



# Media Release

5 February 2018

## **Networkers needed for neighbourly program**

The key to preventing loneliness and isolation in our community may be as simple as enjoying a cuppa and a chat with your next door neighbour.

Neighbourhood Networkers is a new program that builds on the idea of establishing and then maintaining friendships on your own street and in your own suburb.

Community Development Coordinator Simone Sieber said Neighbourhood Networkers aimed to increase the feeling of belonging by holding fun occasional activities to reduce social isolation created by our busy contemporary lifestyles and personal circumstances.

“We are looking for community-minded residents or budding networkers in our suburbs to bring neighbours together, to build familiarity and a greater sense of community safety and connectedness,” Ms Sieber said.

This month, the City’s Community Development team will host free workshops for people interested in becoming Neighbourhood Networkers to learn how to hold small gatherings in their street, park or suburb.

The workshops will run over two sessions on Saturdays 17 and 24 February (9.30-midday) and Thursdays 15 and 22 February (6.30-9pm).

In 2016, Lifeline Australia published results of a Loneliness Survey that revealed 80 per cent of respondents believe Australian society is becoming a lonelier place, and 60 per cent ‘often felt lonely’, despite living with others.

In January this year, British Prime Minister Theresa May appointed a ministerial lead on loneliness who will lead a cross-government group responsible for keeping loneliness prevention on the national agenda.

In the UK, the Commission on Loneliness found that more than 9 million people always or often felt lonely, about 200,000 older people had not had a conversation with a friend or relative in more than a month and up to 85 per cent of young adults aged 18-34 with



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a disability, felt lonely.

Mayor Logan Howlett said programs like Neighbourhood Networkers, were an important foundation for normalising the establishment and maintenance of healthy community relationships.

“It doesn’t mean we have to know everyone’s business, like people often say about small towns,” Mayor Howlett said.

“It means building trust and showing care for one another.

“We are at a time in history where, despite social media technology making immediate communication with someone on the other side of the world a reality, we also need to remember that making connections with those closer to us is just as important to our happiness and health.”

To register for the workshops, or for more information, email [communitydevelopment@cockburn.wa.gov.au](mailto:communitydevelopment@cockburn.wa.gov.au) or visit <https://www.cockburn.wa.gov.au/Recreation-and-Attractions/Whats-On/Street-by-Street-training-Saturday-sessions>

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