resilience and community outreach. • Connect people through book clubs, hobbies, support groups, and regular check-ins. • Ensure inclusive access to information, education, and key services (e.g., legal, community, advocacy). • Strengthen social connection through cross-sector collaboration, inclusive engagement, and training programs.

Ideas generated to inform future initiatives and collaboration included:

- **Libraries as Community Connectors:** Future programs could use library spaces and activities (clubs, hobbies, and group events) to encourage meaningful social connections; support wellbeing and serve as a central information hub.

- **Accessible Information and Support:** Libraries can offer guidance, information, and referrals to other services (e.g., legal help, advocacy, community centres) through different methods, including in-person, online, and phone

- **Inclusive Engagement and Collaboration:** Opportunities to promote welcoming, supportive interactions, cross-sector collaborations, and training, outreach, and regular check-ins to strengthen community connections.

Workshop 6: Older Men, Wellbeing and Social Connection

Table A6. *Key Insights and Participant Examples*

Key Themes	Participant Examples
Barriers to Connection	• Transport, affordability, and location can limit men's ability to participate. • Workforce shortages and safety concerns reduce access to supportive environments. • Digital or language challenges make it harder to stay informed or connected. • Health or ability limitations restrict engagement in community activities. • Ageism, gender norms and low confidence can discourage help-seeking or social participation. • Limited activity options that appeal to men can reduce motivation to connection.
Enablers of Connection	• Venues that are safe, welcoming and easy to access. • Tailored programs codesigned with participants, with clear purpose and outcomes. • Trained facilitators, staff, and volunteers. • Support for transport and affordability. • Strong collaboration with local organisations and service providers.
Inclusive and Welcoming Spaces	• Affordable activities supported by peers. • Disability-friendly facilities with clear eligibility criteria. • Welcoming environments with agreed group guidelines. • Digital inclusion opportunities through the libraries. • Intergenerational participation and support.
Meaningful Social Connection	• Activities can be structured and purpose-driven (Men's Shed, book clubs) or informal (story-sharing, lunch groups). • Build companionship, inclusion, community support, and access to information and services. • Creating a safe and welcoming environment is essential

Ideas generated to inform future initiatives and collaboration included:

- **Design Inclusive, Purposeful Programs:** Offer both structured and informal social opportunities that foster belonging, companionship, and wellbeing.

- **Enhance Accessibility and Support:** Provide transport and offer affordable activities with trained facilitators and volunteer opportunities, in safe, welcoming spaces to remove participation barriers.

- **Collaborate and Share Information:** Co-design activities with participants, provide accessible information, and work with local providers and community organisations to strengthen engagement and connection.

Connection Circle Activity

Table A7. *Key Insights and Participant Examples*

Key Themes	Participant Examples
Sustainable Programs	• Stable funding and flexible frameworks to promote ongoing connection opportunities. • Engaging, meaningful activities that encourage participation.
Community Initiatives and Champions	• Programs such as Chatty Cafés, subsidised travel, and group outings foster connection. • Peer support, volunteers and community champions encourage participation and help those hesitant to join.
Capturing Impact	• Share personal stories alongside data to demonstrate the value to funders and stakeholders.

Wisdom Tree Activity

Table A8. *Key Insights and Participant Examples*

Key Themes	Participant Examples
Connecting Locally	• Prioritise personal, informal connections through greeting neighbours, casual chats, volunteering and joining clubs or programs to build relationships and belonging. • Example: Inclusee Virtual Community Program - Carers Queensland)
Community Programs and Participation	• Participate in programs and events held at libraries and community centres • Provide opportunities that foster connection and engagement. • Identify and support individuals who may be socially isolated. • Example: Mt Gravatt Community Ways to Wellness
Storytelling and Lived Experience	• Maintain curiosity and openness. • Listen to and share personal experiences. • Challenge biases, stereotypes and ageism.

Ideas generated from to inform future initiatives and collaboration included:

- **Build Connected Communities:** Encourage older people to engage with neighbours, clubs, volunteer programs and activities and foster curiosity, listening, and inclusion.

- **Support Programs and Champions:** Develop funded, flexible initiatives and empower volunteers to connect people, build peer networks, and engage those hesitant to join.

- **Demonstrate Impact:** use both personal stories and data to show the value of older people, volunteers, and community programs to funders and the wider community.

Listen, Gather and Share Activity

1. Language and Messaging

- Be mindful of how words shape perceptions and actions
- Promote positive ageing through resources like www.celebrateageing.com
- "Words make worlds"

2. Activity Design and Engagement

- Low-impact activities (e.g., book clubs, conversation clubs) can still foster connection
- Include fun, varied and engaging activities (e.g., karaoke, meditation)
- Encourage intergenerational interaction between younger and older people
- Use tools like the Meetup App to support connections

3. Outreach and Collaboration

- Collaborate with community groups for broader reach
- Connect participants to other groups and community networks
- Link with GPs or link workers to encourage wellbeing activities
- Proactively engage individuals through multiple methods (print, online, face-to-face)
- Follow-up calls are important to maintain engagement

4. Flexible Delivery

- Service delivery should be adaptable, offering different modes of participation to suit individual needs