



**BELONG BLUE MOUNTAINS INC | KATOOMBA NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE (MAIN OFFICE)**  
a. PO Box 197 • 6 - 10 Station St, Katoomba NSW 2780  
t. 02 4782 1117 abn. 59 334 227 797  
[www.belongbm.org.au](http://www.belongbm.org.au)

**Media Release: 1<sup>st</sup> May 2020**

## **Belong Blue Mountains Community Services Go Digital for Neighbourhood Centre Week 2020.**

Neighbourhood Centre Week, 8-15 May 2020, is a nationwide initiative to celebrate the critical role of Neighbourhood Centres in local communities across the nation. It is a week normally marked by people coming together at all sorts of community events and festivities. This year however, will be a little bit different. For Belong Blue Mountains, one of our key local community services organisations including the Lower Mountains, Mid Mountains and Katoomba Neighbourhood Centres, Neighbourhood Centre Week will see the launch of its Virtual Community and Neighbourhood Services.

“Belong Blue Mountains is excited to launch our social connection and support services into the virtual space. We will support individuals and community groups to connect via our virtual Zoom Community Room and teleconference facilities, we have phone and video call social support and connection services, as well as a letter-writing initiative. And we’ll continue to look for new and traditional ways to keep our community connected throughout the COVID restrictions” Danielle Wilding Forbes, Community Engagement Manager said. These initiatives will support a broad cross section of the Blue Mountains community with a strong focus on isolated community members and elderly people at home and in Aged Care.

In 2020, the theme for Neighbourhood Centre Week is ‘Loneliness: the solution is community’. This theme was decided on well before COVID-19 struck and was based on previous research that found 1 in 4 Australians were lonely, and that the ‘loneliness epidemic’ was already having significant social, health and economic impacts then.

“We know that one of the most effective way to reduce loneliness is to make people feel connected to their community” said Kath Harrison, CEO Belong Blue Mountains. “This has always been at the heart of what we do at our Neighbourhood Centres and although it is more challenging, it is even more critical during COVID-19.” Belong Blue Mountains also provides Food Relief Hampers, Home Shopping Services & Domestic Assistance, No Interest Loans and a range of other services that may be helpful during these difficult times.

For Belong Blue Mountains, Neighbourhood Centre Week will also be a time to reflect and pay tribute via social media to all of the community workers and volunteers who work tirelessly across the local community service network to make a difference to the lives of people living across the Blue Mountains. “We have a strong and dedicated network in the community sector across the Blue Mountains” Kath Harrison said. “We honour and thank all the community workers and volunteers involved for their hard work and generosity of spirit.”

If you, or someone you know, is in need of more social connection or support, please get in touch with Belong Blue Mountains on 02 4782 1117 or contact your local Neighbourhood Centre. For 24-hour crisis support, call Lifeline on 13 11 14, or 000 in an emergency.

*For further media enquires please contact Belong Blue Mountains Community Development Coordinator, Nikki Boys on 0403 817 317 or email [nboys@belongbm.org.au](mailto:nboys@belongbm.org.au)*



Belong Blue Mountains Communities and Care & Support Team Members sending the love to Community Workers and Volunteers everywhere for Neighbourhood Centre Week.

Location: Belong Blue Mountains Neighbourhood Centre Courtyard.

Back L to R: Jenni Howard, Eva Regitz, Katrina Simmons

Front L to R: Mick Barret, Danielle Wilding-Forbes