

Taking on Loneliness in Australia

Friends for Good Co-founder, Laura Rouhan



We want to free people from loneliness.

Loneliness is a big problem and it's a big problem for a lot of people.

Overseas research shows how dangerous loneliness is for our health, including the increased risk of heart disease, depression and anxiety and how it is a growing problem.

We aim to free people from loneliness.
This task is enormous.



Co-founders Laura Rouhan and Patricia Lauria

Loneliness & Social Isolation

Why is it important to distinguish between the two?

Loneliness

A subjective feeling about the gap between a person's desired levels of social contact and their actual level of social contact.

Social isolation

An objective measure of the number of contacts that people have. It is about the quantity and not quality of relationships. People may choose to have a small number of contacts.



Different types of loneliness

- Emotional/intimate
- Social/relational
- Collective

Key Facts about Loneliness

- Loneliness does not discriminate and can affect anyone regardless of age, gender, location, race, wealth
- Loneliness has been associated with increased internet use, especially Facebook



- It is estimated that loneliness and the physical problems associated with it *kill more people than obesity*; there is a lot of talk about an obesity epidemic, maybe it's time talk about a loneliness epidemic too.
- Chronic loneliness poses as significant a risk for your long-term health and longevity as cigarette smoking.



185,000

Older people in Victoria are likely to be
experiencing loneliness by 2031

Source: A recent report by the Commissioner for Senior Victorians

Loneliness in Australia

- Based on our sample results, we estimate that almost 3 million (2, 913, 500) Australian adults are experiencing high levels of loneliness.
- Loneliness does not discriminate.
- The way people say they are doing economically impacts how lonely or connected they are.
- There is a negative relationship between income and loneliness, as income increases, loneliness tends to decrease and vice versa.
- People who are unemployed have significantly higher loneliness scores than all other categories of work status.

Some of the things the community has to say about loneliness

Having nobody to talk to

Not having someone to confide in

Isolated, stressful, overwhelming

Feeling alone even with many people around

Feeling like I have nobody around and no support from others

Not finding a connection with people, places or things

I feel lonely when I scroll through social media sometimes

Some results from taking action

- Research
- National networks
- Advocacy
- Community education and awareness raising
- New services

Need a chat?



The national support service ready
for a cuppa and a conversation.

friendline.org.au

FriendLine is available for anyone who needs to reconnect or just wants a chat.

All conversations are casual and anonymous
(this is not a crisis service) and our friendly
volunteers are ready to talk about anything
and everything.

The service is open Tuesdays to Thursdays.

Call  **1800 4 CHATS**
(1800 424 287)

Support line is open 6pm – 8pm

Chat  **friendline.org.au**

Online chat is open 1pm – 4pm

An initiative from  friends
for good

Friends For Good is a volunteer driven not-
for-profit organisation aiming to foster a
greater sense of connection and wellbeing
for individuals and communities.

To find out more or to donate, please visit
friendsforgood.org.au



**Friends for Good is proud to present the second
The Australian Loneliness Dialogue – a national
conference on loneliness.**

Friends for Good, in partnership with the Centre for Participation, invites not for profit organisations, government, researchers, students and all those interested in a dialogue about loneliness, whether from Australia or internationally, to submit abstracts or expressions of interest for involvement in this upcoming national conference.

What can we all do?



Connect with Friends for Good



friendsforgood.org.au



friends
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