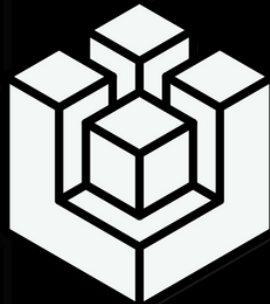




# HUMANS:CONNECTING Business Plan

2025/2026



HUMANS:CONNECTING









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# Executive Summary

## MISSION



We're de-stigmatising loneliness and helping humans to get the connection they need and deserve

## VISION



To be the global faces and voices of an emotion that all humans experience but we do not know how to talk about or sit with.

### What we're doing

We're creating a social enterprise that supports humans experiencing loneliness to move through loneliness and take steps to get the connection we're all looking for.

### Why does it matter

25% of all humans globally are experiencing loneliness and social disconnection. This is a social and economic catastrophe and we are here to make the solution readily accessible to everyday people where they are.



*Ratio of people globally feeling lonely in 2023.*



*Ratio of Australians experiencing loneliness in 2023.*



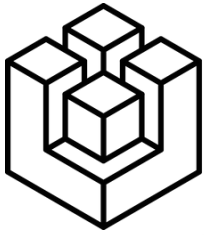
*Ratio of Australians reporting feeling severely lonely in 2023.*

### We're doing this by

- providing an upstream service supporting humans to feel connected and socially well before the need to seek professional mental health support or crisis services.
- talking widely about loneliness as experienced within humans, in our communities and workplaces.
- offering products improving connection that are easily accessible, convenient and provide high-value support.
- measuring how we reduce an individual's feelings of loneliness through our Connection Starter Course.
- collaborating with governments, academics, mental health professionals and mental health support providers globally.
- seeing each human as the beautiful human they are. Humans needing connection are not broken; they're having an uncomfortable human experience and are worthy of support.



# The Social Enterprise



HUMANS: CONNECTING

<b>Name</b>	Philip Leslie McAuliffe
<b>Contact details</b>	hello@humansconnecting.org
<b>Legal status</b>	Sole trader
<b>Start date</b>	October 2023
<b>Structure</b>	Sole trader
<b>Description</b>	Social enterprise designed to reduce rates of loneliness and improve quality of social connections. Products and services for individuals and workplaces.
<b>Aim</b>	Provide an upstream service to educate public on loneliness and support individuals, workplaces and communities to prioritise connection before loneliness becomes chronic and requires mental health intervention and/or crisis support.



# The Organisation

**HUMANS:CONNECTING** is operated as part of The Lonely Diplomat, which was registered in 2019.

**HUMANS:CONNECTING** currently has an annual turnover of less than \$25,000.

Currently, five of six positions are filled (we are looking for a psychologist to join the team). Of the five positions, one of whom is full-time and the others are currently sharing their insights and skills on a pro bono or pro rata basis.





# The People



**Phil McAuliffe**

Founder  
Key Person of  
Influence

Canberra  
Australia

LinkedIn:  
[www.linkedin.com/in/phil-mcauliffe/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/phil-mcauliffe/)

## EXPERIENCE

- Lived experience of loneliness
- Advisory Board - Global Initiative on Loneliness and Connection
- Co-chair – Lived Experience Advisory Panel, Ending Loneliness Together
- Creator
  - The Lonely Diplomat (2018)
    - Blog
    - Podcast
    - Book
  - The Loneliness Guy (2020)
    - Blog
    - Podcast
    - YouTube
- Media appearances
  - ABC Radio National – PM
  - Science Magazine
  - BBC World Service – The Forum
  - SBS TV – Insight
  - SBS TV – World News
  - ABC Radio National – The Roundtable
  - ABC News online
  - ABC Listen app – Story Stream
- Life coach
- Australian Public Servant (1999 – 2022)
  - Department of Immigration / Department of Home Affairs
    - Worked in
      - Canberra
      - Darwin
      - Ho Chi Minh City
      - Seoul
      - Tokyo
- Journalist
  - The Daily Journal (2002-2003)
    - Caracas, Venezuela





**Moana Potaka**

Business Manager

Hastings  
New Zealand

## EXPERIENCE

- Business Support Manager
  - Staff management
  - Group strategy
  - Key client liaison
- Key Account Manager
  - Relationship management
  - Responsible for internal efficiencies
  - Marketing including expo presentations & sales generation
  - Staff culture and engagement support
- General Manager
  - Operational reporting
  - Asset development and event planning
  - Accounts/budgeting
  - Payroll support



**Pete Newsome**

Marketing Manager

Brisbane  
Australia

## EXPERIENCE

- General Manager - Marketing Agency
  - Staff management
  - Marketing strategy
  - Business development
- Advertising Agency Digital/Technical Director
  - Managed major advertising Projects from inception to completion for Australian State & Federal Governments, Universities, enterprise clients through to non-profits and SMEs
- Startup Head of Growth
  - Scaled a startup from a B2C offering to B2B, securing their first enterprise Government client
- Digital Marketing Agency Founder
  - Established and managed a digital marketing agency and a team (local and off-shore of 8) for 15+ years until the profitable sale of the business





**Jonathon Lawless**

Investment  
Management

Sydney  
Australia

## EXPERIENCE

- Founder / Portfolio Manager
  - Founded Sydney-based investment firm focused on long-term investing in listed companies in Asia
- Investment Analyst
  - Researching business models and assessing investment opportunities globally
- Fund raising
  - Interaction with asset allocators globally in a fundraising and investor relations capacity
- Volunteer
  - Lifeline



**Jeff Bartlett**

Design Manager

Canberra  
Australia

## EXPERIENCE

- Social Media Content Coordinator
  - Establishing social media accounts for company
  - Customer liaison
  - Team coordinator across 8 sites
- Social Media Content Designer
  - Artwork
  - Marketing media
  - Stakeholder liaison
- Website designer
  - Artwork
  - Marketing media
  - Stakeholder liaison





**Jack Hedges**

Sales Manager

Melbourne  
Australia

## EXPERIENCE

- Enterprise Sales Leader
  - Channel Management
  - Business Development
  - Go To Market Strategy - 1st on ground Sales
  - Public Speaking
  - Marketing
  - Forecasting
  - Exceeding Revenue targets
- Enterprise Account Executive
  - Training and Education - Security Software Sales
  - 20+ New Logos
  - Exceeding Revenue targets
  - Outbound Sales strategy
  - Challenger Sales
  - Enablement
- Enterprise Account Manager
  - Manage portfolio of existing customers with ARR of 800k+
  - Renewals, upsell, cross sell
  - Exceeding Revenue targets
  - Responding to Tenders - RFP, RFI, RFQ
- Executive Engagement





# Our partnership with Annecy Behavioral Science Lab

**HUMANS:CONNECTING** announced its collaboration agreement with Annecy Behavioral Science Lab (ABSL) in July 2024.

ABSL brings world-leading scientific expertise and the experience of working at the forefront of the global effort to understand loneliness, social disconnection and their impacts on individuals, workplaces, and societies. ABSL has been commissioned by the World Health Organization and the European Commission to conduct research on loneliness and human connection globally.

**HUMANS:CONNECTING** has access to the latest data and research from ABSL, which is included into its products and services. This ensures that users of **HUMANS:CONNECTING**'s products and services always have the access to the most current data and insights.

ABSL has access to **HUMANS:CONNECTING**'s expertise in engaging on issues relating to loneliness, social isolation and human disconnection in ways that speak to the human beyond statistics and data.

**HUMANS:CONNECTING** and ABSL jointly develop the connection starter course and creating connected workplaces and collaborate on the **HUMANS:CONNECTING** blog.

The consumer benefits from a truly innovative approach that brings together the power of lived experience shared in compelling ways with world-leading, cutting-edge scientific research, measurement and data analysis.





# The Market

## WHO WILL BUY FROM US?

**HUMANS:CONNECTING** is for all humans experiencing loneliness and are seeking to improve the quality and/or quantity of their connections.

While the audience for our products and services are for all humans, recent Australian data shows us that young people (aged 18-24 years) and middle-aged people (aged 35-64 years) report the highest levels of loneliness.

Our ideal clients are midlife professionals aged between their mid-30s and their mid-60s. They have realised that they are not living the life they had imagined they would earlier in life and may regret previous decisions. They are looking for change and are scared, but do not have anyone in their lives with whom they could discuss their thoughts and feelings with.

Our products and services meet our consumers where they are: online and looking for high quality support.

Our products are designed to be used by individuals. Our services are designed to be used for higher impact entities, such as in workplaces, on podcasts, public speaking and in the media.



# IDEAL CONSUMER



**Michael**

**Age:**  
45

**Gender:**  
Male

**Relationship status:**  
in a relationship, but it's rocky.

**Education:**  
Tertiary

**Income:**  
US\$100,000+ per year

## GOALS

- Strive for "success"
- Find purpose in work
- Make time for friends
- Want to navigate life's transitions better
- Live well in retirement
- Wants to 'give back' to community

## CHALLENGES

- Struggled with a sense of belonging
- Successful life has not been fulfilling
- How to change without upsetting anyone
- Unsure how to move forward

## LIKES

- Holidays/vacations several times a year
- Group of friends
- Healthy physical lifestyle
- Simplicity and efficiency

## DISLIKES

- Clutter
- Feeling trapped
- Feeling lost and overwhelmed
- Fear of failure or change

## PERSONALITY

- Ambitious
- Driven
- Always busy
- Outwardly
  - cheerful
  - easy going
- Inwardly
  - Tired
  - Lost
  - Hollow
  - Empty and/or
  - Heavy
  - Like they're observing life

## PRODUCTS THEY ENJOY

- Podcasts
  - The Imperfects
  - Mel Robbins
  - Super Soul Sunday
  - Unlocking Us
  - Feel Better, Live More
- Drives an electric vehicle
  - Polestar
- High-quality luggage
  - Rimowa
- Quality clothing
  - Country Road
  - Timberland
- Technology
  - Apple
- Full service airlines
  - Rewards points
- Exercise equipment
  - Setting up home gym



# IDEAL CONSUMER



**Rebecca**

**Age:**  
45

**Gender:**  
Female

**Relationship status:**  
in a relationship.

**Education:**  
Tertiary

**Income:**  
US\$100,000+ per year

## GOALS

- Wants her family to be happy
- Find purpose and fulfilment in work
- To feel reconnected in her relationship
- To not be in such a rush all the time
- Live well in retirement
- Wants to 'give back' to community
- Get back in touch with her ideals

## CHALLENGES

- Finding balance between work and home
- Ageing parents, resents siblings' assumptions that she will be their carer
- Struggles to find time for her partner and herself
- Feels like she's carrying the mental load of her household
- Feels guilty that she's never doing enough
- Wants a change at work, but unsure what and how to balance it all.

## LIKES

- Travelling
- TV medical dramas
- Her career
- Spending time with friends
- Living healthily
- Seeing her family grow up

## DISLIKES

- Busyness of life
- Her constant tiredness
- Feeling trapped
- Feeling lost and overwhelmed
- Fear of failure or change
- How she compares herself to others on social media.

## PERSONALITY

- Ambitious
    - struggles to be suitably ambitious
  - Idealistic
    - passionate about social issues since a teenager
  - Smart
- Outwardly
- always competent
  - has it all sorted
- Inwardly
- overwhelmed
  - frustrated
  - worries what would happen if she pauses

## PRODUCTS THEY ENJOY

- Podcasts
  - The Imperfects
  - Mel Robbins
  - Super Soul Sunday
  - Unlocking Us
  - Dare to Lead
- Drives a Kia Sorrento
  - Big enough for the family but a bit sporty
- Reliable, low maintenance but makes her feel good
  - clothing
  - cosmetics
  - technology
- Pinterest
  - ideas for renovations



# IDEAL WORKPLACE



## Consulting Inc.

Industry:  
Consulting

Size:  
150 employees

Profit:  
US\$7.5m per year

### GOALS

- Helping workplaces navigate change
- Socially aware
- Be a dynamic workplace that does things differently
- Wants to attract the best and brightest workers
- Develop reputation of delivering high quality outcomes for clients
- Wants to 'give back' to community

### CHALLENGES

- Busy
- Grown quickly
- Lots of new staff
- Staff travel out of the office for weeks at a time
- Indicators that staff are feeling disengaged
  - People leaving
  - Surprised by staff survey results

### LIKES

- Making a positive contribution to the community
- Attracting high quality staff
- Training and development
- Being innovative

### DISLIKES

- How hard it feels to balance the many competing priorities between staff welfare, developing a positive workplace culture and delivering work on time and to budget.

### PRODUCTS THEY ENJOY

- Being an active part of the wider industry and community
- LinkedIn
- Harvard Business Review
- Podcasts
  - Diary of a CEO



## WHY WILL THEY BUY FROM US?

People buy from **HUMANS:CONNECTING** because they resonate with the experiences of loneliness and challenges of seeking human connection we share. By openly sharing stories of loneliness and our search for connection and belonging, we build trust and rapport.

They also buy from **HUMANS:CONNECTING** because they have access to the latest findings from world-leading behavioural scientists at Annecy Behavioral Science Lab (ABSL), who are our research partners and co-develop our products and services.

Our products and services are tailored to engage audiences where they are: in their homes, their workplaces, and their communities, guiding them towards meaningful connections.

In providing upstream services, **HUMANS:CONNECTING** empowers humans to improve their social health and prioritise the quality of the connection they feel in their lives.

Accessing personalised mental health support is often costly and access is limited, leading individuals to struggle with discussing their feelings of loneliness. Many wait until their feelings intensify before seeking help, often resorting to crisis services.

Our offerings provide relatable information and support for loneliness, empowering individuals to foster connections and improve their social health without needing professional mental health services or accessing crisis support services.



## MARKET RESEARCH TRENDS

**HUMANS:CONNECTING** and its research partners at Annecy Behavioral Science Lab (ABSL) are assessing the understanding of human connection, human disconnection in workplaces and communities throughout 2025.

Despite there being an increasing awareness of loneliness in society and a growing body of evidence that shows that loneliness is a public health crisis, there is a reluctance to engage with the issue - especially in workplaces.

Our ongoing market research aims to find ways to help individuals, workplaces and communities confidently engage on the topic of loneliness, social isolation and human disconnection.

The need for our work remains immense. Every human experiences loneliness. No job title, salary level, education qualification or address makes us immune.

*Globally, 1-in-4 humans report feeling lonely in 2023. In Australia, 1-in-3 humans are experiencing loneliness, with 1-in-6 humans reporting feeling severely lonely. On average, 16 per cent of Australians aged between 35 and 64 are experiencing severe loneliness.*

*These numbers are enormous.*

*In the United States in 2019, 50% of Gen X and 65% of Millennials and Gen Z report feeling lonely 'sometimes or always'.*

*While loneliness is not a mental illness, it is an antecedent condition for depression and anxiety if left unaddressed.*

*Humans experiencing loneliness are at significantly higher risk of developing heart disease, diabetes and some cancers. Indeed, the health impacts of loneliness reduce longevity by 70 per cent (smoking reduces it by 50 per cent, drinking by 30 per cent and obesity by 20 per cent).*

*In workplaces, we know that humans who feel lonely at work report higher levels of absenteeism. They are less productive, less efficient and are more likely to leave. They're also likely to stay and be less productive and less efficient.*



## COMPETITOR ANALYSIS

There are few social enterprises addressing loneliness and social connection in Australia. The space is dominated by prominent non-profits, such as Lifeline and BeyondBlue. Globally, there are also few social enterprises like **HUMANS:CONNECTING** and the current focus from governments and peak bodies is on increasing the awareness of loneliness within the general public, its pervasiveness and health impacts.

However the 'next steps' about what an individual is meant to do with this awareness is left as a general referral to see a mental health professional, a general practitioner or speak to a friend.

**HUMANS:CONNECTING** is not a mental health service. It aims to increase *loneliness literacy*: making it easier to talk about loneliness and to receive other's experiences of loneliness. We also empower humans experiencing loneliness to have agency over their thoughts and feelings and explore how they can get the connection their loneliness is telling them they need.

## LIFELINE AUSTRALIA BEYOND BLUE AUSTRALIA

### STRENGTHS

- Well-recognised and respected brand in Australia
- Promoted throughout media
- Crisis support services

### WEAKNESSES

- Both companies have a focus on the human in crisis.
- Loneliness discussed as a mental health issue, which feeds the stigma of loneliness.

### OPPORTUNITIES

- Collaborative opportunities to promote our products and services on its website and information given to volunteer counsellors.

### THREATS

- Both companies currently have the attention of the nation in terms of assisting humans experiencing extreme levels of mental health turmoil.



## MARKET TESTING RESULTS

Market testing continues throughout 2025.

Loneliness is a tough concept. Admitting loneliness to oneself and then doing something about it requires a level of courage that few possess.

We've been working on loneliness and social connection since 2018 and have trialled many ways to engage with the audience.

The audience listens to a podcast, watches a video on YouTube and/or reads a blog, as these allow someone to engage on the topic and remain hidden and unseen.

It takes great courage to admit our own loneliness and then yet more courage to take steps to move beyond it. When people do want to engage on loneliness, they often ask a general question or ask a specific question on behalf of someone else (like a wife for her husband, or on behalf of a friend).

Humans engage with our products when they've explored other options and they're ready to be vulnerable.

Our products and services are designed to meet people where they are and provide some outstanding support for them without the need to 'come out' as lonely before they're ready.

## LESSONS FROM SIMILAR BUSINESSES

Other businesses working on supporting people through loneliness and improving their social connection report similar frustrations.

It is rare for other businesses to talk openly about the stigmatised problem (loneliness), rather to highlight the more palatable solution (connection).

Creating **HUMANS:CONNECTING** has allowed us to be one of the first to position ourselves as a low-barrier way to access support and advice for humans through our products and services.

We've created products that allow someone to purchase support for their loneliness quickly and discreetly. They can also purchase support to gift to a friend.





## MARKETING STRATEGY

We have a digital marketing expert on our team who leads our marketing efforts. Our founder is the public face and voice of our work.

Currently, the marketing budget is approximately \$50/month.

However, marketing will be a significant driver of our impact as we grow with 20 per cent of **HUMANS:CONNECTING**'s profit reinvested to impact through marketing. This will allow us to increase our marketing budget to reach our target audience.

The social media landscape in 2025 means that social media platforms limit reach and exposure of content unless business pay to boost their content.

**HUMANS:CONNECTING**'s founder decided to not pay for this service on specific social media platforms, due to those platform's decisions to remove protections for minority and vulnerable communities.

**HUMANS:CONNECTING** is exploring ways to market its products and services with platforms and services that align with its values of supporting human connection and information sharing, not feeding human disconnection and rewarding disinformation.

This has impacted reach and visibility. However, we've noticed that those seeking to engage our services have found us through search engines and word-of-mouth.

We're using our website ([www.humansconnecting.org](http://www.humansconnecting.org)) initially, and then through other platforms like Kajabi as means allow.



# OUR PRODUCTS

Our products are designed for individuals to access our expertise along an Ascending Transaction Model

Product	The Gift	Products for Prospects	Connection Starter Course (self-directed)	Connection Starter Course (1:1 mentoring)	Monthly Mentorship Call
Description	Long form Short form With guest speakers High-value, no cost advice	High-value, low cost 60-90 minute videos with lessons addressing common pain points and ideas to feel connected.	Connection Plan through Connection Starter Course	Connection Plan through Connection Starter Course <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 x 90min 1:1 calls</li> <li>• 3 month duration</li> </ul>	Monthly 90min mentoring call with Phil McAuliffe. Access after completing Connection Starter Course  Limited capacity (10-15 clients)
Cost (AUD)	No cost	\$19.95	\$795.00	\$3,000.00	\$12,000.00 per annum
Delivery	Website Podcast service YouTube	Website	Website	Website Video Call	Website Video Call
Process	Self-directed	Self-directed	Self-directed	1:1 mentoring	1:1 mentoring

The Connection Starter Course is reviewed periodically with our research partners at Annecy Behavioral Science Lab to include the latest scientific research.



# OUR SERVICES

**Our services are designed for greatest positive impact:  
broadcasting our message to large numbers of people**

Service	Media	Creating Connected Workplaces	Speaking	Government Submissions & Advocacy
<b>Description</b>	Interview Phil McAuliffe for stories, programs appearing in the media.	Service developed and delivered jointly with Annecy Behavioral Science Lab, combining cutting-edge psychological science with the power of lived experience. Addressing the impact of loneliness and social disconnection in workplaces. Scalable and adaptable service developed in conjunction with the client organisation.	Speaking in workplaces, conferences, events and podcasts.	Consulting services to help organisations develop their submissions to government. Supporting governments to develop sound, evidence-based and human-centred public policy addressing loneliness and social disconnection. Focuses on issues of belonging, connection, social cohesion, addressing loneliness, disconnection and political and social extremism.
<b>Cost (AUD)</b>	No cost	Negotiated (starts at US\$10,000)	Negotiated (starts at \$2,000 +costs)	Negotiated hourly rate
<b>Engage</b>	Website	Website Online In-person	Website Online In-person	Website Online In-person

Creating Connected Workplaces addresses workplace loneliness. Workplace loneliness feeds higher levels of absenteeism, less productivity, less efficiency, low morale and higher staff turnover.



## **CUSTOMER CARE POLICY**

We want to ensure that those engaging our products and services get the support they need at an affordable price.

Our products and services are not a replacement for individual counselling or therapy.

Every effort is made to support our customers – who are largely anonymous – with reminders and disclaimers prior to purchasing our products that sitting with loneliness is often uncomfortable.

Frequent reminders are given to ensure that the individual consuming our products and services seek immediate crisis support should they feel it appropriate for themselves.

Customers purchasing the Connection Starter Course are provided updates for life. Meaning that as we discover more about human connection, our customers will receive updates containing the latest research.

## **CUSTOMER FEEDBACK**

Customer feedback is central to how our services grow and evolve. Forms are placed throughout the website and invitations are given to provide feedback at the end of podcast episodes and our products and services.

Opportunities to provide feedback are provided at the end of speeches, presentations and talks. Feedback is also an important component of the Connection Starter Course and Creating Connected Workplaces.

These feedback opportunities are ways that we can measure our impact on our audience.





# Social Impact

## WHO BENEFITS FROM OUR SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Humans experiencing loneliness and wanting to improve the quality of their social connections will benefit from our social enterprise.

## WHY OUR SOCIAL ENTERPRISE IS NEEDED

Responses to loneliness and social disconnection often involve referring someone to a crisis support service or mental health professional. This is appropriate in some circumstances, but not all. **HUMANS:CONNECTING** is an upstream service that empowers people to take steps to boost their own social health before a loneliness experience reaches a crisis level.

Loneliness is a complex and universal human emotion that can have significant negative effects on both mental and physical well-being. Loneliness impacts: *(continued next page)*





## MENTAL HEALTH

Prolonged loneliness is associated with various mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, and increased stress levels. It can also contribute to the development or exacerbation of other mental health disorders.

## PHYSICAL HEALTH CONSEQUENCES

Loneliness has been linked to several physical health problems, including a weakened immune system, high blood pressure, cardiovascular diseases, and even a shorter lifespan. Chronic loneliness can contribute to overall poorer health outcomes.

## QUALITY OF LIFE

People who feel socially disconnected and lonely may experience a lack of fulfillment, a sense of purposelessness, and a diminished sense of self-worth.

## PREVENTION OF RISKY BEHAVIOURS

Individuals experiencing loneliness are more vulnerable to engaging in risky behaviors as a way to cope or find a sense of belonging. These behaviours can be dangerous to the individual and to communities, and range from risky sexual behaviours to religious and/or political extremism. Addressing loneliness can help mitigate these risks.

## PRODUCTIVITY & CREATIVITY

In work and academic settings, loneliness can negatively affect productivity and creativity. Collaborative environments and social interactions are often conducive to idea generation and problem-solving.

**Community Well-being:** Addressing loneliness is crucial for building strong, resilient communities. Social connections contribute to a sense of belonging and shared identity, fostering cooperation and mutual support.

## COGNITIVE DECLINE

Studies suggest that loneliness may be a risk factor for cognitive decline and dementia in older adults. The lack of social engagement and stimulation can negatively impact cognitive function.

**Impact on Relationships:** Loneliness can strain existing relationships and make it challenging to form new connections. It may lead to difficulties in communication, increased social withdrawal, and a heightened sense of social insecurity.

## ENHANCED EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE

Social connections provide a support system that can help individuals cope with life's challenges. Having a network of friends, family, or community can enhance emotional resilience in the face of stressors.

## ECONOMIC FACTORS

Loneliness has economic implications due to decreased productivity, increased healthcare costs, and potential impacts on workforce participation.





## HOW OUR SOCIAL ENTERPRISE MEETS THE NEED

**HUMANS:CONNECTING** will be visible across many mediums: we intend to be the voice and face of an emotion that we do not know how to talk about.

We intend to initiate and lead conversations that normalise loneliness and the human need for connection. We intend to put the focus on the response to loneliness on lived experience, because that's where loneliness resides within us all.

We intend to be visible in the media. We intend for our podcast and blog to be popular and globally known. Through these tools, we intend to give people the words to talk about loneliness and the skills to support themselves, their loved ones and their communities to move through loneliness towards authentic connection.

We've created products and services that support people take steps towards feeling connected and knowing how to respond to their loneliness when they experience it. Our products and services meet people where they are – both physically and emotionally.

## HOW WE WORK WITH DIFFERENT PARTNERS

We want to be a one-stop-shop for humans experiencing loneliness to come and get the support they need to feel more connected, even if that means they do not consume any of our products and services.

We've developed an information pack to share with prospective partners as a first step to collaborating with us. The pack contains important information about our mission and vision, and what a partnership with us requires. The aim is to professionalise our collaborations in a sector that is built on more informal and ill-defined collaborations.

We'll be partnering with organisations, coaches and community groups so our website guests can find other services we endorse to support them.

As an upstream service, we're creating partnerships with mental health professionals and crisis support services that both act as a place of referral to their patients and callers, as well as using feedback from them on what they're seeing in their services to shape our messages and products.

Our founder is a member of Ending Loneliness Together – Australia's loneliness advisory body – and served as a co-chair of its Lived Experience Advisory Panel from 2022 to 2024. He currently serves on the Advisory Board of the Global Initiative on Loneliness and Connection. He has an extensive network of connections with other practitioners, academics researching loneliness, social health and social connection in Australia and globally.



## HOW WE MEASURE OUR SOCIAL IMPACT

Initially, our social impact is measured within the Connection Starter Course. The human undertaking the course completes the UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3) twice: at the beginning and end of the course.

The UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3) was developed by psychologist Daniel Russell in 1996. It is a 20-item measure that assesses how often a person feels disconnected from others. It's frequently used as a way to determine someone's thoughts and feelings of loneliness and social disconnection at a particular time.

Using the UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3) allows **HUMANS:CONNECTING** to provide data to measure participants' progress through loneliness towards connection from a widely-accepted data source.

The UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3) is publicly accessible and is free to complete. It is an imperfect measure and **HUMANS:CONNECTING** is aware of international efforts to improve the measure's accessibility.

Indeed, **HUMANS:CONNECTING**'s research partners at Annecy Behavioral Science Lab are leading global efforts at measuring loneliness in a more inclusive and holistic way. We will be using the improved measure to measure our social impact when it is developed.

Starting July 2025, **HUMANS:CONNECTING**'s annual social impact report will contain metrics relating to reach and engagement on products like our blog, podcast, number of subscribers, product downloads, followers across social media channels, media appearances, speaking engagements and outcomes of online marketing campaigns.

While these metrics indicate the content's reach, they do not measure its social impact. Although such data can provide useful insights, it does not capture the full impact of the content. For instance, an individual may feel less lonely or be inspired to prioritise meaningful connections after engaging with **HUMANS:CONNECTING**'s content, yet this impact would remain unmeasured if they do not purchase a product or access a service.







# Business Development

## KEY ISSUES THAT MIGHT AFFECT US

It is challenging to highlight loneliness and social disconnection on social media – a key vehicle for increasing awareness of our products and services. Loneliness is a concept that humans can find difficult to sit with. We choose to focus on the feeling of being genuinely connected as a way to encourage individuals to engage our products and services.

A common trait of people experiencing loneliness is that they hold a deeply-held belief that they are unworthy of love and belonging. As such, they can be reluctant to afford themselves of help.

Beyond the individual's mindset and beliefs about themselves, macroeconomic factors (such as cost of living issues in Australia and globally) can prevent individuals from having the income to spend on their development.





## OUR STRENGTHS

- Our founder is seen as a global loneliness thought leader
- Our content resonates with the people who find it
  - They remain engaged and consume content repeatedly
- Our team are dedicated and believe in the intention of the work.
  - We have started our social enterprise out of improvising, ingenuity and determination.
  - We come to the team with different skills, life experiences and backgrounds.
    - This diversity is a strength and means that we can relate with our audience.
- Our founder is a powerful communicator
  - Public policy expert with 23 years in the Australian Public Service and a postgraduate degree in Public Policy.
    - Excellent at developing and maintaining mutually-beneficial relationships
  - He is a published author and podcaster.
  - He has insights into loneliness and social disconnection that resonate with humans
  - His lived experience is diverse, including
    - Loneliness despite looking like life was perfect
    - Australian diplomat
    - Journalist
    - Social entrepreneur
    - Gay, father of two
  - He's photogenic and relatable.

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## OUR WEAKNESSES

- People do not know that **HUMANS:CONNECTING** exists
  - We do not currently have a marketing budget
- No back-up capacity
  - The delivery of our products and services rely on our founder to deliver them
- Slow progress:
  - While there is a team with necessary skills and experience working on **HUMANS:CONNECTING**, they are not being paid and have other full-time employment.
  - Our founder is working on this full-time with minimal income.
- No financial capacity to engage psychologists to advise or consult when developing products and services.
  - We cannot engage the services of registered clinical psychologists due to lack of funds.



## KEY ISSUES WHICH AFFECT THE INDUSTRY WE OPERATE IN

- Little understanding of loneliness throughout society
    - Individual humans do not know impact of loneliness and social disconnection
    - Support services are catching up on their understanding of the impacts of loneliness, but have little capacity to engage with it to the extent needed.
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- Loneliness seen not as a social health issue, rather as a mental health issue requiring a mental health response
    - Feeling lonely is – like joy and happiness – an emotion.
    - Loneliness is a social health issue which, left untended, leads to devastating mental and physical health consequences.
    - Common response is to refer lonely person to mental health services.
    - This response is not always necessary – simply talking and listening help us feel more connected.
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- Mental health services cannot cope with demand on their services.
    - It can take many months to see a psychologist in Australia (if the psychologist has capacity to take on new patients).
    - The demand is absorbed by crisis support services (like Lifeline and BeyondBlue).
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- Expertise is not yet recognised by the market
    - We miss out on opportunities to speak at conferences and events due to the organisers' expectations that we will deliver our services and share our expert insights without charge.





## CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS AND OUR STRATEGY TO ADDRESS THEM

- Destigmatise loneliness
  - The stigma of loneliness within society means that we don't talk about it openly as an experience that all humans have at times. When we do experience loneliness, we don't know how to talk about it, or to receive others' admissions of loneliness, and we feel even more alone.
  - When loneliness is talked about, it is often discussed as a concept – a problem to be solved.
    - The human experiencing loneliness witnessing the conversation may understand the concept but needs to interpret the concept to apply to their own experience.
  - Talking openly about loneliness is the only way to de-stigmatise it.
    - **HUMANS:CONNECTING** is here to talk openly and candidly about loneliness. Sharing experiences of loneliness and the challenges of doing connection we experience in our busy lives encourages humans to begin sitting with their loneliness, listen to it and to use their loneliness to get the connection they're missing.
  - Strategies to achieve loneliness de-stigmatisation:
    - **HUMANS:CONNECTING** podcast and blog
    - Marketing
      - Social media
      - Media
      - Endorsements/partnerships
    - Mutually-beneficial partnerships with other service providers
    - Public speaking
    - Conferences
    - Guest appearances on other podcasts
    - Media

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- Empower humans to become authentically connected
  - Our products and services are available for individuals, workplaces and communities to engage with more detailed information about loneliness and the importance of social connection in a way that is relatable.
    - These products and services are for after an individual or workplace acknowledge that loneliness is an issue for them and they wish to understand their loneliness further.
    - These products and services will support them in feeling more connected whenever they experience loneliness into the future.
  - If **HUMANS:CONNECTING**'s products and services aren't what they need, then our partners may have services that would support them.



# Operations

## PREMISES

**HUMANS:CONNECTING** is based in Canberra. However, the team is located in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and in Hawkes Bay, New Zealand. Current operations run from a desk in a mortgaged residence. Other team members work from their own houses or rented accommodation.

**HUMANS:CONNECTING's** Canberra base requires a designated space to conduct calls and record podcast episodes and media interviews. A separate workspace/pod in the garden has been identified as an ideal solution. The workspace will need to be fitted out with an ergonomic sit/stand desk, monitors, sound insulation, audio/visual equipment and chairs. Planning approval through the ACT Government may be required for the garden workspace/studio. Workplace health and safety requirements will necessitate compliant furniture and installation by certified tradespeople.

Other costs include:

- Building insurance
- Small business insurance
- Personal Indemnity insurance

## SUPPLIERS

- Zoom
- Google (Google Drive)
- Google (Gmail accounts)
- Wix (website host)
- Optus (internet and telephony)
- PayPal (payment services)
- Canva (social media and promotional material)
- Slack (team communications)
- Spotify (podcast host)
- LinkedIn (premium subscription)
- YouTube (video hosting)
- [Course hosting service]



## EQUIPMENT

Mobile phone	\$2,100
Laptop - HP Envy 14" WUXGA Touchscreen Laptop (512GB) [11th Gen Intel i5]	\$3,000
Monitors – x3	\$1,500
Furniture \$4,000	\$4,000

- Depreciation calculated using three years straight line policy.

## PRODUCTION

**HUMANS:CONNECTING** currently generates and edits its own content.

Podcasts are batch-recorded in 10-week seasons, allowing time outside those recording periods for webinars, seminars and other in-person work.

## SUPERVISION ARRANGEMENTS

**HUMANS:CONNECTING** is working to create a panel of registered clinical psychologists who can review content within products and services to endorse them.

It is difficult to find clinical psychologists who can work pro bono and have capacity to review content in their spare time. However, we persist and are exploring potential partnerships with psychology departments at Australia universities to get the assistance of trainee psychologists.

## MAINTAINING QUALITY STANDARDS

There are no quality standards for mentoring/coaching services in Australia. However, we have been approached by academics researching loneliness and mental health leaders and practitioners to ensure we are providing the most appropriate, high-quality support, advice and services.



## EXTERNAL RELATIONS

### PROFESSIONAL ADVISORS

Annecy Behavioral Science Lab  
Global Initiative on Loneliness and Connection  
Lonely-EU  
One Consultancy

### LEGAL ADVISORS

Nil.

### MEMBERSHIP OF ANY TRADE ASSOCIATIONS

Member of Social Enterprise Australia  
Member of Good Market  
Member of Ending Loneliness Together  
Board of Directors - Global Initiative on Loneliness  
and Connection  
Advisory Board - Lonely-EU



# Finance

## BUDGET SUMMARY

Financial Year 2025/2026

	VALUE	PERCENTAGE
Research and Development	\$22,448.80	44%
Marketing and Advertising	\$22,448.80	44%
Daily Operations	\$11,224.40	22%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$51,020.00</b>	<b>100%</b>

## INVESTMENT AND FUNDING

- **Self-generating income**
  - Sale of products and services
- **Social impact grants**
  - Potential to jump start our impact
- **Partnerships with service providers**
  - Deliver services with service providers holding grants or government funding.





# BUDGET SUMMARY

FINANCIAL YEAR 2025/26

	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25	Feb-25	Mar-25	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	FY2026 Total
<b>INCOME</b>													
Consulting income	2183	2183	2183	2183	2183	2183	2183	2183	2183	2183	2183	2183	\$26,190.00
Course sales	703	703	703	703	703	703	703	703	703	703	703	703	\$8,430.00
Mentoring income	2208	2208	2208	2208	2208	2208	2208	2208	2208	2208	2208	2208	\$26,500.00
Total Income	5093	5093	5093	5093	5093	5093	5093	5093	5093	5093	5093	5093	\$61,120.00
<b>LESS COST OF SALES</b>													
Social impact costs													
Production costs	375	375	375	375	375	375	375	375	375	375	375	375	\$4,500.00
Total Cost of Sales	375	375	375	375	375	375	375	375	375	375	375	375	\$4,500.00
<b>GROSS PROFIT</b>	<b>4718</b>	<b>4718</b>	<b>4718</b>	<b>4718</b>	<b>4718</b>	<b>4718</b>	<b>4718</b>	<b>4718</b>	<b>4718</b>	<b>4718</b>	<b>4718</b>	<b>4718</b>	<b>\$56,620.00</b>
<b>OTHER INCOME</b>													
Advertising revenue	104	104	104	104	104	104	104	104	104	104	104	104	\$1,250.00
Total Other Income	104	104	104	104	104	104	104	104	104	104	104	104	\$1,250.00
<b>LESS OPERATING EXPENSES</b>													
Bank fees													
	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	\$150.00
Depreciation													
	178	178	178	178	178	178	178	178	178	178	178	178	\$2,100.00
Hosting fees													
	221	221	221	221	221	221	221	221	221	221	221	221	\$2,650.00
Insurance													
	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	\$3,000.00
Office equipment													
	667	667	667	667	667	667	667	667	667	667	667	667	\$8,000.00
Social impact expenses													
Marketing & Promos													
	471	471	471	471	471	471	471	471	471	471	471	471	\$5,650.00
Travel (local)													
	83	83	83	83	83	83	83	83	83	83	83	83	\$1,000.00
Software & subscriptions													
	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	\$400.00
Team/Consultant payment													
	2339	2339	2339	2339	2339	2339	2339	2339	2339	2339	2339	2339	\$28,070.00
Total Operating Expenses	4251	4251	4251	4251	4251	4251	4251	4251	4251	4251	4251	4251	\$51,020.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>4251</b>	<b>4251</b>	<b>4251</b>	<b>4251</b>	<b>4251</b>	<b>4251</b>	<b>4251</b>	<b>4251</b>	<b>4251</b>	<b>4251</b>	<b>4251</b>	<b>4251</b>	<b>\$51,020.00</b>
<b>NET PROFIT</b>	<b>571</b>	<b>571</b>	<b>571</b>	<b>571</b>	<b>571</b>	<b>571</b>	<b>571</b>	<b>571</b>	<b>571</b>	<b>571</b>	<b>571</b>	<b>571</b>	<b>\$6,850.00</b>











**Join us in creating a  
connected world**

