



**ENDING
LONELINESS
TOGETHER**



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Media Release

AIA shines a light on workplace loneliness as 1 in 3 Australians report being lonely

- ***AIA partners on Australia's inaugural Loneliness Awareness Week, 7-11 August***
- ***2023 State of the Nation Report on Social Connection in Australia launched***
- ***Younger and middle-aged working Australians the loneliest in the country***
 - ***Lonely people less productive in the workplace***

Strictly embargoed until 00:01 Monday 7 August 2023

Leading life, health and wellbeing insurer, **AIA Australia** has partnered with national authority **Ending Loneliness Together** for Australia's first Loneliness Awareness Week, which include a **State of the Nation Report into Social Connection**.

The report reveals that nearly one in three adults (32 per cent) say they are lonely, while one in six (17 per cent) are reporting severe loneliness, putting them at a higher risk of lower workplace productivity, poor physical and mental health, and chronic disease.

Loneliness is present in the workplace and can have serious impact on employees and businesses. The report finds that people who feel lonely report less work productivity and more work impairment compared with other people.

- 35 per cent of people who are lonely report overall work impairment¹ compared with 24 per cent of people who are not lonely.
- 31 per cent of people who are lonely report presenteeism², compared with 22 per cent of people who are not lonely .
- 11 per cent of people who are lonely report absenteeism³, compared with 8 per cent of those who are not lonely

Workplace loneliness arises from perceived deficiencies in a person's social relationships in the workplace. Loneliness is a complex social, health and economic issue that affects employees across different demographics, seniority levels, and industry sectors.

Research has previously shown that workplace loneliness is associated with poorer job performance and satisfaction, lower organisational commitment, and reduced levels of creativity. Compared with their non-lonely counterparts, employees who are lonelier make more errors, take more sick leave, and express a stronger intention to resign.

¹ Overall work impairment considers if one has worked in the past 7 days, the number of hours worked, and how much health problems affected one's productivity while at work.

² Presenteeism refers to the lost productivity due to health problems while working.

³ Absenteeism refers to absence from work due to health problems.

[Ending Loneliness Together](#), a national network of organisations and individuals united to address the growing problem of loneliness, surveyed more than 4,000 adults between June and July this year, and found younger people (18-24) and middle-aged Australians (45-54) — much of the working population — are the loneliest in the country.

The results show that despite one in three Australians feeling lonely, we're not talking about it in the workplace or our other communities — which highlights the stigma and misconceptions associated with loneliness and has led to the inception and launch of Australia's first [Loneliness Awareness Week \(7-11 August 2023\)](#).

AIA and Ending Loneliness Together have been partners since 2021, working together in a shared-value agenda to raise awareness, reduce stigma, educate the community and develop the tools to reduce the negative impact of loneliness on Australians' health and wellbeing, communities and workplaces.

Commenting on the launch of the report and Australia's inaugural Loneliness Awareness Week, Damien Mu, CEO of AIA Australia says he hopes the findings inspire workplaces to check in on employees who might be feeling lonely and start to foster more meaningful social connection.

"We know that working-aged Australians, particularly the young and middle-aged, are lonely," Damien says. "It's estimated that 37 per cent of the Australian workforce feels lonely, while nearly a quarter do not engage in activities to connect with their colleagues.

"At AIA Australia, we want to create understanding, start conversations, and encourage connection in workplaces."

With that in mind, AIA and Ending Loneliness Together will be launching a corporate awareness program in early 2024 to equip workplaces with the right tools.

"Loneliness is a biological need, just like thirst or hunger. We all feel lonely at times. We need to change the dialogue and support Australians to reach out and connect," Damien says.

"Our partnership with Ending Loneliness Together, as evidenced by the report findings shared today, plays an important role in raising awareness and educating workplaces and communities about loneliness and its impacts on population health, wellbeing and productivity."

Ending Loneliness Together Scientific Chair Dr. Michelle Lim says workplaces need to get better at identifying loneliness issues and fostering social connection.

"Loneliness in the workplace if left unaddressed may lead to increased absenteeism, presenteeism, and poorer health, which will impact businesses," Michelle says.

"It's clear that many people understand the consequences of loneliness but do not know how to talk about it, how to ask for the connections they need, and where to get help.

"This report highlights that loneliness is a critical issue of our time and has been recognised as a public health priority for many countries around the world. While the detrimental health, economic and social impacts of loneliness are well established, community awareness and action remain low."

Stigma and shame are preventing people from talking about feeling lonely. In turn, this reduces opportunities for people feeling lonely to find connection and seek/receive the support they need. It also places Australians at a greater risk of persistent loneliness.

A Way Forward for Workplaces:

Workplaces have an opportunity to take steps towards an Australia where everyone feels a sense of meaningful social connection and belonging by:

- Educating employees to understand loneliness and the impact it can have on health and wellbeing
- Educating leaders and employees to know how to reach out to their colleagues who may be feeling lonely
- Normalising conversations about loneliness to remove the associated stigma
- Building workplace social connection into the employer's health and wellbeing strategy

For more information on Loneliness Awareness Week and the 2023 State of the Nation Report - please visit [UNIQUE URL]

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About AIA Australia

AIA Australia is a leading life insurance specialist with 50 years' experience and purpose to make a difference in people's lives. In 2014 the company launched AIA Vitality, a world leading, science-based health and wellbeing program, to the Australian market. In July 2017, AIA and its partners launched AIA's health insurance business, now known as AIA Health Insurance.

In 2021, CommsInsure Life was integrated into AIA Australia. The lives of more than 3.7 million Australians are protected and enhanced through AIA Australia's unique value proposition of life, health and wellbeing. Our vision is to embrace shared value in championing Australia to be the healthiest and best protected nation in the world.

In pursuit of this, AIA Australia has developed AIA Embrace- a comprehensive wellbeing ecosystem of world-class products, programs and partnerships. These are designed to help customers, partners and the broader community to embrace better health and wellbeing.

In offering a broad range of health and wellbeing services to its customers, partners and broader community, AIA is proudly helping people lead healthier, longer, better lives.

AIA Australia has been recognised with multiple awards, including the ANZIF Life Insurance Company of the Year (2022), Women in Finance Employer of the Year Award (2018, 2019), Super Review's Best Insurer of the Year (2018, 2019), FSC Life Insurance Industry Awards Innovation in Group Life Insurance (2021), Shared Value Awards Organisation of the Year (2020) and Shared Value Project of the Year (2021).

Further information at www.aia.com.au.

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About Ending Loneliness Together

[Ending Loneliness Together](#) is Australia's national organisation driving a coordinated approach to reducing the negative effects of loneliness and social isolation in our community. Inspired by the UK Campaign to End Loneliness, ELT brings together experts across lived experience, national and international research, government, and service delivery to advocate for change, build the evidence-base and design tools to effectively address loneliness in Australia.