



SENIORS SOCIAL ISOLATION PREVENTION PEAK

Seniors Social Isolation Provider Newsletter — August 2026

Welcome



Welcome to the August edition of the Seniors Social Isolation Provider (SSIP) Newsletter. Supporting older people to stay socially connected is at the heart of everything we do. In this edition, we share key updates and global connections, community stories, grants and funding opportunities, and practical resources, ideas and insights to help strengthen social connection for older Queenslanders.

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We hope you find this edition helpful and inspiring as you read through.

SSIP Peak updates



Friendly Reminder

From **11 July to 23 September** Karen's work arrangements have changed as she is based in the UK attending to family matters.

During this time, Karen will be taking some annual leave and working reduced hours.

She will continue to support the SSIP Community of Practice and sector engagement remotely, although response times may be a little slower than usual.

For urgent matters, please contact the **COTA Queensland office** at:

T. (07) 3316 2999

E. info@cotaqlld.org.au

Thank you for your understanding.

🏠 Age-Friendly Manchester 🏠

Whilst in the UK, I took the opportunity to connect with some great organisations and learn more about their work. Earlier this week, I met with [Centre for Ageing Better](#) and the [Greater Manchester Combined Authority \(GMCA\)](#). It was a really energising conversation, made even more memorable by the heatwave and solar eclipse, with temperatures reaching 33°C! ☀️

Together, we shared insights and learnings around all things Age-Friendly. We explored the breadth of what it takes to create places where people can age well, age in place, live well in later life and stay socially connected.

What really stood out was how many of the challenges we're seeing in Queensland are also being experienced in Manchester, including **transport, accessibility, cost of living, housing and digital inclusion**. It was a valuable reminder that, while our communities may be different, many of the barriers to ageing well are shared and there is plenty we can learn from each other.

Some of the themes that stood out:

🚗 **Removing barriers:** transport, digital inclusion, cost of living, accessibility and something as fundamental as access to suitable public toilets.

🏠 **Ageing in place:** downsizing, thoughtful urban design and neighbourhoods with benches, shade, toilets and spaces that support everyday life.

👤 **Real participation and empowerment:** valuing lived experience, hearing all voices, and giving older people a genuine voice, choice, control and agency rather than simply deciding what is “best” for them.

🤝 **Reaching beyond the usual participants:** recognising that events and engagement don't always reach people who are most disadvantaged or isolated, and exploring approaches such as door knocking, with safeguarding at the centre.

💰 **Financial security:** the continuing impact of the cost of living and the importance of financial resilience.

🧠 **Mental wellbeing and preventative health:** recognising and supporting mental health in later life, rather than seeing it as simply “*part of ageing*”, alongside a stronger focus on prevention.

📊 **Data, inequalities and resilience:** data collection, understanding inequalities, and thinking about disaster preparedness and community resilience.

♣️ **Communities, volunteering and the environment:** from concerns around greenbelt development to volunteering, recruitment and ensuring older people's contributions are properly valued and, where appropriate, remunerated.

📁 **Tools for meaningful engagement:** including practical engagement toolkits and established Older People's Networks.



Photo: GMCA Building, Oxford St, Manchester with [Bee Network](#) buses lined up outside



A key takeaway for me was the importance of staying connected and learning globally.

There is so much good work happening across Greater Manchester, and so much opportunity to share learnings, challenge ourselves, and build on what works.

I'm really looking forward to keeping the relationship going and continuing to learn from one another.

Age-Friendly Manchester Resources

- [Accessible Homes Factsheet 2025](#)
- [Age-Friendly Manchester Strategy](#)
- [Ageing and Resilience](#)
- [Ageing Hub](#)
- [Ageing Well](#)
- [Creating Age-Friendly Homes in GM](#)
- [Housing Made for Everyone \(HoME\) Coalition](#)
- [Live Well - Resources](#)
- [Live Well in Later Life Funding](#)
- [Planning and Housing](#)
- [Resilience resources](#)
- [The Ageing in Place Pathfinder](#)
- [Worwin Foundation](#)

Former Greater Manchester Mayor and new British Prime Minister Andy Burnham said:

“Too many of our older people feel disconnected from their communities and that can have a real impact on their health, happiness and independence. Live Well in Later Life is about changing that, by listening to older residents and working with them to shape places that support connection, dignity and wellbeing.

Hug in a Mug: Community Café

Hug in a Mug is a friendly independent café, offering affordable food, hot drinks and a warm, welcoming atmosphere. It's a popular meeting place for local older residents, friends and neighbours.

With its strong community spirit, this Manchester café has supported local events, fundraising activities and initiatives that bring people together.

Next week, I'll be dropping in for **coffee and connection** to find out more about what makes [Hug in a Mug](#) such a valued part of the local community ☺



Age-Friendly Salford

Age Friendly Salford is a programme supporting older people to age well, stay connected and get involved in their local communities.

Delivered through a partnership of local voluntary organisations, it supports a range of community activities, including social groups and activities (walk and talk, tech and tea) that bring people together, as well as opportunities to improve health, wellbeing and community connections.

For providers supporting older people, Age Friendly Salford is a useful local resource to know about, helping people stay active, connected and engaged.

[Find out more about Age Friendly Salford](#)



Grief, Loss and Social Connection in Later Life: A Lived Experience

Grief touches all of us, yet no two experiences are the same. I share these reflections from my own lived experience of losing a close family member, and from what that experience has taught me about the importance of social connection, compassionate conversations and planning ahead in later life.

Loss can change our routines, relationships and sense of belonging. For older adults, this can sometimes deepen feelings of loneliness or disconnection. Yet connection can also be a source of comfort and strength through family, friends, community, culture, faith, shared memories, familiar activities, or simply having someone who will listen.

My experience as sole Executor of an estate in England has also shown me that grief sits alongside many practical responsibilities: arranging a funeral, applying for probate, managing finances and possessions, securing a home and navigating legal and administrative matters. Carrying out these responsibilities has been a privilege, particularly in honouring my family member's wishes, but it has also reinforced how valuable planning ahead can be.

There is no single way to approach grief, loss or end-of-life planning. Culture, family, faith, values and personal circumstances all shape what feels right.

What matters is making space for people to express their wishes, be heard and have their choices respected.

An up-to-date will, knowing where important documents are kept, identifying who should be contacted, and having conversations about what matters to us can make a significant difference to those who may one day need to navigate these decisions.

These conversations may not always be easy, but they are acts of care. Let's start them early, listen with compassion, respect difference, and create opportunities for older adults and those around them to stay connected, not only in life, but through times of loss and change.

Written by Karen Wilson



A gentle reminder

Be kind to yourself as you navigate grief and loss. Where possible, stay connected with others and don't be afraid to reach out for support. You don't have to go through it alone.

If you need someone to talk to, Lifeline Australia is available 24/7 on 13 11 14, or visit [Lifeline Australia](https://www.lifeline.org.au).



Community of Practice 2026

July 2026 Session

If you missed the **Sharing Knowledge to Strengthen Community Outcomes** session, catch up by accessing the **Minutes and Session Recording**:

-  [Minutes](#)
-  [Recording](#)
-  [QCOSS PPT](#)

The session featured **Coralie Traynor**, Service Integration Lead at Carer Gateway, Wellways Australia, and **Carolina Leyton Zamora**, Manager, Sector Development at QCOSS.

All previous Minutes and Recordings are available on the [SSIP Hub](#) under **Resources for Providers** → Community of Practice Hub → 2026 Minutes & Recordings.

We encourage you all to revisit the SSIP Hub and find themes and topics relevant to you!

Upcoming Dates

There have been some minor revisions to the remaining COP dates for 2026:

- **23/9/26:** Mental Health and Dementia Awareness
- **28/10/26:** Housing and Homelessness
- **19/11/26:** International Men's Day
- **16/12/26:** Reflection, Gratitude & Care

Visit the [SSIP Hub](#) for full details

We'd love to showcase your activities, successes and good news stories. If you'd like to **share your work as a guest speaker** at one of our upcoming Communities of Practice (CoPs), please contact Karen by email: karen.wilson@cotaqld.org.au

Help us improve the SSIP Hub



Have you been using the SSIP Hub? We'd love to hear your feedback.

The SSIP Hub brings together Community of Practice resources, sector news, referral information, a growing resource library, community directories, maps and useful links, all in one place to support your work.

If you haven't already, **bookmark the SSIP Hub** or **add it to your mobile home screen** for quick access to the latest resources and updates.

User Guides are available under:

- Resources for Providers → Learning & Development → SSIP Hub User Guides.

Your feedback will help us continue to improve the Hub and ensure it meets the needs of the sector

We encourage you to **Register today** and Follow the Hub, to automatically receive updates!

If you'd like to know more or need assistance with registering or navigating the Hub, please contact Karen via email: karen.wilson@cotaqld.org.au

 **Access the SSIP Hub Today!** 

Sector News

Loneliness Awareness Week 2026

During Loneliness Awareness Week (August) Monash University delivered a webinar on their [Connecting for Better Health \(C4BH\) Project](#)

The webinar was chaired by Professor Cathy Mihalopoulos and showcased emerging findings from the C4BH project.

The opening session introduced the national campaign and explored the importance of understanding loneliness and creating opportunities for meaningful social connection.

Presentations highlighted new Australian evidence on the relationship between loneliness, social isolation and chronic health conditions, geographic patterns of social connection, and community preferences for loneliness interventions.

The webinar reinforced the growing evidence that loneliness and social isolation are significant public health issues closely connected to chronic disease management and wellbeing.

The C4BH project is contributing important evidence on when loneliness emerges, where it is concentrated and what intervention features people value most.

Together, they hope these findings will support the development of more effective, equitable and targeted responses to improve social connection and health outcomes across Australia.

 [Watch the webinar recording](#)

Password: M\$93re&E

Note! The first 15 mins were not recorded

National Loneliness Conference

Ending Loneliness Together are excited to announce the 2026 National Loneliness Conference will take place on 21–22 October in Melbourne.

This year's theme is "*Creating a Culture of Connection Across the Lifespan*".

It's an opportunity to connect with global and national experts, lived experience, community, policy and practice leaders to share evidence and drive real-world action.



[Registrations](#) now open!

A Time to Listen Project

Over the past few months, COTA Queensland has been working on a new storytelling project, "*A Time to Listen*", presented at the National Elder Abuse Conference on the 27-29th of July.

The project shares **six short films** inspired by the real experiences of older Queenslanders and explores the often-subtle signs of abuse and mistreatment of older people.

Each story highlights a different perspective, encouraging people to recognise the signs, start conversations and know where to find support. These videos have been **created using AI-generated representations** to protect the privacy of those who shared their experiences. We're proud to be able to share stories inspired by the real experiences of older people whose voices are too often unheard.

For further information visit:

A Time to Listen: <https://cotaqlld.org.au/a-time-to-listen/>



Reaching Older Men Earlier (ROME)

ROME is a Queensland-wide project working with community organisations to strengthen how they reach and support men aged 65 years and over who may be experiencing isolation or distress, before things become too difficult.

Bring your project coordination and engagement skills to a role with purpose

Are you organised, good with people and able to keep projects moving?

Council on the Ageing Queensland is looking for a Project Support Officer to join the Reaching Older Men Earlier (ROME) project.

This role would suit someone with a mix of project support, coordination and community or stakeholder engagement skills who enjoys working with people while keeping activities, information and deadlines on track.

Working closely with the Project Lead, you will help coordinate the day-to-day delivery of the project and build respectful relationships with older men, community organisations and project partners.

Visit [SEEK](#) for more information!



Feel free to share with your networks!

Community Stories

Ipswich Thriving Seniors: Mini Ekka Show

More than 200 seniors came together for the very first Ipswich Thriving Seniors Mini Ekka Show, enjoying a fantastic afternoon of fun, friendship and Ekka nostalgia!

The event featured all the favourites, including showbags, delicious strawberry ice creams, games and entertainment from our talented seniors music groups.

The Seniors Showcase highlighted the remarkable creativity and skills of our seniors, with entries including painting, knitting and baking.

We look forward to making this an annual event, giving seniors the opportunity to connect and celebrate within their community.

Written by Karmen Howard, Program Officer, Ipswich Thriving Seniors



Photos of participants enjoying the Mini Ekka show

Learning & Development

Anglicare Free Webinar

Alcohol Use in Older Adulthood: Cognitive Impacts and Effective Treatment Strategies

This webinar will provide information on the epidemiology of alcohol use, with a focus on increasing alcohol-related harms among older adults. The impact of alcohol use on the brain, cognitive impairment and dementia will also be detailed. Finally, effective intervention approaches for reducing alcohol use in older adults will be presented.

This session will also include time for questions.

Date: 27th August 2026

Time: 12pm-1pm AEST

About the Speaker

Dr Louise Mewton is an Associate Professor and public health researcher with a focus on the epidemiology, assessment, prevention, and treatment of alcohol use and related disorders across the lifespan. She is Program Lead in Lifespan and Brain Health Research at the Matilda Centre, University of Sydney.

To Register: [Webinar Registration - Zoom](#)



Grants & Funding Opportunities



Ventia Community Grants Program

At Ventia, we're focused on creating meaningful, lasting impact in the communities we're part of. One of the ways we do this is through our Community Grants program.

The program supports local initiatives that strengthen **regional and rural communities** and help them thrive. Since launching, we've partnered with close to 500 community groups, contributing more than \$820,000 to support projects that make a real difference.

Every grant is a chance to support something positive, from building new skills and confidence, to bringing people together and strengthening a sense of belonging.

Grants of up to \$2,000 are available to help community groups turn their ideas into action and deliver outcomes that matter.

Learn more at: [Community Grants](#)



💡 Explore the [SSIP Hub](#) for grants across Queensland and Australia.

Go to Resources for Providers → Grants & Funding where you'll find:

- ▶ Grants across Queensland and Australia
- ▶ Local Council Grants



Community Futures Fund

At CleanCo, our aim is to create a better energy future for our customers, communities and Queensland.

The Community Futures Fund supports initiatives that contribute to the wellbeing of the communities where we live and work.

Applications close at 5pm on **Monday 7 September 2026**.

CleanCo's Community Futures Fund supports not-for-profit organisations, community services, First Nations initiatives, educational institutions and environmental associations.

The Fund offers sponsorships of up to \$5000, with one funding round held each year.

Applications open annually in August and are available to organisations located within one of the following local government areas:

- Cairns
- Tablelands
- Ipswich
- Mareeba Shire
- Cassowary Coast
- Somerset

The CleanCo Community Futures Fund aligns with our [Thriving Communities Strategy](#).

To read more or apply visit:

[Community Futures Fund | CleanCo Queensland](#)

Resources & Tools

About the SSIP Hub Resource Library?

As the Seniors Social Isolation Prevention Peak Body, Council on the Ageing (COTA) Queensland leads work to build the capability and capacity of funded organisations across the state to better respond to social isolation.

The Peak brings together providers to strengthen collaboration, share knowledge, and support more consistent, effective local responses that help older people stay connected and included.

A key focus is amplifying the voices and lived experiences of older people to inform service design and policy, ensuring supports reflect what matters most to communities.

We also share learnings from funded programs across Queensland, highlighting innovative, place-based approaches that strengthen community-led solutions and improve outcomes for older people experiencing or at risk of social isolation.

Through the online engagement hub, we've also developed a **Resource Library** to support providers across the sector. It brings together key topics including aged care navigation, connection and belonging, cultural safety and inclusion, digital inclusion, disability and neurodiversity, health and wellbeing, housing, and transport.

We encourage providers to explore it as a practical space for tools, guidance, and good practice to strengthen outcomes for older people across Queensland.



Access the SSIP Hub Today!



Events & Key Dates



Seniors Expos Calendar 2026

- Friday 28 August – Mareeba
- Thursday 10 September – Rockhampton
- Friday 18 September - Gatton & Laidley
- Friday 9 October – Stanthorpe
- Thursday 22 October – Bribie Island
- Thursday 12 November – Carina
- Thursday 26 November – Capalaba
- Tuesday 8 December - Kingaroy

Seniors Savings Pop-up

- Thursday 27 August – Cairns
- Tuesday 8 September – Barcaldine
- Wednesday 9 September – Emerald
- Friday 11 September – Yeppoon
- Monday 23 November – Goondiwindi
- Tuesday 24 November – Dalby
- Wednesday 25 November – Roma

See further information at:

<https://www.qld.gov.au/seniors/legal-finance-concessions/seniors-expos/seniors-event-calendar>

Free Scam Awareness Workshop for Older Queenslanders

As more banking services move online, many older Queenslanders are navigating a rapidly changing financial environment. While digital banking offers convenience, flexibility and independence, it can also create new challenges when it comes to staying safe online. Older Australians are increasingly being targeted by sophisticated scams and fraud attempts.

To help address these challenges, Council on the Ageing (COTA) Queensland, in partnership with Auswide Bank and MyState Bank, is delivering a free Scam Awareness and Safe Digital Banking Workshop.

This practical and interactive workshop will provide participants with practical skills and knowledge they can use every day to bank safely and confidently in an increasingly digital world, tools to recognise scams, protect their personal and financial information, and build confidence using online and mobile banking services.

Tuesday 18 August 2026 at the **Yeppoon Community Centre** 80 John St, Yeppoon QLD 4703

Wednesday 19 August 2026 at the **Gold Room in Rockhampton Art Gallery (next to Pilbeam Theatre)** - 62 Victoria Pde, Rockhampton QLD 4700

Thursday 20 August 2026 at the **Maxine Brushe Meeting Room #03, Philip Street Precinct**, 1 Pengelley St, Gladstone QLD 4680

Register at

<https://events.humanitix.com/banking-safely-in-a-digital-world-central-queensland>



Share a Good News Story!

We'd love to hear a Good News Story about your organisation or a volunteer?

We love highlighting the amazing work happening in your communities!

If you have a success story, achievement, or inspiring moment from your program, we'd love to feature it in our newsletter, [website](#), and social media.

Send us your story, photos, or highlights and help spread the positivity.

Email your Story to:

karen.wilson@cotaqlld.org.au

Visit the [SSIP website](#)

Explore the [SSIP Hub](#)

Thank you for taking the time to read the August edition of the SSIP Newsletter! ♥



Connect With Us

Have questions or ideas? We'd love to hear from you! Reach out and let us know how we can help.

Contact

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Next Edition: October 2026 for Seniors
Month

