

Ending Loneliness Together



Annual Report 2021- 2022





Contents

1	About Ending Loneliness Together	4
2	Message from our Chair and Scientific Chair	6
3	2021-2022 Highlights	8
4	Members, Partners, and Supporters	13
5	Ending Loneliness Together Committees & Advisory Group	20
6	Financial Position	25
7	Join Us	26



1

About Ending Loneliness Together

Ending Loneliness Together (ELT) is the national Australian organisation working to raise awareness and reduce the negative effects of loneliness and social isolation in our community through evidence-based interventions and advocacy.

Inspired by the work of the UK Campaign to End Loneliness and the growing research evidence of the role of social connection in the prevention of poor health and wellbeing, Ending Loneliness Together draws together knowledge from national and international researchers, along with service delivery expertise from community groups, professional organisations, government agencies, and skilled volunteers, to effectively address loneliness in Australia.

www.endingloneliness.com.au

Acknowledgment

Ending Loneliness Together acknowledges Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognises the continuing connection to lands, waters, and communities. We pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures; and to Elders past and present.

Message from our Chair and Scientific Chair

Ending Loneliness Together continues its journey against the backdrop of the SARS-COV-2 pandemic. Our vision of creating a world in which everyone feels a sense of connection and belonging has become more important than ever as we progressed through the public health crisis.

One in four Australians report problematic levels of loneliness and post the onset of COVID-19 pandemic, the estimates were that one in two Australians reported they felt lonelier. Loneliness is now readily identified as the next public health emergency straining Australia's health services and negatively impacting on the person affected, their family, their community and business.

The pandemic inhibited our ability to host our face-to-face meetings and events and challenged us to be flexible so that we can continue to achieve the outcomes we need. Nevertheless, we forged on and hosted a national leaders roundtable at the National Press Club in early 2022, with attendance from our Federal Members of Parliament who support the issue, Dr Fiona Martin, MP and Mr Andrew Giles MP, and leaders from the Department of Health, National Mental Health Commission, health, and community sector leaders.

The findings of this national leadership group are clear and unanimous. Ending Loneliness Together was well-equipped in providing the Government

with evidence-based recommendations and actions and has the capacity and capability to coordinate the diverse voices across all sectors.

Ending Loneliness Together is not just a national leader but also a global leader. We founded the Global Initiative on Loneliness and Connection, a newly formed non-profit based in Washington DC, and worked with the World Health Organization on their upcoming commission on addressing loneliness and social isolation.

Ending Loneliness Together receives support from Dr Vivek Murthy, the 19th and 21st US Surgeon General and Dr Etienne Krug, Director of the Social Determinants of Health, from the World Health Organization. The global leaders addressed our national leadership team and spoke about their ambitions of reducing chronic loneliness and social isolation for better health and wellbeing.

Loneliness is a global issue and global issues are often complex and cannot be solved by one approach or one organisation. Our role at Ending Loneliness Together is to bring together individuals and organisations to create thought leadership, transformative partnerships, and a network of people who are committed to combatting chronic loneliness. Adopting an intersectoral approach allows us to draw on the expertise of people with lived experience, academics, health and community service delivery providers, the corporate sector, and government.

In the past two years Ending Loneliness Together has advanced its strategic priorities and direction.

This annual report provides the year's highlights and achievements of 2021-2022.

I want to acknowledge the leadership of the Management Committee, Advisory Group, Scientific Advisory Committee, our Lived Experience Advisory Panel, and the incredible contribution of our members and financial supporters.

It is only with their support that we are able to continue to do the work and achieve the vision of creating an Australia where everyone feels a sense of connection and belonging.



Dr Michelle H Lim

Chair and Scientific Chair
Ending Loneliness Together



2021-2022 Highlights

To live in a world where everyone feels a sense of connection and belonging

Strategic Direction 1

Develop a strong evidence base for the measurement of loneliness and the most effective solutions

- Australia's first National Loneliness Outcomes Measurement Framework translated into a suite of measurement and evaluation tools for community organisations
 - A Guide to Measuring Loneliness for Community Organisations
 - A Guide to Evaluating Loneliness for Community Organisations
 - A Guide to Reporting Service Evaluations for Community Organisations

Strategic Direction 2

Inform and equip the development of effective responses to loneliness and loneliness prevention

- We developed freely available resources to download for the community
 - What to do if you feel lonely?
 - Staying connected in lockdown
 - 5 myths about loneliness
- We participated and or provided consultation to a number of local, state, national, and global initiatives including:
 - Neighborhood Houses Victoria, Sector Launch
 - Sutherland Council NSW- Addressing loneliness in community services
 - Mental Health Commission Western Australia, Think Mental Health initiative
 - Global Initiative on Loneliness and Connection
- We delivered workshops for Workplaces on addressing loneliness, delivered to over 6000 individuals
- We commenced the development of the Ending Loneliness Together Service Directory
- We hosted two social work students on university placement to incorporate loneliness into their daily work.

Strategic Direction 3

Influence government and relevant stakeholders

- We increased our membership base to 80
- We established strategic partnerships with Medibank and Bolton-Clarke
- The **Lived Experience Advisory Panel** was established. This was following a national wide recruitment drive attracting over 50 applicants
- We launched the [Global Initiative on Loneliness and Connection](#) (GILC). Ending Loneliness Together is proud to be a co-founding organisation of GILC, a collection of national organisations committed to end the pressing global issues of loneliness and social isolation. Over 200 attendees from around the world attended the webinar launch
- We led the development of the Global Initiative on Loneliness and Connection (GILC) [Positions Statements](#)¹, which is now taken up by global and national organisations
- We hosted the first national leader's roundtable event with the Department of Health, community, and mental health service providers. It was agreed that loneliness is the next critical public health issue to address in Australia. Ending Loneliness Together was nominated to unite all sectors from community, health, business and to lead the national strategy to end loneliness and social isolation as part of the Government's social recovery agenda. The strategy development kicked off in February 2022 and led to the development and launch of the Social Recovery to Accelerate Social Connection White Paper.

Strategic Direction 4

Raise public awareness and inspire action

- We increased our reach monthly and we now have over 2,500 followers across our social media pages
- We had an average of 900 website users and 2700 page views per month
- We had over 10 speaking engagements around the country
- We had numerous media engagements including ABC Radio National Sunday Extra with Julian Morrow and ABC Radio National Life Matters with Hilary Harper
- We had written expert opinion pieces in TIME Magazine, The Conversation, and the Sydney Morning Herald
- We had guest contribution articles from Professor Ben Smith from the University of Sydney- Let's talk Loneliness and Communities and Hugh MacKay- Kindness: A Cure for Loneliness?

Fireside Chat with Dr Vivek Murthy, US Surgeon General

Dr Vivek Murthy, 19th and 21st United States Surgeon-General. In 2013, Dr Murthy was appointed by President Barack Obama, and in 2021 appointed by President Joe Biden as the United State Surgeon-General. He wrote the book, 'Together: The Healing Power of Human Connection in a Sometimes Lonely World'.

Dr Murthy is a supporter of the loneliness agenda and joined Ending Loneliness Together for a fireside chat with Dr Michelle Lim around loneliness as the next public health challenge for nations to address.

Address from Dr Etienne Krug, World Health Organization

Dr Etienne Krug, Director of the Social Determinants of Health, from the World Health Organization addressed the roundtable event to share his global insights on loneliness. Dr Krug is a well-known physician and epidemiologist.

The World Health Organization released a report on loneliness and social isolation in older adults in the previous year and have now extended their focus to addressing the issue across all ages. They are launching a Commission in loneliness and social isolation and will appoint several Commissioners to undertake work in their identified priority areas.



4

Members, Partners, and Supporters

Addressing loneliness in Australia requires a coordinated and multifaceted approach across individual, community, and societal levels. Ending Loneliness Together brings together organisations that are working at local, state, and national levels, who are committed to addressing loneliness. We also include individuals who experience loneliness, are interested in helping others who are lonely, researchers and students.



Our Members

As of June 2022, membership stood at **80**. During 2021-2022, Ending Loneliness Together has accepted **25 new members: 12 organisations and 13 individual members**.

80
MEMBERS

25
NEW MEMBERS

12
ORGANISATIONS

13
INDIVIDUALS



Ishani

INDIVIDUAL MEMBER PROFILE

“I am a Ph.D. student exploring the health and economic implications of loneliness and social isolation on older adults and informal carers in Australia. During the COVID pandemic, just like many of us, I experienced the true intensity of what it was to be lonely. Being a part of Ending Loneliness Together gives me an opportunity to give back to the community and help reduce the negative impacts of loneliness, thus promoting a more connected and social environment, especially in the older adult space”.

ISHANI MAJMUDAR



Men's Sheds

MEMBER ORGANISATION PROFILE

“Many men find themselves alone, especially after retirement, often living in isolation and needing to connect with their community and find new purpose but they aren't sure how. Men's Sheds reduce social isolation of men by providing opportunities for community connection & participation. Men's Sheds of WA with Curtin University are conducting research on the mental health benefits of belonging to a shed, and we look forward to sharing our findings with Ending Loneliness Together.”

JAMES WILD, CEO MEN'S SHEDS WA

Men's Sheds are more than the four walls in which they operate. Sheds improve the health and wellbeing of their members by giving them a safe place to make friends, share meaningful activities, talk, and access health information and resources. Sheds provide opportunities for men to develop and pass on their skills and to volunteer or participate in local community projects. In doing so sheds can help men to find a new sense of purpose in life.



Bolton Clarke

ADVISORY GROUP PROFILE

“Social connection is one of the central pillars of our research, with evidence-informed programs and collaborations in this area a focus across Bolton Clarke”

“It’s a key issue across the life course – we know that loneliness causes a lot of health issues and that social connection works to protect against these things. COVID-19 has also had a huge negative impact on health and wellbeing with increased loneliness and social isolation, meaning there is an even greater need for a coordinated and research-based response that recognises the vital importance of social connection for our nation’s health”.

JUDY LOWTHIAN, HEAD OF RESEARCH,
BOLTON CLARKE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Bolton Clarke provides a broad range of aged and community health and social services enabling independence and quality of life for older people across home support, retirement living, and residential aged care.

Professor Judy Lowthian, Head of Research at Bolton Clarke Research Institute said she was delighted at the opportunity to work with Ending Loneliness Together and build on Bolton Clarke’s long standing collaborative work to support social connection.

Inaugural Advisory Partnerships

Ending Loneliness Together is proud to announce official partnerships with aged and health care provider, Bolton Clarke and health insurer, Medibank. These partnerships support the work of Ending Loneliness Together through research, training, and awareness building. Our advisory group is about transformative partnerships with an ambitious goal to combat chronic loneliness together. These partnerships are essential to our work and we are grateful for their contribution.



Medibank

ADVISORY GROUP PROFILE

“As a healthcare company, we’re increasingly focused on preventative health as we work to better support the health and wellbeing of our customers, our employees, and the broader community”

“This partnership bolsters our ability to work collaboratively to improve practice and policy to better support the development and maintenance of meaningful social connections for all Australians. Our partnership with Ending Loneliness Together is really important to us. The community that Ending Loneliness Together brings – in terms of corporates, experts, universities, and government – is necessary to make a coordinated change”.

KAREN OLDAKER, SENIOR EXECUTIVE,
WELLBEING AND COMMUNITY, MEDIBANK

Medibank is a health company that supports 3.9 million people in Australia to better manage their health and wellbeing. One of the leading private health insurers in Australia, Medibank is focused on providing people with more choice, access, and control of their healthcare and helping transform Australia’s healthcare system to ensure it can remain sustainable.

Ms Karen Oldaker is the Senior Executive, Wellbeing and Community and says Medibank is working on a long-term approach to help address loneliness as one of the most critical social, health, and economic concerns here in Australia and around the world.

Parliamentary Friends of Ending Loneliness

The Parliamentary Friends of Ending Loneliness has provided a non-partisan forum for members of parliament to meet and discuss the issues of loneliness as a health and social issue since its launched in May 2021. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of an individual's sense of connection and belonging, and the need to reduce social isolation to reduce the incidents of mental health problems.

We are grateful to have received support from Dr Fiona Martin MP and the Hon Andrew Giles MP for their support as co-chairs since May 2021. With change of government, we thanked and farewelled Dr Martin and welcomed Ms Bridget Archer MP to the role of co-chair.

The Hon Minister Andrew Giles MP



Co-Chair | Parliamentary Friends of Ending Loneliness (MAY 2021 – PRESENT)

The Hon Minister Andrew Giles was first elected to the Australian Parliament as Member for Scullin in 2013. A member of the Australian Labor Party Andrew was re-elected in 2016, 2019, and 2022. Minister Giles is the Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, and Multicultural Affairs. Previous ministerial roles include Shadow Minister for Cities and Urban Infrastructure, Shadow Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Shadow Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, and Shadow Assistant Minister for Schools. Minister Giles has been a long-time valued supporter of Ending Loneliness Together and has held the position of co-chair of Parliamentary Friends of Ending Loneliness since its inception. experience and partner organisations.

“The COVID-19 pandemic only exacerbated the loneliness that was experienced by many Australians. It is clear there is no quick fix or simple solution that can resolve loneliness because Australians are so diverse. But we can start somewhere - we can unite and work across all sectors, taking on a comprehensive approach to resolving this critical issue”.

Quote: (Sourced from PFOEL media release 04 Aug 22)

Dr Fiona Martin MP



CO-CHAIR | PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDS OF ENDING LONELINESS (MAY 2021- MAY 2022)

Dr Fiona Martin MP became the first female Member for Reid in 2019. Prior to entering Parliament, Dr Martin worked as a psychologist, academic researcher, and small businesswoman. She completed her Ph.D., in 2007 which focused on improving the social functioning of young people with autism spectrum disorder.

Mrs. Bridget Archer MP



CO-CHAIR | PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDS OF ENDING LONELINESS (AUGUST 2022 – PRESENT)

Mrs. Bridget Archer MP has been a member of the House of Representatives since the 2019 Federal election. She is a member of the Australian Liberal party and represents the Division of Bass in Tasmania. Bridget is the Deputy chair of the Standing Committee on Communications and the Arts. Born and raised in Northern Tasmania Bridget held the position of Mayor of George Town Council from 2014-2019. A passionate advocate for community connection, Bridget became the co-chair of Parliamentary Friends of Ending Loneliness in 2022.

“Loneliness is a very misunderstood state – it can be silent but distressing. And worryingly not obvious to others. So effective action requires us to have a consensus understanding of what it is, how to resolve it, and how to effectively help others who are at risk of distressing or persistent loneliness. We can take a preventative approach by addressing it early before it leads to poorer physical and mental health. This can in turn reduce the burden on our health, community, and business sectors”.

Quote: (Sourced from PFOEL media release 04 Aug 22)

Ending Loneliness Together Committees & Advisory Group

Management Committee Members

The names of committee members throughout the year and at the date of this report are:

Committee Member	Position	Number Eligible	Number Attended
 Dr Michelle Lim	Chairperson	4	4
 Prof Jo Badcock	Vice-Chairperson	4	4
 Kevin Cheung	Treasurer	2	2
 Nick Tebbey	Secretary	4	4
 Karn Nelson	Committee Member	4	4
 Fay Mound	Committee Member	4	4
 Katherine Newton	Committee Member	4	2
 Heath Ducker	Committee Member	4	3
 Jennie Sager	Committee Member	4	2

Dr Michelle Lim



SCIENTIFIC CHAIR

Research Fellow, Iverson Health Innovation Research Institute, Swinburne University of Technology.

Professor Jo Badcock



SCIENTIFIC CHAIR

Adjunct Professor, School of Psychological Science, University of Western Australia.

Dr Lidia Engel



MEMBER

Post-Doctoral Research Fellow, Monash University.

Professor Ben Smith



MEMBER

Professor of Public Health, Prevention Research Collaboration, Charles Perkins Centre, University of Sydney.

Professor Julianne Holt-Lunstad



INTERNATIONAL MEMBER

Professor of Psychology and Neuroscience, Brigham Young University & Adjunct Professor, Social Health & Wellbeing Laboratory, Swinburne University of Technology.

Professor Catherine Haslam



MEMBER

Professor Clinical Psychology, University of Queensland.

Professor Lisa Brophy



MEMBER

Professor of Social Work, La Trobe University.

Professor Cathy Mihalopoulos



MEMBER

Head of Inaugural Health Economics Division, Monash University.

Associate Professor Sarah Wright



INTERNATIONAL MEMBER

Associate Professor, University of Canterbury Business School, New Zealand.

Scientific Advisory Committee

The aim of the Scientific Advisory Committee is to provide expert research advice to the Management Committee of Ending Loneliness Together, foster connections between loneliness researchers and service providers at state and national level, and supply strategic direction and leadership on loneliness research to ensure that the mission of ELT is achieved.

This year, we welcomed two new scientific committee members Associate Professor Sarah Wright from University of Canterbury, New Zealand, and Professor Catherine Haslam from University of Queensland.

Professor Alex Brown



SPECIAL ADVISOR

Professor of Medicine, University of Adelaide & Aboriginal Health Equity Theme Leader, South Australia Health and Medical Institute.

Advisory Group

The aim of the Advisory Group is to contribute to Ending Loneliness Together's strategic direction as a stakeholder group to the Management Committee and to support the sustainability and activities of Ending Loneliness Together.

Professor John Pollaers
OAM

CHAIR



Professor Judy Lowthian

MEMBER



Ms Karen Oldaker

MEMBER



Lived Experience Advisory Panel

The aim of the Lived Experience Advisory Panel is to guide and support Ending Loneliness Together research and practice and to give people experiencing loneliness the voice to impact meaningful insights and outcomes.

Ben Manolas

Kylie Carlson

Phil McAuliffe

Phuong Nguyen

Max Simensen

Andrew Bacon

Staff

Tess Newton-Palmer
Marge Jackson

Financial Position

Independently audited financial Report available on request

Kevin Cheung

TREASURER



It is my pleasure to introduce myself as Treasurer of Ending Loneliness Together and to report the organisation has finished the year in a sound financial position with an operating surplus for the year ended 30 June 2022 at **\$159,921** compared to **\$141,055** in 2021.

The accounts have been audited and the auditor's report is available on request by contacting info@endingloneliness.com.au.

I would like to thank our auditors, Alternative Accounting for the preparation of the Independent Auditors Report for the year ending 30 June 2022 and the Ending Loneliness Together Board members for their care and diligence.

Kevin Cheung
Treasurer

9

Join us

1 in 4 Australian adults are lonely. If you're anything like us, you think it's time for that to change.

There are many ways you can join us in the fight to address loneliness in Australia, including by becoming an individual or organisational member, or supporting us as a donor or an organisational partner.

To make an immediate impact, consider donating online. By making a charity donation, you are supporting Ending Loneliness Together to lead a national, coordinated response to tackling persistent loneliness effectively.

www.endingloneliness.com.au





Contact Details

Ending Loneliness Together
C/O WayAhead
Level 2.02, Building C, 33-35 Saunders
St, Pyrmont NSW 2002

info@endingloneliness.com.au

www.endingloneliness.com.au