Young and Old brought together in friendship for new campaign to combat loneliness

Brisbane, 25 February 2019 Reducing loneliness and social isolation by connecting younger and older Queenslanders is the motivation behind an innovative new campaign launched today.

#OLDMATE Queensland, a partnership between social impact strategists spur:org and not-for-profit Anglicare Southern Queensland, aims to reduce loneliness in people aged 18-35 and those over 65+

Anglicare’s Amy Lee-Hopkins said the organisation cared for thousands of elderly people who regularly experience loneliness and hoped the campaign helped highlight that getting older doesn’t mean you stop being your own person with your own interests.

“It’s a misconception when you get older your passions, interests, hobbies, and experiences take a back seat,” Ms Lee-Hopkins said.

“We look after many lovely, interesting people who have lived incredible lives and have so many stories to tell and wisdom to give.”
“’We also know that up to 62 per cent of people aged 18-35 feel they lack companionship. “#OLDMATE Queensland will help us bring these two groups of people together to build connection and hopefully lifelong friendships.

“We’re asking young Queenslanders to take the pledge to become a Young Mate and have a go at spending regular time with one of our Old Mates.”

Directors of spur:org Lee Crockford and William Smith-Stubbs said that thanks to the support of Anglicare, there is now a greater opportunity for volunteers to engage with Old Mates across the state.

“We’re delighted to be working in partnership with Anglicare – not only to grow the number of volunteers who take the pledge, but to help improve the mental wellbeing of Old Mates within Anglicare’s network,” Mr Crockford said.

“Given our organisations are working to achieve a similar goal, it makes sense for us to work together on this issue which has such a big impact on the aging members of our community.”

Ms Lee-Hopkins said research showed socially minded young people wanted to volunteer for causes they could relate to and believe in, but young people under 30 only equated to nine per cent of all volunteers at Anglicare.

“Mental health and wellbeing is a huge concern across every age group and #OLDMATE Queensland opens up an amazing volunteering opportunity for young Queenslanders,” she said.
“Spending just one hour a month with an #OLDMATE has the potential to improve their self-esteem and mental health, while also reducing isolation. And it can have a positive effect on your mental health as well.”

Mr Smith-Stubbs added that participants in #OLDMATE Queensland don’t need to have any mental health training.

“The program is about bringing people together to engage in simple activities that help increase connection, skilling and the mental health of elderly relatives, friends and neighbours,” he said.

“There are some great ideas for spending time with older people on the #OLDMATE Queensland website. Your catch-ups can be simple and low-cost or exciting and extravagant – it’s entirely up to you and your Old Mate.”

#OLDMATE Queensland launches today via social media, video and outdoor supported by partners Global Youth Media Company VICE and Queensland billboard company goa. For more information about #OLDMATE Queensland and how to get involved visit: www.oldmateqld.org.au

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Key Statistics about loneliness

- Loneliness is a modern epidemic - 5.6 million Australians experience loneliness
- Loneliness as bad as smoking 15 cigarettes a day - in terms of life expectancy
- Almost half of Australians do not have someone they could turn to for help if needed
- Lonely people are twice as likely to die prematurely
- Loneliness increases inflammation in the body which can contribute to heart disease and other chronic health conditions

About the #OLDMATE Queensland Campaign

#OLDMATE QUEENSLAND is Anglicare Southern Queensland’s brand new, integrated campaign to reduce loneliness amongst the elderly, change cultural perceptions of getting older and encourage 18-35 year olds to volunteer and engage with people over 65 for at least one hour a month. #OLDMATE smashes the stereotypes of getting old, showing the elderly for who they are as individuals, as dancers, as adventurers, and more – not just their age.

Bringing #OLDMATE QUEENSLAND to life with Anglicare are partners: youth media company VICE, Queensland’s largest billboard and signage company goa, social impact strategists spur:org. The campaign stars 12 Anglicare Southern Queensland aged care clients across digital, outdoor and video.

#OLDMATE was originally created by spur:org in 2017 to address suicide in men aged 80+.

www.oldmateqld.org.au
About spur:org  www.wearespur.com

#OLDMATE is an initiative of spur:org – the multi-award-winning, mental health charity created by social impact strategy firm spur:.

spur: are social impact strategists who design innovative solutions to solve complex social issues and formed spur:org to produce projects and campaigns to improve the state of mental health.

spur:’s work is based on understanding what drives human behavior, how to change it, and how to effectively measure the outcomes of this change.

spur: works closely with Governments, NGOs, and corporates to make impact in the areas of health and wellbeing, education, environment and sustainability, equality, access, and peace.

About Anglicare  www.anglicaresq.org.au

Anglicare Southern Queensland is the official Queensland Partner of #OLDMATE and brings the capacity to directly link Young Mates to Old Mates within Anglicare’s care. Anglicare is an inclusive and diverse not-for-profit.

Our staff and the people we support include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, those from cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds, LGBTQI+ communities, people with disabilities and people with a lived experience of mental health issues. We provide a child-safe environment and are committed to providing ongoing care and protection for vulnerable Queenslanders.

Whether it is providing nursing care and domestic assistance in the home, physiotherapy to enable the return of mobility, emergency accommodation for victims of domestic violence, working with foster carers in the care of vulnerable children, a safe caring environment for the elderly, skills training for young unemployed people or parental education and counselling, Anglicare has empowered 1 in 30 Queenslanders in need.

We are proud to care for and provide services to people from all walks of life

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