

MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday 14 May 2024

SOCIAL ISOLATION RATE AMONGST WA SENIORS ONE OF THE HIGHEST

- Aged Care Volunteers Visitors Scheme helping to reduce social isolation amongst seniors.
- Umbrella Multicultural Community Services looking for multilingual volunteers.

One in five older Australians experiences social isolation, with the highest rates being in metropolitan Sydney and Melbourne, rural South Australia and Western Australia. This is according to 2022 research conducted by Aged Care Research & Industry Innovation Australia.

Umbrella Multicultural Community Services Inc. is one of 140 community organisations across Australia delivering the Aged Care Volunteers Visitors Scheme (ACVVS), funded by the Australian Government. The scheme has been running for over 30 years and was previously known as the Community Visitors Scheme.

Umbrella's scheme is tailored for seniors from multilingual, multicultural and LGBTIQ+ communities. It specialises in matching culturally and linguistically diverse seniors with volunteers of all ages from multilingual backgrounds.

From 1 July 2023 to 30 April 2024, Umbrella facilitated 1250 visits to seniors at risk of social isolation in the Perth metro and Peel region. The current participation rate is over 80 volunteers and 120 seniors and the scheme plans to exceed 2,000 visits by the end of this year. It also aims to double its outreach to 240 seniors in need of companionship.

"The population of Australia is ageing rapidly, with the 2021 census showing us that over 1.2 million older Australians are living alone. This highlights a growing need for social support and initiatives to address loneliness for our seniors," said Chief Executive Officer at Umbrella Multicultural Community Services Henrietta Podgorska. "The ACVVS is more than just a visitation program; it's a vital community service aimed at mitigating social isolation."

Umbrella currently has a waiting list of over 70 seniors of Italian, Macedonian, Bosnian, Polish, German, Romanian, Iranian, English and Croatian backgrounds, waiting for a visit from a friendly volunteer who speaks their language. If you are a migrant or multigenerational language speaker with an hour a fortnight to spare, we would love to hear from you.

Please email acvvs@umbrellacommunitycare.com.au or call Umbrella on 9275 4411 during office hours. You can also visit the website and download an ACVVS application form at [Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme - Umbrella Multicultural Community Care \(umbrellacommunitycare.com.au\)](https://www.umbrellacommunitycare.com.au).

39 Abernethy Road, Belmont WA 6104
PO BOX 311, Belmont WA 6984

T: (08) 9275 4411
F: (08) 9275 8993

