



SENIORS SOCIAL ISOLATION PEAK SERVICES PROGRAM

Seniors Social Isolation Provider Community of Practice (SSIP-CoP)


Minutes of Meeting No. 1 - 2026


Date/Time	Wednesday 18 February 2026 (2.00 – 3.00pm)
Theme	Digital Confidence and Access
Location	Zoom Meeting Meeting ID: 844 835 1855 Passcode: yt4mXr
Facilitator	Karen Wilson , Executive Officer, Seniors Social Isolation Peak Services Program, Council on the Ageing (COTA) Queensland
Admin Support	Matthew Strachan , Admin Assistant and Program Support Council on the Ageing (COTA) Queensland
Guest Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusee: Tatia Power, Strategic Partnerships Manager • The Older Mens Network (TOMNET): Shannon Wade, General Manager and Anthony Hegarty, Program Manager/Counsellor (<i>SSI Service Provider</i>). • Gateway to Industry Schools Program: Julie Anderson, Project Lead – Gateway, NDS, Community Services
Recording	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y-G-KvhnkfA
Apologies ^	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bundaberg 60 & Better - Des Kemp 2. Connecting Seniors in Lockyer Valley (Ipswich), STAR Community - Janine Smith 3. Encircle Redcliffe Neighbourhood Centre - Debbie Fletcher 4. Noosa Seniors Connect, Noosa Council - Alison Hamblin 5. Proserpine Intergenerational Storytime Program, Whitsunday Regional Council - Alicia Mulcahy 6. Seniors in Focus, Fraser Coast Regional Council - James O'Connor 7. Seniors Relationships Social Isolation Program (Maroochy), Relationships Australia Queensland - Catherine Cates and Toni Meehan 8. Somerset Seniors Connect, Somerset Regional Council - Carole Labram 9. South Burnett Stronger Together, South Burnett Contributing to Community (SBCTC) Inc, Nanango - Debra Melvin 10. UnitingCare Community - Jan Du Buisson

^ Apologies noted above were from those who declined the meeting in MS Teams.

Discussion, Key Points and Actions

	Discussion and Key Points	Actions
1	WELCOME AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	
1.1	<p>Acknowledgement of Country The meeting acknowledged the Turrbal people of Meanjin (Brisbane) as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we met, and paid respects to Elders past, present and emerging. Respect was also extended to any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples joining the meeting.</p> <p>Lived Experience Acknowledgement The meeting recognised and valued the lived experience of participants and acknowledged the wisdom and diverse perspectives that strengthen our shared work.</p> <p>All new members were welcomed.</p>	
1.2	<p>Confirm Previous Minutes and Actions</p> <p>The Minutes of the previous meetings were confirmed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COP5 (19/11/25) Showcasing Programs & Activities • COP6 (1/12/25) 60 & Better Programs only 	<p>Available on SSIP Hub Related Projects Tool → Community of Practice → 2026 Meetings</p>
1.3	<p>Check-in: who is here today</p> <p>Attendees – SSI Provider</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ageing Gracefully Gold Coast, Thriving Multicultural Communities (TMC) - Krystal He, Coordinator and Kacey Jackson, Digital Literacy / Digital Sisters Program. 2. Barcaldine 60 & Better Program, Barcaldine Regional Council - Jean Williams, Program Coordinator. 3. Bidgerdii Elders Social Engagement Program (BESEP) – Lauren Noller, Program Manager. 4. BlueCare - Philippa Hall, Community Engagement Lead 5. Redcliffe Older Persons Action Program (OPAP), Redcliffe Encircle Neighbourhood Centre – Jenny Reid, Case Manager. E. jennyr@encircle.org.au 6. Queensland Men's Shed Association – Frank Pearce, Regional Coordinator 7. Transit Care – Dani Bailey, Events Coordinator 8. Wynnum 60 & Better – Wendy Stewart, Manager <p>Attendees – Other</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. COTA Queensland – Lisa Rusten, Director of Services 10. Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety – Jean Lagan, Principal Policy Officer, Strategy and Reform 	<p>Please confirm if you attended and are not on the list.</p>

	Discussion and Key Points	Actions
	<p>Updates - Seniors Social Isolation Prevention Peak</p> <p>Karen briefly shared a couple of updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSIP Hub: testing the pilot site during Feb/March with a small group of SSI-Providers. • Survey: 38% response rate and representation from across the state. Will be shared on the SSIP Hub. • Mental Health Essentials Training: date to be confirmed • Seniors Month Grants: Close 27 March, 5pm. https://qldseniorsmonth.org.au/grants/ 	<p>SSIP Hub has been published for providers to test - more details to follow in March</p>
2	Guest Speakers	
2.1	<p>Guest Speaker: Tatia Power, Strategic Partnerships Manager, Inclusee</p> <p>Topic: Embrace the Digital World with Confidence</p> <p>Tatia acknowledged joining from Quandamooka land in the Redlands and paid respects to First Nations peoples and Elders past and present.</p> <p>She introduced Inlusee, a virtual community centre delivering over 200 online activities each month for older Australians and people who are unable to easily leave home. She also mentioned her new role as Australian Ambassador for the Social Connection Collective, a global alliance addressing social isolation.</p> <p>Inlusee provide social, educational and recreational programs, with the purpose of bringing meaningful social connection directly to participants. Tatia noted that while there is a common assumption that older adults resist technology, the main barriers are lack of confidence, fear of embarrassment, or previous negative experiences.</p> <p>Inlusee’s approach makes technology simple and largely “invisible,” prioritising connection over formal technical training. Digital skills develop naturally through participation. The model emphasises patience, emotional safety, celebrating small wins, co-design with participants, and proactive follow-up when people become disengaged.</p> <p>Tatia emphasised practical, participant-centred strategies, including personalised support, following up with participants, strengths-based messaging, adapted technology rollout, providing multi-format resources, and co-designing accessible programs.</p> <p>She also highlighted broader initiatives such as Say G’day Day, a national campaign promoting social connection, and encouraged attendees to connect with Inlusee for collaboration or referrals, noting that vacancies are currently available for participants.</p>	<p> Recording starts at 9:27 Minutes</p> <p>Social Connection Collective https://www.linkedin.com/company/social-connection-collective/</p> <p>And below is the closed group for the collective https://www.linkedin.com/groups/14936039/</p> <p>Contact Details</p> <p>Inlusee https://inlusee.org.au/</p> <p>Contact Tatia at tatia@inlusee.org.au</p> <p>Add Say G'Day Day link to the SSIP Hub</p>

	Discussion and Key Points	Actions
2.2	<p>Shannon Wade, General Manager and Anthony Hegarty, Program Manager/Counsellor, The Older Mens Network (TOMNET), Toowoomba and the Lockyer Valley</p> <p>Topic: <i>"Digital Inclusion and Technology: What's Working Well in Practice"</i>.</p> <p>TOMNET are an SSI-Provider. Shannon said they support men over 50 across Toowoomba and the Lockyer Valley, providing social connection and low-intensity mental health services to around 330 members, nearly half of whom are over 75.</p> <p>Shannon and Anthony shared key insights, lessons learned, challenges, and successes from implementing a new CRM (Customer Relationship Management) system.</p> <p>Implementing New CRM Database - Key Insights</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ChilliDB aimed to centralise participant and program data, reduce reliance on multiple spreadsheets, improve reporting accuracy, strengthen compliance, and support organisational growth. Challenges included evaluating suitable platforms, training staff with varying technical skills, complex data migration, and customising reporting functionality. Despite these challenges, the CRM has already delivered significant benefits, including real-time tracking of participant demographics and referrals, centralised records, event management, stronger governance oversight, and evidence-informed decision-making, providing a robust platform for future growth. 2. Anthony described the challenges of sourcing a CRM that met the organisation's specific needs, noting that many available platforms were either too costly or lacked required functionality. He highlighted the frustration of adapting programs or workflows to fit unsuitable CRMs. 3. To address gaps in attendance tracking, Anthony developed a customised app, allowing simple recording and reporting of unique attendances at events and meetings. While still being tested, the app is expected to save significant staff time and improve data accuracy. He noted that similar solutions may become more accessible to smaller organisations in the future, particularly for those with staff interested in technology. <p>A summary is provided below. See Appendix A for "Case Study" overview of their presentation, to guide others implementing new CRMs'.</p>	<p> Recording starts at 29:18 Minutes</p> <p>Contact Details https://tomnet.org.au/ https://www.facebook.com/TOMNETinc T. 07 4638 9080 admin@tomnet.org.au</p>

	Discussion and Key Points	Actions
	<p>Comment from Frank Pearce, QMSA</p> <p>Software for capturing attendances is an ongoing issue for the 250 Men's Sheds across the state. As a Peak we have implemented Chilli DB over the last year. Our sheds use a variety of manual and digital tools, some boutique software written by shedders which they are happy to share. Some sheds use this product - which is free for NFPs https://attendance.co.nz/</p>	
2.3	<p>Julie Anderson, Project Lead – Gateway, NDS, Community Services, Gateway to Industry Schools Program</p> <p>Julie leads the Community Services Gateway to Industry Schools program, funded by the Queensland Government. The program supports 68 schools across Queensland and partners with over 300 industry organisations to expose students to diverse career pathways within community services and other sectors. Activities include two-day CARE programs, immersion days, industry connection events for school staff, site visits, mock interviews, work experience placements, and school-based traineeships.</p> <p>Julie reported liaising with Karen to explore intergenerational opportunities that connect students with older Queenslanders, aiming to reduce social isolation while building students' communication, empathy, and employability skills.</p> <p>This initiative aims to co-design activities connecting Queenslanders and students, supporting wellbeing, social inclusion, and meaningful engagement. Students gain exposure to real-world experiences and potential careers in the community sector, while older participants benefit from social interaction and support. The long-term goal is to develop a sustainable model that strengthens community connections and workforce development.</p> <p>📢 Providers are invited to learn more and explore participation at a level that suits their capacity.</p> <p>Benefits for students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop communication skills and adapt to different styles • Build emotional intelligence, problem-solving, and employability skills • Gain experience in following through on commitments • Exposure to diverse career paths and practical work experiences (e.g., administration, meal preparation, gardening, maintenance) 	<p>📺 Recording starts at 45:37 Minutes</p>

	Discussion and Key Points	Actions
	<p>Benefits for older Queenslanders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce social isolation and foster emotional connection and shared purpose • Opportunity to share life stories and career experiences • Feel valued and included in the community • Access to technology support • Improved overall wellbeing <p>Get Involved</p> <p>For more information about the Gateway to Industry Schools Program, contact Julie or Joy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Julie Anderson, Project Lead, T. 0439 629 596, Julie.anderson@nds.org.au • Joy Collins, Project Assistant, Joy.collins@nds.org.au <p>To express interest in participating in the intergenerational program, contact Karen, who will coordinate with Julie and compile a list of interested SSI providers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Karen Wilson, Executive Officer, Seniors Social Isolation Peak Services Program, COTA Queensland. T. 0484 023 614 or E. karen.wilson@cotaqld.org.au. <p>Participation is entirely voluntary and designed to fit within existing workloads.</p> <p>Comment by Tatia Power. We run a virtual intergenerational program and are hoping to expand it. I'd love to chat with you about how we can work with you on this.</p>	<p>Providers who want to learn more to reach out to Julie, Joy or Karen.</p> <p>Tatia Power and Julie Anderson to connect.</p>
3.0	Q&A SESSION	
3.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time did not permit a Q&A session, but participants were invited to connect with Karen directly with any questions. • Karen to circulate an email next week with information on grants, training, and other opportunities (sent 26/2/26) 	Previous email updates (Jan, Feb, March) now on SSIP Hub under Related Project Tools.
4.0	NEXT MEETING AND CLOSE	
4.1	<p>Wednesday 15 April 2026 (2-3pm) online via Zoom. Theme: Health, Care and Dignity.</p> <p>Note! After the meeting, Jean Lagan, Principal Policy Officer, Strategy and Reform, Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety, forwarded some important information about the Be Connected Program. See Appendix B for details.</p>	<p>Agenda to be circulated one month before.</p> <p>Karen to add to the SSIP Hub</p>

Minutes drafted by Matthew Strachan and reviewed and finalised by Karen Wilson. Please email any revisions or comments to: Karen Wilson, Executive Officer, Seniors Social Isolation Peak Services Program, Council on the Ageing Queensland at: karen.wilson@cotaqld.org.au

Appendix A: CRM Implementation Case Study 2025

TOMNET – The Older Men's Network, Toowoomba and the Lockyer Valley

Challenges

1. Selecting the Right CRM

- Lengthy evaluation process due to large number of CRM platforms available.
- Many systems were sales-focused rather than designed for community service delivery.
- Essential features were either unavailable or required expensive upgrades.
- Budget constraints limited options.

2. Cost Pressures

- Total cost influenced by:
 - Number of users
 - Training requirements
 - Customisation
 - Reporting add-ons
- Balancing affordability with long-term sustainability was difficult.

3. Technical & Customisation Demands

- Significant programming and configuration skills were required.
- Staff had varying levels of digital literacy.
- Customisation was more complex than anticipated.

4. Data Migration Complexity

- Migration was time-intensive and technically challenging.
- Required redesigning how outcomes and impact were captured.
- It was not just data transfer, but it required structural improvement of data systems.

5. Reporting Limitations

- Pre-configured reports did not meet organisational needs.
- Paying for full vendor customisation was cost prohibitive.
- Required purchasing an additional module and building internal reporting logic.

6. Unique Attendance Tracking Gap

- The CRM could not calculate unique attendances as required for reporting.
- Manual tracking was inefficient and frustrating.
- Required development of a custom-built attendance app.

7. Implementation Time & Capacity

- Took over 12 months to implement.
- Small team balancing core service delivery with system rollout.
- Resource strain during transition period.

Learnings

1. Community Services Require Sector-Specific Solutions

- Many CRMs are not built for community reporting and compliance needs.
- Sector alignment is more important than brand popularity.

2. Customisation Is Essential

- Off-the-shelf functionality rarely meets community program requirements.
- Flexibility and ability to customise fields and reporting are critical.

3. Internal Technical Capability Is a Major Asset

- Having in-house technical skills significantly reduces long-term costs.
- Ability to build add-ons (e.g., attendance app) increases system effectiveness.
- Not all organisations have this advantage, creating inequity across the sector.

4. Data Migration is an Opportunity for Improvement

- Migration should be treated as a redesign process, not a simple transfer.
- Strengthening outcome measurement during migration adds long-term value.

5. Implementation Takes Longer Than Expected

- Small organisations should plan for extended timelines.
- Implementation requires ongoing refinement even after “go-live.”

6. Modular, Integrated Approaches Can Work

- Combining CRM functionality with complementary tools (e.g., custom apps) can achieve better outcomes than relying on a single system alone.

7. Emerging Technologies May Lower Barriers

- AI and low-code tools may make custom solutions more accessible in future.
- Smaller organisations may eventually build lightweight solutions without deep programming expertise.

Successes

1. Established a Single Source of Truth

- Centralised participant and program records.
- Reduced duplication and reliance on spreadsheets.
- Improved data integrity.

2. Strengthened Governance & Compliance

- Better audit readiness.
- Alignment with funding body reporting requirements.
- Integration of policy and asset registers.

3. Improved Reporting Accuracy

- Real-time demographic tracking.
- Accurate referral and inquiry monitoring.
- Regional comparison capability.
- Identification of previously under-reported numbers.

4. Evidence-Informed Decision-Making

- Management committee now receives reliable, data-driven insights.
- Supports strategic planning and organisational growth.

5. Enhanced Event & Program Management

- Strong event management functionality.
- Tailored reporting built internally.
- Unique attendance app significantly reduces manual reconciliation.

6. Built Organisational Capacity for Growth

- Scalable system designed to grow with the organisation.
- Foundation for future expansion.
- Increased operational maturity.

Overall Analysis

While the implementation of **ChilliBD** was technically demanding, time-intensive, and resource-heavy, it ultimately delivered:

- Greater organisational control
- Stronger compliance and governance
- More accurate and credible reporting
- Strategic insight for growth

The project demonstrated that for small community organisations, CRM implementation is not simply a technology upgrade, it is an **organisational transformation process**.

Appendix B – Be Connected Program

The Australian Government currently funds the Good Things Foundation and eSafety (\$42 million) to run the Be Connected program until June 2028.

The program aims to give older Australians (aged 50 years and over) the confidence and skills to safely navigate the digital world including how to use social media, video calling, internet banking, pay bills, shop online and access government services. It helps to empower older Australians to navigate current and evolving technology safely, which is essential for protecting yourself from scams online.

Be Connected has already supported more than two million older Australians and is delivered in metro, regional and remote areas by a network of more than 3,800 community partners including libraries and community centres.

More information on the Be Connected program is available on:

- [Department of Social Services website](#)
- <https://beconnected.esafety.gov.au/>
- <https://goodthingsaustralia.org/our-programs/be-connected/>

The **Good Things Foundation** run a range of programs in addition to Be Connected Inc: <https://goodthingsaustralia.org/our-programs/>

Digital Sisters	The Digital Sisters program brings together free local support and online learning opportunities. Organisations partner with Good Things Foundation to run programs for women on topics like AI, keeping kids safer online and essential digital skills. Since 2023, 4,500 migrant and refugee women have been supported to be safer and more confident online.
Get Online Week	A digital inclusion campaign held annually in October.
The Bridge Initiative	The Good Foundation works with and supports people with disability to get online and mentor their peers, so they feel safe and confident in the digital world and have equal access to the internet and tech.
AI for Good	AI for Good brings together free local support and online learning opportunities to support people to keep up with tech. This program aims to support the 1 in 3 Australians worried what AI (artificial intelligence) will mean for them.
The LIFE initiatives	Supporting families to have the essential digital skills and access they need for life – work, school and fun. The program aims to ensure parents and carers feel confident keeping their young people safe online. Topics include affordable internet connections for families on low incomes and keeping kids safer online.
Digital communities	This program brings together partners from across communities and creates local connections. Partners include bank branches, local stores and our network to offer training, coaching and free resources to help people and community organisations get the digital skills support they need, as well as fostering great relationships and create local programs.

Connecting communities	The Good Thing Foundation has partnered with WorkVentures and Good360 Australia to launch the National Device Bank. This initiative collects, refurbishes, and redistributes quality devices to people who need it. To support them with their learning, work, healthcare and staying in touch with friends and family.
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This includes the **Get Online Week** that is a national campaign aimed to close the digital divide run during Seniors month. This year between **19-25 October 2026** hundreds of fun, local digital skills events will be held in communities across Australia to help everyone get online.

You can visit the <https://goodthingsaustralia.org/get-online-week/> website to find out more about what events are on in your area, to host an event, or learn something new.

DRAFT