



Neighbours Every Day

Social Connection Community survey

Summary report

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Overview

In 2026, Relationships Australia conducted a survey to measure social connection and loneliness within the community, with a particular focus on awareness, involvement and impact of the Neighbours Every Day campaign.

In our Social Connection Survey, 10.4% of the 1926 respondents had been involved with NED. Of these 124 NED engaged participants, the majority (66.9%) had organised or participated in a Neighbour Day event.

NED had both direct impact on those that had been involved, and was significantly associated with greater social connection and less loneliness.

Those that had been involved in Neighbour Day or the Neighbours Every Day campaign in any way were statistically significantly more likely to report greater social support; social connection, neighbourhood identification, and social cohesion, and less loneliness, than those that had not.

There are positive attitudes to campaigns such as NED and suggestions for increasing reach and impact within the community.

In addition to reports of the direct impacts by those involved in NED, a sizeable proportion of people who had not been involved with NED felt that a campaign to increase interactions with their neighbours would make them feel more socially connected, less isolated and less lonely.

While involvement in the campaign was clearly beneficial, respondents described several ways that the reach and impact of Neighbours Every Day can be expanded, as well as other ways to build social connection and reduce loneliness at the community level.

Key terms

Loneliness	'A subjective unpleasant or distressing feeling of a lack of connection to other people, along with a desire for more, or more satisfying, social relationships.' ⁱ
Neighbourhood social identification	An individual's sense of belonging and associations with their local, place-based community. ⁱⁱ
Social cohesion	'Vertical and horizontal interactions among members of society characterized by attitudes and norms that include trust, a sense of belonging and willingness to participate and help and their behavioural manifestations.' ⁱⁱⁱ
Social connection	Social connection refers to the structure, function and quality of how people relate to and interact with each other. It is an umbrella term, and can include social cohesion, social support, and social trust. ^{iv}
Social isolation	'Social isolation refers to having objectively few social relationships, social roles, group memberships, and infrequent social interaction.' ^v
Social support	The actual or perceived availability of resources (e.g. informational, tangible, emotional) from others; typically, one's social network. ^{vi}

Suggested citation:

Kennedy, B. & Robinson, S. (2026). The Neighbours Every Day Social Connection Community survey: Summary report. Kingston, ACT: Relationships Australia.

ⁱ Badcock, J.C., Holt-Lunstad, J., Garcia, E., Bombaci, P., & Lim, M.H. (2022). Position statement: Addressing social isolation and loneliness and the power of human connection. Global Initiative on Loneliness and Connection; p.11.
https://www.gilc.global/files/ugd/410bdf_62e236db3a7146cd9f2654877a87dbc6.pdf

ⁱⁱ Fong, P., Cruwys, T., Haslam, C., & Haslam, S. A. (2019). Neighbourhood identification and mental health: How social identification moderates the relationship between socioeconomic disadvantage and health. Journal of Environmental Psychology, 61, 101–114.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2018.12.006>

ⁱⁱⁱ Garcia, L., Hunter, R., & Anderson, N. (2025). From loneliness to social connection - Charting a path to healthier societies: report of the WHO Commission on Social Connection; p.xiii.

^{iv} Garcia et al. (2025), p.9.

^v Badcock, J.C., Holt-Lunstad, J., Garcia, E., Bombaci, P., & Lim, M.H. (2022). Position statement: Addressing social isolation and loneliness and the power of human connection. Global Initiative on Loneliness and Connection; p.11.
https://www.gilc.global/files/ugd/410bdf_62e236db3a7146cd9f2654877a87dbc6.pdf

^{vi} Garcia et al. (2025), p.xiii.

Background

Increasing social connection and preventing loneliness are key to improving physical and mental health and community wellbeing. Loneliness can lead to several adverse effects on mental and physical health.¹ Our recent scoping review of the published research literature on relationships and suicide² reported that loneliness, as well as lack of social connectedness, social inclusion, and social support, are also established suicide risk factors.

The 2024 Relationship indicators survey found that 24% of people in Australia report that they often feel very lonely and 37% of people report being socially lonely,³ which disproportionately affected groups

such as people living with long-term mental illness or with disability (Figure 1). According to recent evidence from Ending Loneliness Together,⁴ an estimated 51% of Australians are either lonely or socially isolated, and one in five are both. ‘Social isolation & loneliness’ is also identified as a leading suicide stressor (24.6%) by Suicide Prevention Australia.⁵ Concerningly, the Household Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) study also report a downward trend; that community participation, in particular social connection and civic engagement, has consistently declined in Australia between 2010 and 2022.⁶

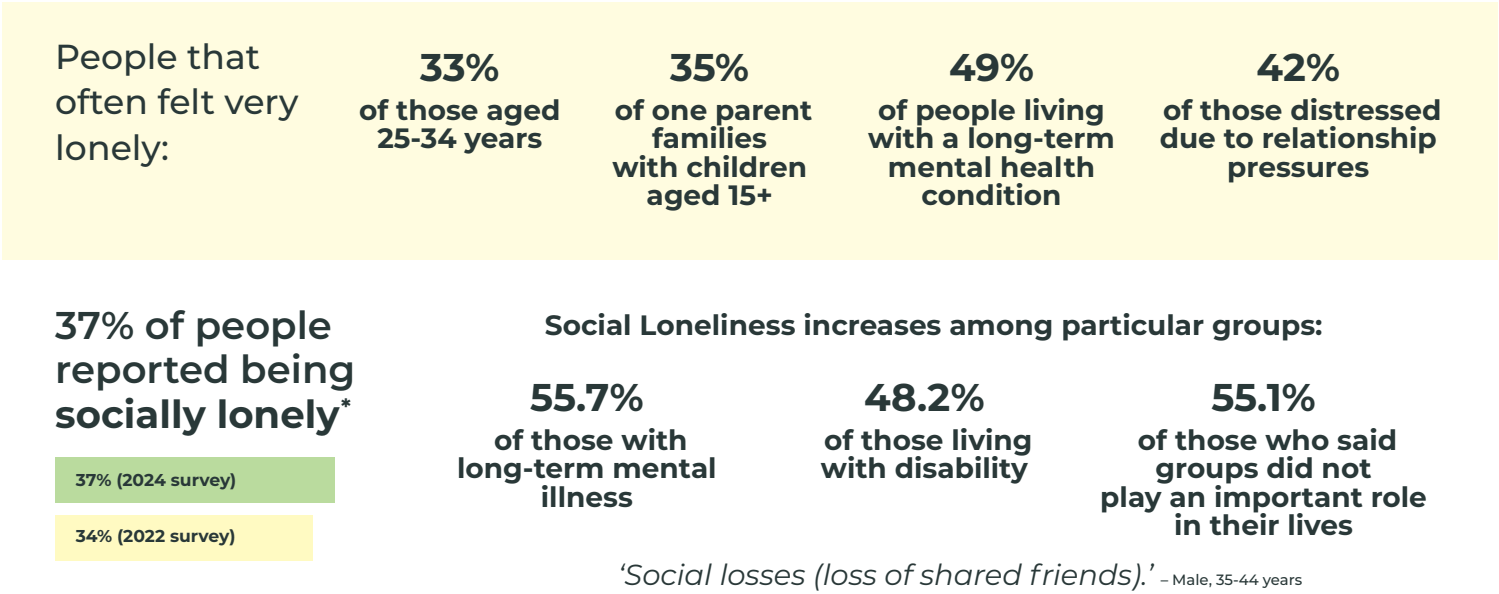


Figure 1. Groups that more often report feeling very lonely and socially lonely, Relationship Indicators 2024 survey (Source: Relationship Indicators 2024)

The National Suicide Strategy⁷ and Ending Loneliness Together’s State of the Nation report⁸ identify that the risks of loneliness and social isolation can be addressed through quality time with

friends, family and community. For example, chatting to neighbours, attending community events, a strong sense of community and volunteering.

¹ Holt-Lunstad, J., Smith, T. B., Baker, M., Harris, T., & Stephenson, D. (2015). Loneliness and social isolation as risk factors for mortality: A meta-analytic review. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 10(2), 227–237. doi:10.1177/1745691614568352

² Kennedy, B., Trainor, S., & Henricksen, R. (2026). Relationships and Suicide Risk. Relationships Australia & Suicide Prevention Australia. <https://www.relationships.org.au/wp-content/uploads/SPA-Relationships-and-Suicide-Report-APR26-FINAL.pdf>

³ Relationships Australia. (2024). Relationship Indicators 2024. ‘Full Report’. Kingston, ACT: Relationships Australia. <http://www.relationships.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Relationship-Indicators-2024-Report-Final.pdf>

⁴ Ending Loneliness Together (2026). State of Nation: Understanding and Rebuilding Social Connection in Australia. https://endingloneliness.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/ELT_SOTN_2026.pdf

⁵ www.suicidepreventionaust.org/community-tracker

⁶ Wilkins, R., Botha, F., Laß, I., & Peyton, K. (2024). The Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey: Selected Findings from Waves 1 to 22. Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, The University of Melbourne.

⁷ Ending Loneliness Together (2026). State of Nation: Understanding and Rebuilding Social Connection in Australia. https://endingloneliness.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/ELT_SOTN_2026.pdf

⁸ National Suicide Prevention Office. (2025). National Suicide Prevention Strategy 2025–2035. Australian Government, Department of Health and Aged Care; Canberra, ACT. <https://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/national-suicide-prevention-strategy>

Community participation, and social connectedness, inclusion, and support are identified as statistically significant protective factors for suicide;⁹ and there is promising research on prevention that addresses these factors, as well as those that focus on family relationships, and groups. A meta-analysis by Hou et al.¹⁰ reported statistically significant reductions in suicide risk in interventions that include social support. However, the evidence base for community-based interventions needs further development.^{11 12}

The Neighbours Every Day (NED) campaign is a public health intervention addressing social connection and loneliness in the community. The objective of the Neighbours Every Day Community Survey was to measure **social connection and loneliness**, alongside **experiences of, and attitudes towards Neighbours Every Day**, Neighbour Day, and other campaigns to improve social connection and reduced loneliness in the community.

Neighbours Every Day (NED) is Relationships Australia's national, year-round social connection campaign, helping individuals, communities, organisations and governments build a more connected, inclusive Australia. For over 20 years, the strengths based campaign has inspired Australia to take small, everyday actions that help people feel included, supported and valued.

www.neighbourseveryday.org

Neighbour Day is the campaign's annual National Day of Action, held on the last Sunday in March. It encourages people to take simple, positive steps to connect with others. Founded in 2003 and adopted by Relationships Australia in 2014, Neighbour Day has grown into a widely recognised, grassroots celebration of connection and community.

www.neighbourseveryday.org/day-of-action

Evaluation by the Australian National University¹ found 85% of Neighbour Day participants knew their neighbours better afterwards, with 99% of these relationships enduring. Independent economic analysis found NED delivers outcomes at \$4,667 per QALY, well below the \$28,000 benchmark, making it more cost-effective than many public health interventions.²

NED's evidence-based, community-based model has also been recognised nationally and internationally: including in the World Health Organization's 2025 'From loneliness to social connection' report³ as one of the only worldwide campaigns of its type that is evidence-based, and in Australia's National Suicide Prevention Strategy 2025–2035,⁴ as a leading prevention initiative.



¹ Australian National University (ANU) and Relationships Australia (RA). (2020). Neighbour Day Evaluation Summary Report – September 2020. Australian National University and Relationships Australia Inc.; Canberra, ACT. <https://www.relationships.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Neighbour-Day-Evaluation-Report-Final-Copy.pdf>

² Beilby, H., Spinks, J., & Cruwys, T. (2023). Neighbour Day cost effectiveness evaluation. The University of Queensland & Australian National University.

³ Garcia, L., Hunter, R., & Anderson, N. (2025). From loneliness to social connection-charting a path to healthier societies: report of the WHO Commission on Social Connection.

⁴ National Suicide Prevention Office. (2025). National Suicide Prevention Strategy 2025–2035. Australian Government, Department of Health and Aged Care; Canberra, ACT. <https://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/national-suicide-prevention-strategy>

⁹ Kennedy, B., Trainor, S., & Henricksen, R. (2026). Relationships and Suicide Risk. Relationships Australia & Suicide Prevention Australia. <https://www.relationships.org.au/wp-content/uploads/SPA-Relationships-and-Suicide-Report-APR26-FINAL.pdf>

¹⁰ Hou, X., Wang, J., Guo, J., Zhang, X., Liu, J., Qi, L., & Zhou, L. (2022). Methods and efficacy of social support interventions in preventing suicide: a systematic review and meta-analysis. Evidence-based Mental Health, 25(1), 29–35. <https://doi.org/10.1136/ebmental-2021-300318>.

¹¹ Garcia, L., Hunter, R., & Anderson, N. (2025). From loneliness to social connection – Charting a path to healthier societies: report of the WHO Commission on Social Connection.

¹² Hansen, T., Nes, R. B., Hynes, K., Nilsen, T. S., Reneflot, A., Stene-Larsen, K., Tornes, R. A., & Bidonde, J. (2024). Tackling social disconnection: an umbrella review of RCT-based interventions targeting social isolation and loneliness. BMC Public Health, 24(1), 1917. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-024-19396-8>

Method

The Neighbours Every Day community survey was delivered online from February to March 2026 using a convenience / snowball sampling approach. Invitations to participate in the survey were sent out to Very Neighbourly Organisations and other community sector organisations associated with Relationships Australia, as well as posts on the NED website, LinkedIn, and social media pages (Facebook and Instagram) and in the NED 'Verandah' Newsletter. An invitation and a link to participate was also provided as part of a shorter 'community snapshot' survey carried out during the same time period.

The questionnaire included basic demographic information (age, gender, occupation, geographic location, household composition, education, and employment status). Questions on social connection and loneliness were measured using established and validated items describing multiple groups membership (described in this report more generally as social connection),¹³ social support,¹⁴

neighbourhood social identification,¹⁵ social cohesion,¹⁶ and loneliness.¹⁷ Questions on awareness, involvement and impact of the Neighbours Every Day (NED) campaign (including Neighbour Day) also included attitudes towards a campaign such as NED among non-engaged respondents. The survey included open-ended questions about interaction with Neighbours Every Day and additional ways to improve social connection and reduce loneliness in the community.

Data were collected using the Survey Monkey platform and prepared and analysed using Excel and SPSS software. As well as describing social connection, loneliness, and the reach and impact of NED, statistical comparisons were made between respondents that reported being involved with NED and those that had not.

Ethical approval was granted for the survey by the ACT Health Human Research Ethics Committee's Low Risk Sub-Committee on 4 February 2026 (ACT Reference: 2026.LRE.00036).

¹³ Social connection was represented by membership in multiple groups, using four items originally derived from the Exeter Identity Transition Scale (EXITS): Haslam, C., Holme, A., Haslam, S. A., Iyer, A., Jetten, J., & Williams, W. H. (2008). Maintaining group memberships: Social identity continuity predicts well-being after stroke. *Neuropsychological Rehabilitation*, 18(5-6), 671–691. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09602010701643449>

¹⁴ Social support items from HILDA survey, originally from Henderson et al 1978 and Marshall & Barnett (1993); Validated Manera, K. E., Smith, B. J., Owen, K. B., Phongsavan, P., & Lim, M. H. (2022). Psychometric assessment of scales for measuring loneliness and social isolation: an analysis of the household, income and labour dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey. *Health Qual Life Outcomes*, 20(1), 40. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12955-022-01946-6>

¹⁵ The Four Item Social Identification Scale (FISI) (As used by Cruwys et al 2021, Fong et al, 2021). Originally from Doosje et al. (1995), and Postmes, T., Haslam, S.A. and Jans, L. (2013), A single-item measure of social identification: Reliability, validity, and utility. *Br. J. Soc. Psychol.*, 52: 597–617. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12006>

¹⁶ Social cohesion items from Barber et al. (2016) and Sampson et al. (1997), as used by Fong, P., Cruwys, T., Robinson, S. L., Haslam, S. A., Haslam, C., Mance, P. L., & Fisher, C. L. (2021). Evidence that loneliness can be reduced by a whole-of-community intervention to increase neighbourhood identification. *Social Science & Medicine*, 277, 113909.

¹⁷ UCLA 3-item score; Russell DW. UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3): reliability, validity, and factor structure. *J Pers Assess* Feb 1996;66(1):20-40. Note: the single item measure of loneliness also included as part of social support measure.

Findings from the NED community survey

There were 1926 respondents to the NED community survey. The majority of respondents were female (77.9%, n=1501), aged between 35 and 74 years (78.7%, n=1513), were in full or part-time

employment (47.4%, n=913), or retired (24.9%, n=479), lived with their partner and had no dependent children (29.4%, n=566), or lived alone (22.3%, n=429).

Social connection, support, identification and cohesion

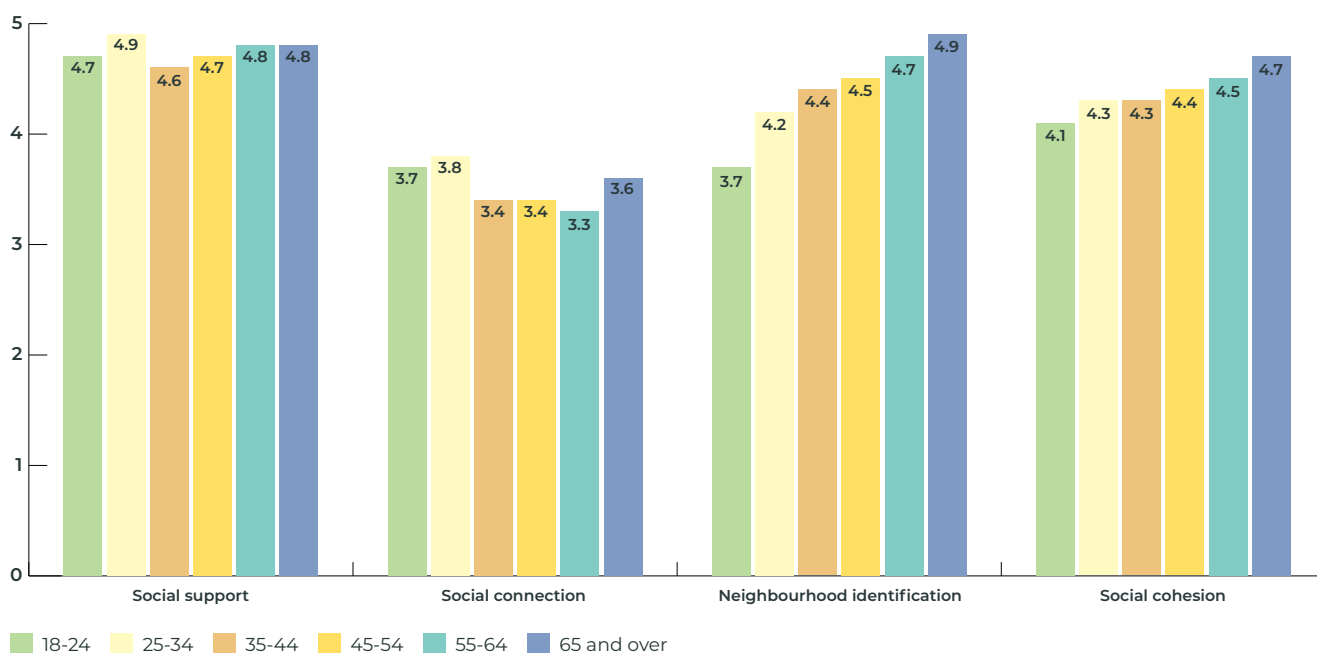


Figure 2. Mean social connection, support, identification and cohesion by age (n=1792)

Social connection

Social connection¹⁸ was highest among younger adults and over 65s (Figure 2). Full-time and part-time employed, students, and retired persons also reported higher social connection. There were no substantial differences found across gender.

Lower social connection was reported by people on a disability pension and those not currently working. There was also lower reported social connection among the middle-adult age groups between 35-64. This is similar to the findings from Ending Loneliness Together's State of the Nation report,¹⁹ which found that the 45-54 year age group was the most lonely and socially isolated.

'My neighbourhood centre is critical for providing social connection to many members of the community. Without it there would be many people feeling isolated, it provides small, accessible and meaningful ways for people to connect and participate.'

(Female, 40-44, NSW)

¹⁸ Social connection comprised the mean agreement from the following four items (7-point Likert scale): I belong to lots of different groups; I join in the activities of lots of different groups; I am friendly with people in lots of different groups; I have strong ties with lots of different groups.

¹⁹ Ending Loneliness Together (2026). State of Nation: Understanding and Rebuilding Social Connection in Australia. https://endingloneliness.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/ELT_SOTN_2026.pdf

Social support

Social support²⁰ was observed most among over 55s and was greater among women than for men or non-binary persons. Respondents that were retired, or in full-or part-time employment, also reported greater social support.

Lack of social support was reported significantly more often among men, and respondents that were living on a disability pension, carers/parents and for those not currently working.

'I could not raise my children as a single parent without the village of neighbours I have. We have a collective of 5 houses of people we know and trust implicitly, we have each other's back for everything...'
(Female, 45-49, WA)

Neighbourhood social identification

Neighbourhood social identification²¹ was higher among those aged 45 and above, women, and retired persons. Lower neighbourhood social identification was reported by those on disability pensions, not currently working, students, and carers. Those in full-time employment reported not having strong ties within their neighbourhood.

'The local area social media groups are very negative and political that it makes me feel like I would not want to engage with local people if that is a representation of those in my area.'
(Female, 50-54, VIC)

'All we have is FB groups which feel very void as it's mostly complaining.'

(Female, 30-34, QLD)

Social cohesion

Social cohesion²² was higher among over 55's and women, and among those that were in full-time employment or retired. Lower social cohesion was reported by students, those on disability pensions, carers/parents, and not currently working.

'We need to get off our devices and talk to our neighbours more again like they did in years gone by.'
(Male, 50-54, SA)

Loneliness

Over half of the respondents were lonely according to the three item, UCLA 3-item measure of loneliness (52.1%, n=1004).²³ While there were no clear differences between genders, loneliness was higher among younger through to middle-adult age groups. People that lived alone and single parents living with at least 1 child under 18 also reported higher loneliness scores, as did people on disability pensions, not currently working, or carers/ parents. Over one third (39.7%, n=766) agreed that they were often very lonely on the single item measure of loneliness.²⁴

'I'm lonely with people around me.'
(Female, 65-69, SA)

²⁰ Social support comprised the mean agreement on 10 items (7-point Likert scale): People don't come to visit me as often as I would like; I often need help from other people but can't get it; I seem to have a lot of friends; I don't have anyone that I can confide in; I have no one to lean on in times of trouble; There is someone who can always cheer me up when I'm down; I enjoy the time I spend with the people who are important to me; When something's on my mind, just talking with the people I know can make me feel better; When I need someone to help me out, I can usually find someone; I often feel very lonely. Scoring was reversed for negatively worded questions before individual items were combined.

²¹ Neighbourhood social identification comprised (7-Point Likert) the mean agreement for the following 4 items: I identify with (the people in) my neighbourhood; I see myself as a resident of this neighbourhood; I am pleased to be a neighbourhood resident; I have strong ties with other residents in this neighbourhood.

²² Social cohesion comprised the mean agreement with the following 5 items (7-point Likert scale): People around here are willing to help their neighbours; People in this neighbourhood can be trusted; People in this neighbourhood generally do not get along with each other; This is a close-knit neighbourhood; People in this neighbourhood do not share the same values.

²³ UCLA 3-item scores were calculated where response were coded: Hardly ever=1, Some of the time=2, and Often=3, to the questions: How often do you feel that you lack companionship?, How often do you feel left out?, and How often do you feel isolated from others? A score of 6-9 was considered lonely.

²⁴ Selected 'Somewhat agree', 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' to the statement 'I often feel very lonely. Those that reported being very lonely on the single measure of loneliness were more likely to be a carer or parent, on a disability pension, or out of work, and less likely to be in full-time work or retired.

Awareness & involvement in NED

Have you heard of Relationships Australia's social connection campaign Neighbours Every Day?

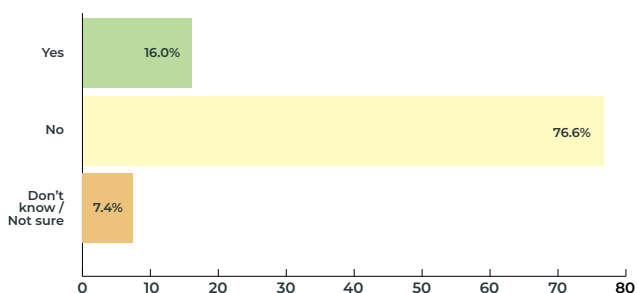


Figure 3. Awareness of Neighbours Everyday (n=1883)

One sixth (15.7%, 302/1926) of the survey respondents had heard of Neighbour Every Day (Figure 3) and 6.4% (124/1926) had been involved in the campaign in some way, including organising or participating in a Neighbour Day event (Figure 4).²⁵ Female respondents (86.3%), those aged between 40 and 69 years (72.6%) and in full-time or part-time employment (71.8%) were more likely to be involved in NED.

'We had a lunch in the middle of the street with everyone'

(Female, 18-19, QLD)

'We hold a morning tea event on Neighbour Day most years. Approx 40 people attend.'

(Female, 65-69, VIC)

'I organised a sausage sizzle and children's activities for the local neighbourhood through my (volunteer) workplace community cafe.'

(Female, 65-69, VIC)

NED's Impact

30.6%

Participated in a Neighbour Day event

25.8%

Organised a Neighbour Day event

18.5%

Took action to connect with neighbours

14.5%

Engaged with Neighbours Every Day in other ways

10.5%

Engaged in both Neighbour Day & NED

'I've had people respond with how appreciative they are for me organising the get together. That is reward enough.'

(Female, 65-69, NSW)

There was a clear, direct impact reported among those that had been involved in NED, in particular that involvement had made them feel more socially connected (Figure 5).

'It was a great one day event with lots of activities. If someone was feeling loneliness and isolated, there were lots of services there to connect with.'

(Female, 55-59, QLD)

Figure 4. Involvement in Neighbours Every Day (n=124)

²⁵To gather baseline awareness of NED, we deliberately administered the survey prior to Neighbour Day 2026, however the convenience sampling technique means that respondents may have been skewed towards those already aware of the campaign. This means that while the results are still meaningful, they cannot be generalized to the population.

Do you think being involved in the Neighbours Every Day campaign and/or Neighbour Day has:

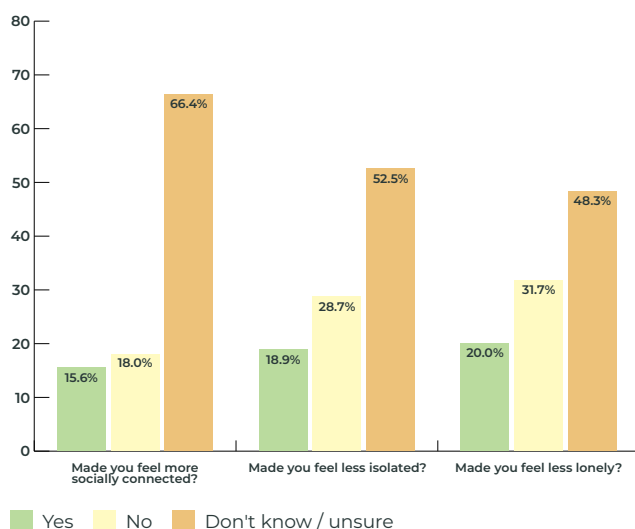


Figure 5. Reported impact of NED involvement on social connection, isolation and loneliness (n=123)

Do you think a campaign designed to increase interactions between neighbours would:

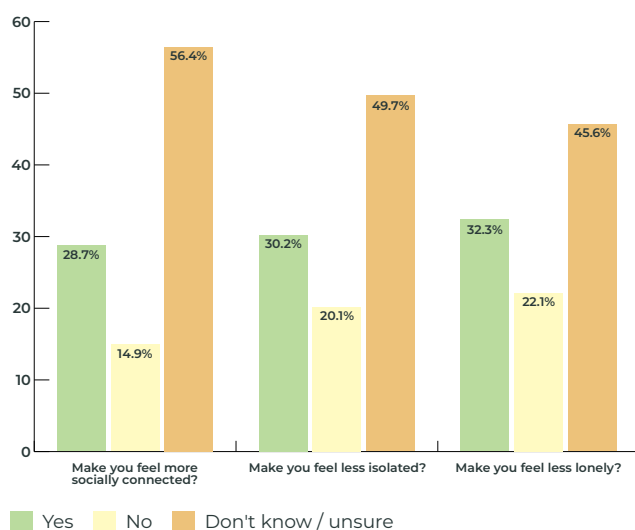


Figure 6. Projected impact of neighbour campaign on social connection, isolation and loneliness, among non-involved respondents (n=1733)

Respondents who had not been involved with NED were also asked if they felt that a campaign to increase interactions with their neighbours would make them feel more socially connected, less isolated, and less lonely (Figure 6), with similar positive responses, in particular for social connection (56.4%).

Those that believed the campaign would make them feel more socially connected reported greater social connection, social support, neighbourhood social connection, and social cohesion than those that did not see a benefit in the campaign. There were similar results for believing the campaign would make them less isolated and less lonely, except that these were not associated with reporting higher social support.

'Would make me feel more included and needed.'

(Female, 60-64, VIC)

'It would make me feel more comfortable and secure in my community.'

(Female, 60-64, TAS)

'I feel my neighbours wouldn't get involved.'

(Female, 35-39, QLD)

'The people here seem to only care about themselves'

(Female, 70-74, VIC)

Those involved with NED reported greater social connection and less loneliness

There were statistically significant differences between respondents that had been involved in NED and those that had not, across social connection, social support, neighbourhood

identification, social cohesion and loneliness (Figure 7). The greatest difference was for social connection. In particular, 70.2% of those that had been involved with NED reported that they were friendly with a lot of groups.

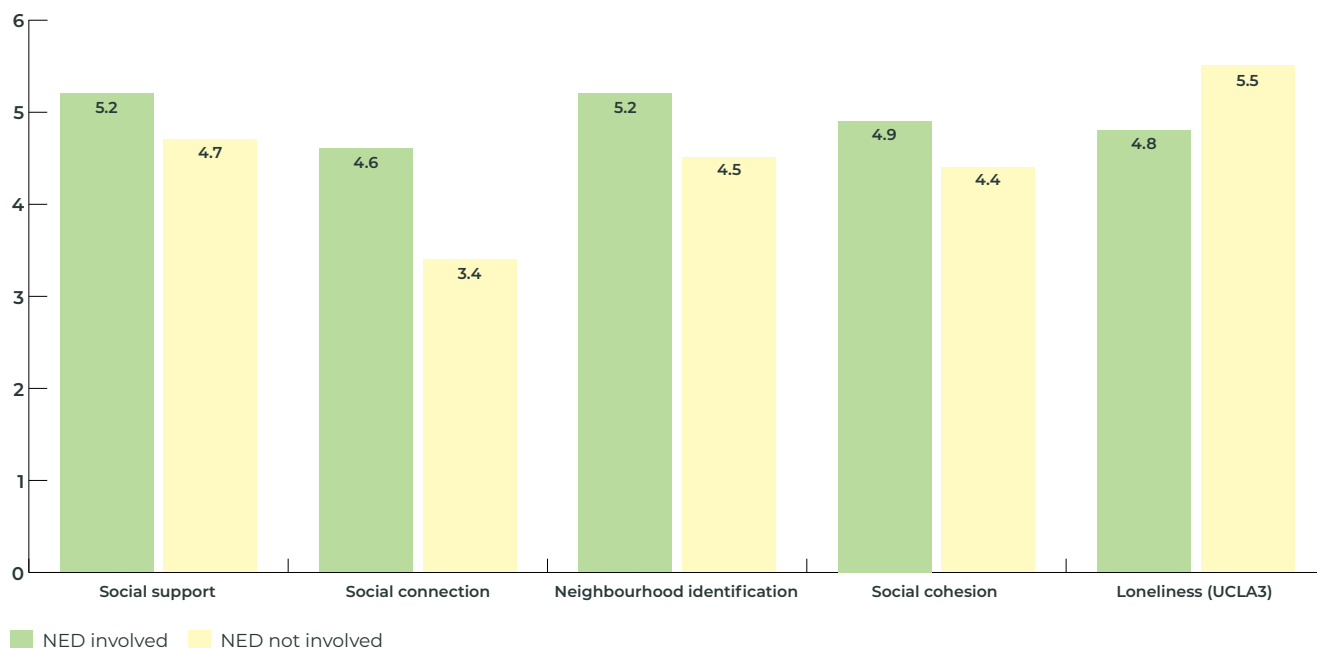


Figure 7. Mean social connection, social support, neighbourhood identification, social cohesion and loneliness among people that had been involved in NED and those that had not.

Note: While respondents that had been involved with NED generally reported higher on social connectedness and lower loneliness, this does not indicate direct impact of the campaign. One explanation could be, for example, people that are less isolated or lonely may find it easier to engage with initiatives such as NED, compared to persons

who are more disconnected and lonely at baseline. Similarly, people with a more positive outlook may answer more favourably to both the feelings of social connection and loneliness and the attitudes towards NED. Prosocial behaviours, such as willingness to help others, are associated with less social isolation and loneliness.²⁶

²⁶ Ending Loneliness Together (2026). State of Nation: Understanding and Rebuilding Social Connection in Australia. https://endingloneliness.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/ELT_SOTN_2026.pdf

Implications

‘Whatever action is taken to improve social connection needs to be visible to everyone and sustained over the long term’ (Female, 65-69, NSW)

Those that had been involved in NED reported direct impacts, but there was also clear, statistically significant associations between NED participation and validated measures for social connection and loneliness. Promisingly, there were also positive findings towards a campaign such as NED among respondents that had not yet been involved with NED.

Some key lessons from the survey findings and qualitative responses include:

Improving awareness and reach of NED

There is clear support, among both respondents who had participated in NED and those who hadn't, for a social connection campaign of this type to be expanded to reach a greater portion of the community. With adequate investment, the NED campaign has the evidence and resources to support a far greater number of people living across communities in Australia to build social connection and community engagement.

The findings also identify a need to reach pockets of communities that are currently not adequately supported to develop social connection. The survey found that 16% of respondents had heard of Neighbours Every Day. Those on disability pensions, unemployed, and in caring roles are less socially supported or connected, and more lonely, and may benefit from more targeted support to get involved with NED. Men, and the younger and older adult age groups were also under-represented when it came to being involved. For example, only 8.1% (10/288) of male respondents reported that they had participated in a Neighbour Day activity or been involved with the Neighbours Every Day campaign in some way.

Building on NED's initiative

‘Ambassadors in community that activate streets and pockets of isolation.’ (Female, 40-44)

The survey findings also point to opportunities to build on the successful foundations of NED by investing in, and scaling up, activities that bring communities together. When respondents were asked about how Neighbours Every Day could be improved, there were several promising suggestions.

“Having more greenery, small parks perhaps...Would provide easy accessible places for neighbours to meet children to be outdoors” (Female, 65-69, SA)

A strong theme amongst these was around the importance of coming together over a common purpose, particularly around growing food, and sharing meals.

The importance of sharing food and community gardening

Several respondents shared that their Neighbour Day activities centered around growing and sharing food and community gardening:



'I have organised Neighbour day since I first heard about it many years ago. It started with just families close by and probably for the last 10 or so years the whole street. This led on to a monthly garden club.' (Female, 70-74, VIC)

'I organise a neighbour day event at my community garden.' (Female, 35-39, QLD)

'Organised a produce share stand with my neighbour and have helped promote Neighbour Day through a local festival at our community garden.' (Female, 50-54, TAS)

'I organised women in my neighbourhood to come together to connect, chat and share food.' (Female, 75-79, VIC)

'Uniting communities around a purpose that transcends the diverse communities in an area, involves food, and has a low barrier to entry would be powerful.'

(Male, 25-29, NSW)

Community gardens, gardening, and bringing people together to share food were also frequently described as ways to improve social connection and reduce loneliness in the community:

'I think neighbourhood gardens are amazing.' (Female, 45-49, NSW)

'Encourage community gardening...'
(Female, 55-59, WA)

'Picnics in the park.' (Female, 45-49, WA)

'Saturday morning street gardening – Local front garden, street garden or verge competition in every street with neighbours helping out the elderly or infirm/physically unable to tend to their verge or front yard.' (Female, 40-44, NSW)



Create Belonging
• Neighbours Every Day •

"Food connects us ... it nourishes us ... and the sharing experience creates wonderful memories, strong communities – AND helps create belonging."

NED Ambassador - Julie Goodwin
Masterchef, media personality, mental health & wellbeing advocate

Neighbours Every Day | *Relationships Australia.*



Create Belonging
• Neighbours Every Day •

"I don't need a disaster, I don't need a pandemic to bake something for my neighbour. I don't need a flood to come and assist you in your garden or help you with some chores. Our neighbours are living breathing community around us."

Neighbour Day Ambassador Costa Georgiadis host of ABC's Gardening Australia

Neighbours Every Day | *Relationships Australia.*

More targeted and inclusive support

Inclusivity was identified as an important theme across opinions on how to improve social connection and reduce loneliness:

‘Matching older and disabled people up with local buddies... They are matched and introduced by a coordinator who stays linked to them for safety and support.’

(Female, 55-59, NSW)

‘Making sure poor, disabled and neurodivergent people can be and feel like part of the community needs to be a priority, otherwise you’re just increasing division. And actually ensuring access means taking action to overcome systemic barriers, not just saying the right things.’ (Female, 35-39, VIC)

Removing barriers

‘I am neurodiverse and would rather be able to pick who I socialise with than be forced to socialise with people based purely on geographical proximity.’ (Non-binary, 45-49, VIC)

‘Help local community organisations that promote social inclusion to achieve their aims’ (Male, 70-74, NSW)

Many respondents spoke from experience within their communities, identifying barriers such as cost and organisational support:

‘... More intercultural events and intentional activities where every[one] can be respected and treated equally. In other words, Australia is multicultural, but it has a long way to go to be united.’

(Male, 80-84, NSW)

‘There are so many ways, but our biggest struggle is covering insurance costs to do events / projects....’ (Female, 45-49, WA)

‘Create more low-cost local events, hobby groups, and welcoming community spaces where people can drop in anytime. Connection grows from regular, pressure-free opportunities to meet, talk, and belong’ (Male, 50-54, WA)

Conclusion

Addressing social isolation and loneliness is a public health priority, with strong evidence that social connection and support protect physical and mental health and strengthens communities. By increasing connection and reducing isolation and loneliness, Neighbours Every Day (NED) contributes to improved wellbeing, social cohesion and community resilience. Its broad reach and community-based approach offers cost-effective, meaningful impact across diverse settings. Alongside efforts to increase the profile and engagement of NED and Neighbour Day, there are valuable opportunities to further strengthen and adapt the campaign. Ongoing evaluation of reach and impact, together with continued attention to local voices, will help ensure NED remains relevant, effective, and grounded in community.

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