

6.2 NOTICE OF MOTION: Mayor John Carey – Community Development Initiative for Isolated Seniors

That Council REQUESTS the Chief Executive Officer to:

1. Investigate the potential establishment of a community development initiative that facilitates connections between isolated seniors in our community and nearby residents, including the creation of a contact register and funded police checks, to enable such meetings and activities to occur; and
2. Report back to Council with recommendations relating to this community development initiative for isolated seniors no later than December 2016.

REASON:

With an ageing population it is important that the City of Vincent recognises the older residents within our community that are, or are at risk of being socially isolated and that we find creative ways of better connecting those residents with others in our community. This may include the creation of a contact register to enable the connection of socially isolated older residents with other members of the community and the provision of a police clearance rebate for those residents involved in the initiative.

There is readily available evidence on the prevalence of major risk factors linked to such isolation and loneliness, including psychological distress and poor wellbeing. While the City, along with other community organisations, provides a range of programs and services for older people these do not necessarily capture those within our community that lack the social connections, accessibility or willingness to participate. Therefore, it is requested that Administration investigate an initiative to facilitate such social connections for isolated older people within our community.

ADMINISTRATION COMMENTS:

There are approximately 4,600 residents within the City of Vincent aged 60 years and above, which represents 15% of the total population; it is likely that a proportion of these older people are socially isolated. Research suggests that people in the oldest age brackets are more likely to be isolated, men are more likely to experience isolation and loneliness than women, and those receiving professional care and support in their own homes are also at higher risk.

Recent initiatives in the Eastern States have identified successful strategies in fostering social inclusion and building social support for older people throughout the community. They include introducing interventions as part of a wider strategic approach, targeting specific groups of older people, using existing community resources, using volunteers to run programs, and involving older people in the planning and delivery of programs. Such initiatives have also demonstrated that good relationships and community connectedness provide greater protection against social isolation than a larger number of shallow relationships.

Administration supports the proposed Motion and will investigate the potential establishment and operation of this initiative, including opportunities to partner with other organisations, individuals and local volunteer networks. These investigations will require due consideration of delivery capability, resource requirements, risk management issues, funding implications and intended community outcomes.

Administration will progress these investigations with a report to be presented back to Council for consideration no later than December 2016.