

The Chatty Café Toolkit

have
a
chat

Connecting communities through conversation
to reduce loneliness and social isolation.



Creating positive social and economic impact for local communities,
community organisations, and hospitality businesses



Proudly supported by



Recognition of contributions

The Bayside Chatty Café Project was funded by a grant from the Victorian Government's Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions', Inner South-East Metropolitan Partnership under the Metropolitan Development Fund (2021–22). We would like to thank everyone who contributed to the success of the Bayside Chatty Café Project, the evaluation process and informed this Toolkit.

Members of the Project Delivery Team, Project Working Group and Stakeholder Group (in alphabetical order)

Project leaders

- Bayside City Council: Erica Breedon (Community Development), Laura Bristow (Community Development), Sally Carlier-Hull (Digital Communications), Paula Clancy (Community Strengthening), Ryan Cooray (Economic Development), Lisa Gallagher (Community Services), Lizzy Kuoth (Inclusion – Transport), Michelle Lord (Community Services Policy and Development), Catie Maher (Libraries), Leanne Parnis (Children & Families Community Development), Sharon Preston (Community Engagement), Karen Reiter (Libraries) and Katrina Wotherspoon (Healthy Ageing Community Development)
- The Chatty Café Scheme Australia Pty Ltd (volunteers): Glenys Reid (Managing Director) and Helen Boulton (National Chatty Ambassador)

Project stakeholders

- Castlefield Community Centre: Sally Kuhr
- Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (Metropolitan Partnerships Program): Simon Gray, Jo Richardson, and Elizabeth Ryan
- Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (Community Partnerships): James Wray
- Neighbourhood House Victoria: Nicole Battle
- Paperboy Coffee Bar (local business): Evan Packer
- South Eastern Melbourne PHN: Laura Waite

External partners: Sarah Bishop and Letitia Duncan (Activate Consulting) and Dr. Robyn Cochrane (Cochrane Research Solutions)

Evaluation participants: Chatty customers, Chatty volunteers, Chatty venues (community organisations, libraries, and hospitality businesses), Project Delivery Team, and Project Working Group

Acknowledgment of Country

Bayside City Council and The Chatty Café Scheme proudly acknowledge the Bunurong People of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which we work, and we pay our respects to their Elders, past, present, and emerging.

© October 2022 Bayside City Council and The Chatty Café Scheme Australia Pty Ltd

To download this document: <https://chattycafeaustralia.org.au/resources/>

To find out more: <https://chattycafeaustralia.org.au/>

Table of Contents

Section 1: About this Toolkit	3
1.1 Background	3
1.2 Purpose	3
1.3 Who should use it	3
Section 2: Starting a Chatty Café Project	4
2.1 Partners	4
2.2 Why start a Chatty Café Project	5
Section 3: Core elements of a successful Chatty Café Project	7
3.1 Project management and planning	8
3.2 Implementing the Project and engaging stakeholders	9
3.3 Recruiting and empowering Chatty table volunteers	12
3.4 Partnering and enabling Chatty venues	13
3.5 Promoting your Project to the community	18
3.6 Delivering a positive experience and growing your Project	21
Section 4: Evaluating the success of your Chatty Café Project	23
Section 5: Resources to help you get started	25

SECTION 1:

About this Toolkit

1.1 Background

The Chatty Café Scheme is a global initiative that originated in the United Kingdom in 2017. The Scheme aims to reduce loneliness and social isolation by encouraging and creating opportunities for communities to interact through conversation at 'Have a Chat' tables. In Australia, The Chatty Café Scheme Australia Ltd (CCA) was initiated in October 2019. CCA is an Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) approved health promotion and harm reduction charity (HPC) with Tier 1 deductible gift recipient status.

In 2020, Bayside City Council (local government authority in Victoria) funded CCA to establish the Bayside Chatty Café project – a strategic, whole-of-municipality roll-out of Chatty Café. The aim of the Bayside Chatty Café Project was to generate positive social and economic impact through increasing community connection. Building on this, Bayside City Council (BCC) and CCA successfully applied for a grant under the Victorian Government's Metropolitan Partnerships Development Fund, 2021-22 to enhance and expand the Project to incorporate local businesses in a COVID-19 recovery environment, conduct a detailed evaluation and prepare a Toolkit to assist other local governments to implement the Scheme.

1.2 Purpose

This Toolkit provides a starting point for those seeking to understand, or establish, a Chatty Café Project. It is a resource to promote and support the expansion of the Scheme into the future.

The Toolkit:

- Proposes core elements for establishing a successful Chatty Café Project
- Outlines CCA operational processes
- Shares insights from the Bayside Chatty Café Project experience and evaluation

WE BELIEVE HAVING A
CHAT CAN BRIGHTEN
YOUR DAY.

1.3 Who should use it

This Toolkit has been primarily prepared for local government authorities interested in implementing the Chatty Café Scheme in their municipality. However, it offers valuable insights and information for any organisation or venue interested in the Scheme:

- **Local government:** Communications, Community Centres, Community Development and Capacity Building, Community Transport, Economic Development, Inclusion and Equity, Library Services, and Public Health and Wellbeing team
- **Community organisations:** Managers and operators of community facilities such as neighbourhood houses, community centres, opportunity shops, aged care services, and schools
- **Hospitality operators:** Owners or operators of commercial hospitality businesses such as cafés, restaurants, clubs, pubs, wine bars, galleries, local markets, and facilities in Aged Care Residences

SECTION 2:

Starting a Chatty Café Project

For the purposes of this Toolkit, a **Chatty Café Project** is a strategic, place-based implementation of the Chatty Café Scheme across one or multiple venues in a targeted geographical location or a local government municipality.

2.1 Partners

A Chatty Café Project involves four partners who collaborate to plan, manage, and deliver opportunities for Chatty customer conversations.

Chatty customers are the people who come along and participate at a 'Have a Chat' table. Everyone is welcome to participate at a 'Have a Chat' table. People experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, vulnerability (due to barriers in accessing or engaging in essential services to function on a day-to-day basis), are especially welcome.

1. Lead organisation / project manager:

Key contact person for the lead organisation/s initiating the Project and liaison point with CCA. Drives the establishment of partnerships, planning, governance, recruitment of Chatty table volunteers, and partnerships with Chatty venues. Promotion of the Project. Responsible for overall delivery of the Chatty Café Project.

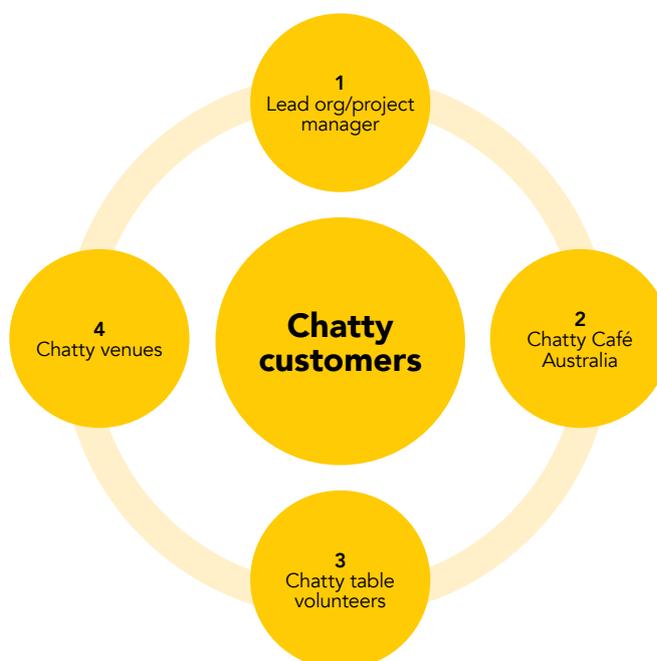
2. Chatty Café Australia (CCA):

Registered charity, staffed primarily by volunteers, and overseen by a volunteer Board. Undertakes a variety of roles to support the establishment and expansion of 'Have a Chat' tables including:

- Managing the online venue registration portal for CCA Chatty venues, providing promotional materials and advice to Chatty venues
- Managing the online volunteer registration portal, coordinating, inducting, and training CCA Chatty table volunteers
- Supporting promotion of the Project and Chatty venues, 'Have a Chat' tables, and events via printed materials (included in welcome kit), social media templates and support (Facebook, Instagram) and website
- Coordinating the centralised storage and dissemination of promotional materials and resources

3. Chatty table volunteers:

Individuals who lead and encourage conversation. Volunteers may be arranged by the Chatty venue or accessed via local Councils/Shires, community organisations, or volunteer databases (as applicable). CCA manages CCA 'Have a Chat' table volunteers who are allocated to Chatty venues subject to availability.



4. Chatty venues:

Buildings, spaces, and places where a 'Have a Chat' table is hosted. Responsible for hosting 'Have a Chat' tables on the agreed dates and times and supports the promotion of the 'Have a Chat table'. Venue types include:

- Council buildings (such as libraries, art centres and galleries)
- Community buildings (such as community centres and neighbourhood houses)
- Hospitality operations (such as cafés, restaurants, clubs, pubs, wine bars, galleries, local markets, and facilities in Aged Care Residences)

2.2 Why start a Chatty Café Project

A Chatty Café Project can provide many potential benefits for your community. A Chatty Café Project aims to create positive social and economic impacts for local communities, community organisations and hospitality businesses.

Potential outcomes include:

- Improvements to physical and mental health and wellbeing: By reducing loneliness and social isolation and increasing sense of community connectedness
- Community development and capacity building: By building local networks, fostering positive experiences and opportunities to learn about others in the community
- Supporting ‘shop local’ model and economic recovery: Through positive brand promotion, attracting new patrons to venues, increasing community confidence in attending venues, and demonstrating a sense of social responsibility and ‘community mindedness’

	Improvements to physical and mental health and wellbeing		Community development and capacity building		Supporting ‘shop local’ model and economic recovery	
What is involved	Reduce loneliness and social isolation	Increase sense of community connectedness	Build local networks	Positive experiences and learning	Brand promotion and increase in patrons	Corporate and community social responsibility
Project Management: Partnerships, planning, governance, recruitment, & delivery			○	○		
Chatty customers: Chat opportunities/ events for all, including those at risk of experiencing vulnerability	○	○				
Chatty table volunteers: Opportunities, induction, & training for CCA Chatty table volunteers	○	○	○	○		
Chatty venues: opportunities to connect with community, promote facility, & increase patrons	○	○	○	○	○	○



Feedback and positive impacts	Reduce loneliness and social isolation
<p>Chatty customers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 64% were living alone • 73% said it brightened their day • 70% enjoyed connecting with new people • 37% made new friends • 86% felt 'Good' or 'Great' after their chatty experience (22% increase from before the session) • 24% reduction in those who felt 'Not good' or just 'Okay' following their chatty experience <p>Chatty table volunteers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All would recommend to a friend • Largely positive feedback about recruitment and induction process • Motivated by being involved in community and helping others <p>Chatty venues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority motivated by supporting community, rather than benefits to their venue • All positive about sign-up process and materials • Community venues saw an increase in customers/ patrons • Majority would recommend other venues get involved • Larger numbers attending 'Have a Chat' tables in community venues than commercial venues • Reported positive word-of-mouth from being involved 	<p>Chatty customers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good has come out of COVID-19 with Chatty Café... I really rely on and look forward to the Chatty Café sessions • I'm now very connected. I have a wonderful friendship group now thanks to Chatty • Chatty Cafe is wonderful especially when you live on your own • I enjoyed it, made my day bright • I look forward to meeting the friendly people there each week... It doesn't just stop when you leave the centre - it carries on throughout the rest of your week. • I had not intended to meet anyone, just a quiet cup of coffee but Anne saw me alone and invited me to join her for a chat. It was wonderful and did change my day <p>Chatty table volunteers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have found it very rewarding • My best chatty moment was when a group of about 10 'chatters' were at Sandringham library, all chatting, both together and in smaller groups with the whole event running over time as no one wanted to leave. It was very gratifying to see how the event at the library had developed <p>Chatty venues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I've loved seeing people still chatting HOURS later • My best chatty moment was receiving feedback from a socially isolated gentleman whose wife had passed away that chatty cafe had broken down his feelings of isolation and loves coming to them • It's uplifting watching people connect and develop friendships

SECTION 3:

Core elements of a successful Chatty Café Project

Through the Bayside Chatty Café Project experience, six core elements emerged for establishing a successful Chatty Café Project.



3.1 Project management and planning

A clear, documented plan and project management approach is critical to initiate, establish, and/or grow a Chatty Café Project. Ideally someone (an individual, position, organisation and/or team) is responsible and accountable for the Chatty Café Project and is supported to plan, guide and deliver the Project.

Key project management and planning tasks include:

- Establishing key stakeholder partnerships to guide the Project:** Identify and engage potential partners such as representatives of Council/ Shire departments, community organisations, community centres, neighbourhood houses, and hospitality business owners or operators. This may involve sharing promotional resources and information about the project and online registration processes. Making follow-up efforts to involve stakeholders in one or more of the following roles:
 - Participant in governance arrangements (Project Management, Project Working Group or Stakeholder Reference Group)
 - Prospective Chatty table volunteer
 - Prospective Chatty venue
 - Prospective Project advocate or sponsor
 - Planning the Project:** Prepare a project plan with timeframes that are realistic given the community context, readiness for a Chatty Café Project, and available resources (people and funds).
- As Council resources are often stretched to capacity, new initiatives and collaborations may take some time to set-up. Initiatives that need endorsement or resolution by Council often involve significant planning and scheduling. Allocate additional time when prospective partners operate around school terms. Be mindful that community organisations often have limited paid positions and rely on the efforts of volunteers and/or a volunteer Committee of Management. These organisations may not operate during standard business hours.
- Establishing appropriate governance arrangements:** Set up a team, Project Working Group or Stakeholder Reference Group as appropriate to support Project oversight and delivery (and consider funding body if applicable).
 - Preparing and managing the budget/resources:** Identify available resources such as access to paid positions, volunteers, and funds (also consider applying for funding via grants programs if applicable).

Sample Project budget/resourcing based on the Bayside Chatty Café Project

Skillsets and resource requirements	Potential resourcing options			
	Unpaid or volunteer	Paid/in-kind (time)	In-kind support (resources)	Funds
Project management, planning, and governance	○	○	○	
Establishing partnerships (calls, emails, site visits)	○	○	○	
Volunteer recruitment and co-ordination	○	○		
CCA volunteer compliance, induction, and training	○	○	○	
Establishing and maintaining relationships with venues	○	○	○	
Promotional content for social media posts or videos	○	○	○	○
Promotional content for website			○	○
Promotional printed materials			○	○
Promotional products customised for Project				○
Events co-ordination	○	○	○	
Supports the implementation of the Project	○	○	○	○
Project evaluation (evidence gathering – print, online, and digital)	○	○	○	○

Insights from the Bayside Chatty Café Project

A co-ordinated approach to project management and planning, relationship building, and engaging stakeholders is critical to the establishment of a Chatty Café Project.

- When establishing partnerships and engaging key stakeholders, identify and start with community-minded partners (such as Council/Shire departments, community organisations, community centres, neighbourhood houses, and hospitality business owners or operators) whose objectives align with anticipated Chatty Café outcomes.
- Reach out to build or strengthen the relationship and share information:
 - Start with referrals or known contacts recommended by key stakeholders
 - Targeted phone calls
 - Emails to selected individuals
 - Bulk emails or e-newsletter item distributed via community or trader databases
 - Site visits based on selected geographical locations or specific types of venues
- Having more than one 'Chatty Café' champion within each organisation is desirable and helps mitigate issues around staff leave and turnover.

3.2 Implementing the Project and engaging stakeholders

Following the documenting of the project management and planning tasks, the Project moves into the implementation phase. A co-ordinated approach to project implementation, building relationships, and engaging stakeholders is critical to your Project's success.

Key project implementation and stakeholder engagement tasks include:

- **Recruiting and empowering Chatty table volunteers:** Liaising with CCA and Project Management to identify ways to access prospective volunteers. Then, sharing resources, training and/or mentoring volunteers as agreed or required
- **Partnering and enabling Chatty venues:** Liaising with CCA and Project Management to identify and access prospective venues. Then, providing information, following up to understand capacity to host a 'Have a Chat' table, sharing promotional resources, and guidance to create a positive customer experience
- **Monitoring, adjusting, and evaluating the Project:** Having regular check-ins to monitor progress, and adjust where required. Evaluation requirements may vary from Project to Project. Where external funding is secured (i.e., grant, sponsorship, or donation), a deeper evaluation approach may be requested to satisfy acquittal processes

Leveraging the networks, skills, and knowledge within your local government organisation.

- The objectives and goals of a Chatty Café Project closely align with many Council strategies and objectives, specifically the focus on community wellbeing, reducing loneliness and social isolation, and strengthening community connections. While a Chatty Café Project doesn't have to involve the local government body, Councils are often well positioned to initiate, promote, and support the delivery of a Project.

Council/Shire organisations and involving staff from different teams can:

- Increase the likelihood of securing a competitive community grant or in-kind support for the Project
- Spread the word about the Chatty Café Project through established communications channels and networks
- Involve Council team members who are willing to promote, support or deliver the Project
- Coordinate with existing Council services or activities to reach prospective venues, volunteers and customers and support their participation (i.e., Meals on wheels clients, community transportation)

Having access to Council staff who are engaged and willing to drive this Project internally can prove helpful in many ways. There are many tasks involved in implementing a Project across a community or municipality.

Insights from the Bayside Chatty Café Project

How the Project may relate to this Council team	Discussion prompts and considerations
Community Development (primary or critical stakeholder)	
Project objectives and goals closely align with this team (community wellbeing, reducing social isolation, and strengthening community connections)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there public housing within the community/ municipality? Are there opportunities to connect with and support residents to attend?
May be able to connect with community centres interested in hosting 'Have a Chat' tables or events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can existing programs or communications be built on or expanded to include a Chatty Café Project? Could the Project meet the criteria for a Community Grant? Does the Project deliver on the objectives of their Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan?
Communications (primary stakeholder)	
May assist with access to communications channels across the municipality and promote the Project on social media channels. May have access to a graphic designer, photographer, or videographer to assist with developing promotional messages and materials, and capture events and activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nature of partnership may require inclusion of Council's logo or branding on materials and an acknowledgment in the text Materials for public release are likely to require a formal approval process which may involve additional time Is there a community notice board, community events listings, or community display boards (often known as real estate boards) where local community groups and not for profits can promote their events? What is the approval process for outdoor advertising and/or footpath signage?
Library Services (primary stakeholder)	
Project objectives and goals closely align with this team and library buildings may be in accessible and visible locations across the municipality to promote the Project. May also be interested in hosting 'Have a Chat' tables or events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can existing programs, events or communications be built on or expanded to include a Chatty Café Project? Many libraries operate programs in line with school terms, so consider timing when making contact
Economic Development (primary stakeholder)	
May provide insights and information about the local traders and shopping centres May assist with access to traders and businesses (i.e., invitation to attend Trader Association meetings or present at network events) May assist with promotions to prospective venues through their business database and social media channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there local shopping centres where the Project can be advertised? Consider advertising on bus shelters, street furniture and rubbish bins Is there a business/trader database that could be used to share the Chatty Café message? Which suppliers are used to print and install outdoor advertising materials? What is the approval process for outdoor advertising and/or footpath signage? These teams may receive substantial communications and requests from local businesses, so follow-up requests may be required
Councilors and Councilor support officers (primary stakeholder)	
May be interested in advocating on behalf of CCA May be able to influence Council funding decisions, so awareness of the community benefits associated with CCA is important May be interested in attending official launch and events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Councilor contact details are listed on council websites or available via Councilor support person

How the Project may relate to this Council team	Discussion prompts and considerations
Community Services (Aged, Disability Care, Family and Children) (secondary stakeholder)	
<p>May share Project information in communications and advise opportunities to attend or present at events (i.e., Seniors' Month, Children's Week, and Parent support group sessions).</p> <p>May be able to access staff members and inform them about the Chatty Café model, so this information can be shared with clients.</p> <p>May be opportunities to access potential customers via Maternal Child Health Nurses, Playgroups, Toy Libraries, Meals on Wheels, home aged care services, social support services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can existing programs or communications be built on or expanded to include a Chatty Café Project? • Is there a client database that could be used to share the Chatty Café message? • Is it possible to share the Chatty Café message in conversations with clients?
Communications (primary stakeholder)	
<p>The Community transport team (including support for the transport isolated) may be based within Aged and Disability Care or another team. This team may be able to support participants to attend Chatty venues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can existing transport routes and/or client groups be built on or expanded to include a Chatty Café Project?
Environmental Health (secondary stakeholder)	
<p>May share information with prospective Chatty venues through their food and beverage provider database.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What food and beverage or business/trader databases can be used to share the Chatty Café message?
Advocacy and sponsorships (secondary stakeholder)	
<p>May assist with advocacy on behalf of CCA or for a Council-based project, with other levels of government or external organisations such as potential sponsors or partners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What organisations, grants, or funding opportunities are recommended regarding a Chatty Café Project? • Does a Chatty Café Project align with existing strategies or advocacy plans?
Arts and Culture (secondary stakeholder)	
<p>Galleries, theatres, or art spaces may be in accessible and visible locations across the municipality to promote the Project.</p> <p>May be interested in hosting a 'Have a Chat' tables.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can existing programs, events or communications be built on or expanded to include a Chatty Café Project? • Cultural operations may align programs with school terms, so consider timing when making contact

Council resources are often stretched to capacity. Securing attention, support and commitment for a Chatty Café initiative or collaboration may take some time. Teams often experience competing demands from within Council for in-kind support so it's important to be clear and realistic about what involvement you are seeking from them.

3.3 Recruiting and empowering Chatty table volunteers

Recruiting, supporting and empowering Chatty table volunteers is a key component to your Chatty Café Project. The role of a Chatty table volunteer is to help start and encourage conversations at a 'Have a Chat' table in venues that are part of the Project. These volunteers play an important role in creating a welcoming and inclusive environment and a positive customer experience.

CCA's approach to registering and empowering volunteers

- Prospective volunteers are directed to submit an online form via the CCA online registration portal (See: <https://chattycafeaustralia.org.au/volunteer/>). A commitment of one to two hours each week to act as a Chatty table volunteer is expected
- CCA contacts prospective volunteers and arranges Working With Children Check (WWCC)
- After receipt of satisfactory WWCC (and NDIS check for aged care residences, as required), CCA inducts and trains volunteers. Volunteers receive a handbook and Chatty name tag, sign a volunteer agreement, and are invited to join the buddy system. Where possible, volunteers are allocated to Chatty venues within proximity of their homes to minimise travel time and costs. *CCA registered volunteers are the responsibility of CCA and covered by CCA insurance.*
- A regular newsletter for volunteers is under consideration
- There are also other volunteering opportunities available with CCA: Chatty caller (phone contact), administration, events, social media, marketing, and finance roles
- Chatty venues may request a CCA registered and trained Chatty table volunteer (subject to availability)

Venue-recruited volunteers

CCA volunteers are limited, so Chatty venues may choose to provide or source their own volunteer. These volunteers will undergo Chatty Café volunteer training but will remain the responsibility of the venue:

- Council buildings such as libraries, art centres, and galleries: Council staff members may undertake the role of Chatty table volunteer, subject to approval by council management. *Volunteer is the responsibility of the venue.*
- Community buildings such as community centres and neighbourhood houses: Paid staff members may undertake the role of Chatty table volunteer. Alternatively, draw on established volunteer networks connected to the community centre or neighbourhood house. *Volunteer is the responsibility of the venue.*

- Hospitality operations such as cafés, restaurants, clubs, pubs, wine bars, galleries, and local markets: Paid staff members may undertake the role of Chatty table volunteer. Alternatively, invite regular customers to volunteer. *Volunteer is the responsibility of the venue.*



Recruiting volunteers via established networks

- Promote Chatty table volunteering via word-of-mouth, social media (Facebook, Instagram) and website
- Conduct a volunteer recruitment campaign
- Promote through Council's Volunteers database (if available)
- Reach out to community organisations that are connecting with people experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, vulnerability
- Volunteers can be managed directly by the Project lead and/or complete the CCA online registration process

Desirable skills and traits for Chatty table volunteers

- **Interpersonal skills:** ability to communicate or interact well with other people (verbal and non-verbal communication), conversation starter, inclusive, shows empathy, and an active listener
- **Character traits:** caring, sincere, respectful, punctual, and reliable

Insights from the Bayside Chatty Café Project

CCA Chatty table volunteers provided the following feedback via an online survey

- Volunteers heard about the Chatty Café Project via a variety of channels - Bayside City Council newsletter, via a family member or friend, at a Chatty Café, via Bayside Community Hub, Council volunteer email, via a Library program, and by hearing a radio interview
- Volunteers were motivated by opportunities to have regular social contact with other people and help reduce loneliness in the community
- Many volunteers reported volunteering was a positive experience, satisfying, and rewarding
- Volunteers are very likely or likely to recommend becoming a Chatty table volunteer to a friend

3.4 Partnering and enabling Chatty venues

Partnerships with Council, local community organisations, libraries, hospitality businesses, or traders will help establish and expand your Project to increase positive social and economic impact for the local community.

To support and enable Chatty venues, CCA manages an online registration portal for venues, and provides advice, promotional materials, resources, promotes venues and events via CCA social media (Facebook, Instagram) and website. Where prospective venues wish to participate and provide a 'Have a Chat' table for one-off events, it is not necessary to complete the online registration process.

Potential benefits for Chatty venues

- Social impact and community social responsibility: Being recognised as a venue that is keeping the local community connected. Instantly join a national scheme that reduces loneliness and social isolation and provides opportunities for people to connect through conversation
- Economic impact: Increasing customers or patrons as well as repeat business, attracting customers outside peak hours, increasing length of customer visits and engagement (product purchases or participating in other activities)
- Positive brand exposure: Positive branding through CCA social media (Facebook and Instagram) and website, articles or items distributed via newspapers, radio, or local Council newsletter. Opportunity to build or strengthen relationships with the local Council/Shire and stakeholders delivering the Project

Insights from the Bayside Chatty Café Project

- Service options available to Aged Care Residences:
 - Residents visit external venue/s only: residents attend external commercial, or community based Chatty venues
 - Closed to the Public: Appropriately certified Chatty volunteers facilitating 'Have a Chat' tables or events at the facility for clients only
 - Open to the Public: Appropriately certified Chatty volunteers facilitating 'Have a Chat' tables or events at the facility, community members welcome





Identifying and reaching prospective venue partners

- Promote Chatty venue opportunities via word-of-mouth, printed materials, social media (Facebook, Instagram) and website
- Conduct a campaign and use an Expression of Interest process. For example, 'Chat around Bayside' was an initiative used to raise awareness of the Chatty Café model and encourage hospitality and other businesses to host a one-off 'Have a Chat' table or event. The campaign ran from 3 May to 9 June 2022. The campaign involved 14 Chatty venues and 19 events and created momentum for the Project through a published schedule of chat opportunities and concentrated effort for five weeks. It helped venues get a taste of the Chatty Café experience and several signed-up to continue regular Chatty sessions
- Enquire about, or draw on, Council's databases and newsletters where available (i.e., community organisations, businesses, traders)
- Councils may wish to conduct an Expression of Interest process via emails to local businesses subscribed to the Economic Development team's database. Emails and e-newsletters to Council databases often take time to co-ordinate. Businesses may be time-poor, so items and calls to action need to be easy to access and straightforward. Follow up responses promptly with a phone call and/ or on-site visit
- Use promotional and outdoor signage to advertise the Project following the securing of approval (consider shop windows, bus shelters, street furniture and rubbish bins)
- Reach out to community organisations that have established programs and connections with people experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, vulnerability
- Think about community organisations or commercial enterprises that have multiple sites/ facilities in the Project area and engage with their area manager or CEO (i.e., Neighbourhood Houses, franchise venues, libraries)

Becoming a CCA Chatty venue

- Encourage prospective venues to register with CCA (<https://chattycafeaustralia.org.au/register/>)
- After registering, a new Chatty venue receives a Welcome Pack which contains table signs for designated 'Have a Chat' table/s, A4 size promotional posters, promotional leaflets, and promotional stickers to display on venue door or window
- **When a new Chatty venue is ready to operate a 'Have a Chat' table:**
 - The venue is listed on the CCA website and social media
 - The venue can request a CCA Chatty volunteer to facilitate a 'Have a Chat' table at a regular time/ date on a weekly basis to support introducing the concept to your customers (subject to availability)
 - The venue can purchase a teardrop promotional banner (at cost)
 - A network and newsletter for Chatty venues is under consideration
 - The venue is encouraged to promote their Chatty Café through their channels and networks. Over time, if the day/time is consistent it will become more known

Insights from the Bayside Chatty Café Project

Partnering with community organisations



- **Who:** Neighbourhood Houses, Community Centres and Hubs and other community groups and organisations. Likely to have paid and/or volunteer staffing arrangements
- **Why:** Have a similar mission and values - improving community wellbeing, reducing loneliness and social isolation, and strengthening community connections. Already have established projects, hirers, events, community connections and social media followers. Likely to have accessible locations and community-friendly facilities. May be willing and have space to host 'Have a Chat' tables or events
- **Tips to consider:** Community facilities may operate around a school-term schedule. Community facilities may be operated or supported by volunteers and not operate usual business hours. As it is a free Project, consider the financial sustainability when offering refreshments and meals

Spotlight on Hampton Community Centre

Context

Commenced in March 2021.
Operates 'Have a Chat' tables indoors.
Accesses CCA Chatty table volunteers.
Around 35 Chatty customers per week (average).
Motivation to join the Project – to support the program and enable people to connect socially.
Centre volunteers assist with serving refreshments and meals.

Outcomes

Good experience with CCA registration process
Attracted new customers/ patrons.
Received excellent feedback about Chatty customer experience.
Recommends other venues get involved and host a 'Have a Chat' table.

Insights from survey and interview

" Uplifting watching people connect and develop friendships"

" We incorporated Chatty café tables into a day of free social connection activities - Food, Move, Connect Nourish Project"

Partnering with Council libraries



- **Who:** Department that provides online and in-person library and other services, often servicing one or multiple suburbs. Likely to have paid staffing arrangements and may have access to volunteers
- **Why:** Have a similar mission and values - improving community wellbeing, reducing social isolation, and strengthening community connections. Already have established projects, services, events, members, community connections and social media followers. Likely to have accessible locations and community-friendly facilities. May be willing, and have space, to host 'Have a Chat' tables or events
- **Tips to consider:** It may take substantial staff time and effort to promote and raise awareness of the 'Have a Chat' tables

Insights from survey and interview



Spotlight on Sandringham Library

Context

Commenced in August 2021.

Operates 'Have a Chat' tables indoors.

Accesses CCA Chatty table volunteers.

11 to 15 Chatty customers per week (average).

Motivation to join the Project - to become involved in the community overall, to increase new patrons, to promote and raise awareness of this facility, to support the program and enable people to connect socially.

Staff were briefed about the Project and 'Have a Chat' table.

Outcomes

Good experience with CCA registration process
Attracted new customers generally, and outside of usual peak hours.

Increased number of returning customers .

Encouraged customers to stay longer than usual

Promotional exposure (social media, website).

Strengthened relationships with other departments within Bayside Council.

Received excellent feedback about Chatty customer experience.

Recommends other venues get involved and host a 'Have a Chat' table.

Partnering with hospitality businesses



- **Who:** Cafes, restaurants, pubs, wine bars, clubs, galleries, and facilities at Aged Care Residences. Likely to have paid staffing arrangements
- **Why:** May have a sense of community or corporate social responsibility and want to strengthen their community connectedness. Already have an established presence, community connections and social media followers. Likely to have accessible locations and community-friendly facilities
- **Tips to consider:** Business operators may express interest but not have the capacity to engage. Face-to-face 'walk-in' recruitment is the most effective or leveraging Council's trader communications. May be time poor operating the business, upskilling, and adapting operations in a changing environment. Likely to be, and have been, affected by COVID-19 restrictions, requirements, and impacts such as adjusting staffing level and adapting to the increased importance of digital channels. May take longer to raise awareness and attract numbers as it is less expected from the community at these venues (as opposed to community venues already attracting people to connect)

Spotlight on The Bay Road Café

Context

Commenced in March 2021.

Operates 'Have a Chat' tables indoors (weather dependent).

Two Chatty customers per week (average).

Motivation to join the Project – to overcome social isolation, has a demographic of older women and wanted to help our community after COVID-19 lockdowns.

Insights from survey and interview

"Can bring in people that haven't been here before"

"There are regulars, it is a lovely community thing to do, and I absolutely encourage other businesses to do it!"

3.5 Promoting your Project to the community

Communicating and promoting Chatty Café events and 'Have a Chat' tables is key to attracting Chatty customers, particularly those who are socially isolated. Without promotion, those who may benefit most from chat opportunities may not know about them. The social impact of your Project will be greater if it brings together people who are already well-connected and attracts new people including people experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, vulnerability, to your 'Have a Chat' table.

Use a variety of communications methods to reach your diverse community.

Online/digital options

- Facebook, Instagram, website, and e-newsletters (yours and partner organisations)
- Facebook groups (community groups and residents)
- Community radio station and TV stations
- Podcasts and local blogs

Printed materials

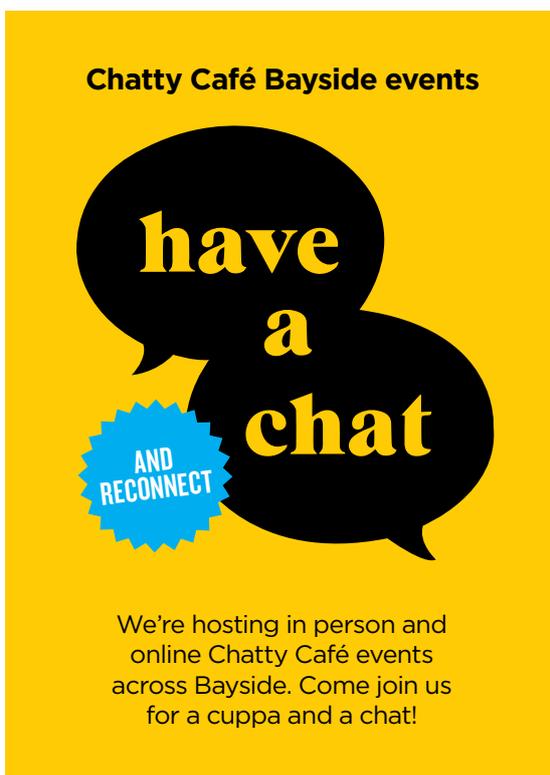
- Posters, postcards, and outdoor signage in and around venues
- Newspapers and community newsletters

In-person conversations

- Contact local community groups such as Senior Citizens, Country Women's Association, Rotary Clubs, Lions Clubs, Neighbourhood Watch, "Friends of", sports clubs, resident groups, and business networks
- Contact local groups that provide community services (i.e., social workers, support groups for carers or people with a disability)

Customise communications and promotional messages to suit your target audience and likely level of awareness of the Project.

- Use a clear heading (We're hosting a Chatty Café Chatty table. Come join us for a cuppa and a chat!)
- Briefly describe the Chatty Café Scheme (a global movement to help bring people together, reduce loneliness and social isolation, and build connections within the local community)
- Include details about your 'Have a Chat' table/s (Our Chatty Café volunteer will introduce everyone and get the conversation going in a safe and supported environment. So, if you want to connect more with your local community, meet new friends, or just enjoy the company of others – come along!)
- Clearly state the day/s, time/s, location name and street address
- Indicate that everyone is welcome and outline booking arrangements (if applicable)
- Indicate whether there is a cost to participate or what costs apply (i.e., purchasing own food and beverages)
- Use friendly and inclusive text and language
- Use images that are friendly, 'capturing the moment' style. Represent the diversity of the community to make everyone feel welcome (and don't assume only older people may feel isolated)
- List options to access more information (website, phone number, QR code)
- Where possible, use the Chatty Café style guide (see CCA website)
- Remember, prospective customers may lack social confidence. Sharing key information will be reassuring and encourage the confidence to attend.



Insights from the Bayside Chatty Café Project

Groups to target	How to access them
Communication channels effective for reaching Chatty customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council newsletter, website, and socials • Through their network of family members and friends • Via venue and Chatty Café social media pages • Signage in shopping villages and community/ commercial Chatty venues • Via specific community organisations (such as Bayley House, Brighton Yacht Club, Cheltenham Family Life Op Shop) • Via social workers and community support organisations
Communication channels effective for reaching prospective 'Have a Chat' table volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council newsletter, website, and socials • Through their network of family members and friends • Via venue and Chatty Café social media pages • Through local community hubs and community support organisation's channels / network (such as Bayside Community Hub) • Council volunteer email • Enquiries via local council and library services • Radio interviews and media exposure
Communication channels effective for reaching prospective community and library venues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council newsletter • Directly approaching the venue • Engaging support from working group members to seek a 'warm introduction' to the venue managers • Speaking at relevant industry events (such as Library conferences or community centre forums)
Communication channels effective for reaching prospective hospitality venues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council newsletter • Via an expression of interest (EOI) process to the Council trader database • Directly approaching the venue • Engaging support from working group members to seek a 'warm introduction' to the venue owners • Speaking at relevant industry events (such as trader group meetings, Council events targeting local businesses – like Business Awards nights)
Communication activities for engaging partner organisations and support within your organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present an information session to inform key stakeholders and colleagues about the Project. Invite a representative from all teams to uncover unexpected connections and opportunities. • Prepare internal communications messages which reinforce the Chatty Café message





Additional promotion guidance

- Display posters, postcards, and signage in and around cafes and community venues. Signs work best in highly visible areas, near entrances, counters, toilet facilities, and outward facing windows
- Use social media repetitively, frequently, and consistently. Tag relevant groups, organisations, individuals, and businesses in posts and images. Share posts on personal and group pages and encourage others to share. This significantly amplifies the reach of your message and can introduce you to a wider audience. As your posts are competing for space on followers' newsfeed, do not assume previous posts have been seen
- Display outdoor signage around key activity areas and shopping villages. Understand and comply with signage permit approval processes for footpath and free locations. Costs are incurred for outdoor advertising spaces, printing and installing signage
- Showcase the Project, venues and events on Council's website and social media channels. Focus on involvement in the Chatty Café movement and not the venue. Tag the venues or businesses referenced as well as local business or trader associations, shopping village social media pages, and use relevant hashtags
- CCA Chatty teardrop banners are available to purchase at cost price

3.6 Delivering a positive experience and growing your Project

Creating a welcoming and inclusive environment is vital to a positive customer experience and the success and possible expansion of your Chatty Café Project.

Strategies to consider:

- **Reassuring participants that they are at the right place:** Displaying promotional signage (i.e., posters, window/door stickers, teardrop banners, table signage) reassures your Chatty volunteers and Chatty customers that they are at the right place. The signage may also attract the interest of regular customers and prospective Chatty customers. Where possible, position the Chatty table in a location that is visible upon entry or easy to locate with clear signage or directions. Signage can be displayed all day, every day to generally raise awareness.
- **Providing a warm welcome:** Creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere is important. Provide a friendly check-in or entry process for your Chatty volunteers, prospective and actual Chatty customers. Some venues display signage to demonstrate inclusivity and diversity, and that all people are welcome. Create a friendly atmosphere and consider adjustments such as adding a yellow tablecloth or flowers.
- **Having a Chatty table volunteer to facilitate respectful conversations:** CCA 'Have a Chat' table volunteers have received training and are good conversationalists. Where a Chatty venue is arranging its own 'Have a Chat' table facilitator, it is desirable that this person communicates or interacts well with other people, is caring, and respectful. Some Chatty customers may have a hearing-impairment, limited mobility, or experience social anxiety. People experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, vulnerability (due to barriers in accessing or engaging in essential services to function on a day-to-day basis), may need some additional support or encouragement.
- **Creating a regular and consistent experience:** Ideally, Chatty café venues operate 'Have a Chat' table/s on a regular basis. Offering one-to-two-hour chats on a weekly basis is a good way to build momentum and create a structure for Chatty customers to build into their weekly routine. As 'Have a Chat' table volunteers play a key role in shaping the Chatty customer experience and often build rapport, it is desirable for table volunteers to be reliable and punctual.
- **Promoting your welcoming and inclusive environment:** Use regular communication channels and Facebook/ social media posts with imagery to promote your Chatty venue and encourage Chatty customers.



"If not for Chatty Café I wouldn't have been able to settle as well in Australia. I'm now very connected and have a wonderful friendship group" (Chatty customer)



Insights from the Bayside Chatty Café Project

- Approach the Chatty Café Project using an inclusive lens. When designing 'Have a Chat' tables, activities, and events, consider inclusiveness, for people of all ages, abilities, and cultures. Also consider ways to accommodate people experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, vulnerability (due to barriers in accessing or engaging in essential services to function on a day-to-day basis)
- Chatty customer-related considerations for venues:
 - Likelihood of being viewed as a safe and comfortable spaces by Chatty customers
 - Facility accessibility for people of all-abilities
 - Location accessibility by public transport
 - Capacity to offer beverages, snacks, or meals at no or low cost
 - COVID-19 infection control is managed adequately
 - Sufficient internal space for participants to engage safely and with access to air flow
 - Willingness of management or operators to understand and explain the Chatty Café Project to staff and customers who inquire
- Consider arranging transport for people in need or those who are transport isolated to support participation
- When 'Have a Chat' tables are located closer to the front of the venue this minimises Chatty customer concerns or anxiety about entering the venue alone and searching the venue to locate the 'Have a Chat' table
- Venue management or staff can inform regular customers who they believe are lonely or socially isolated to attend their 'Have a Chat' table when it is operating



Call or video your friends and family for a chat



SECTION 4:

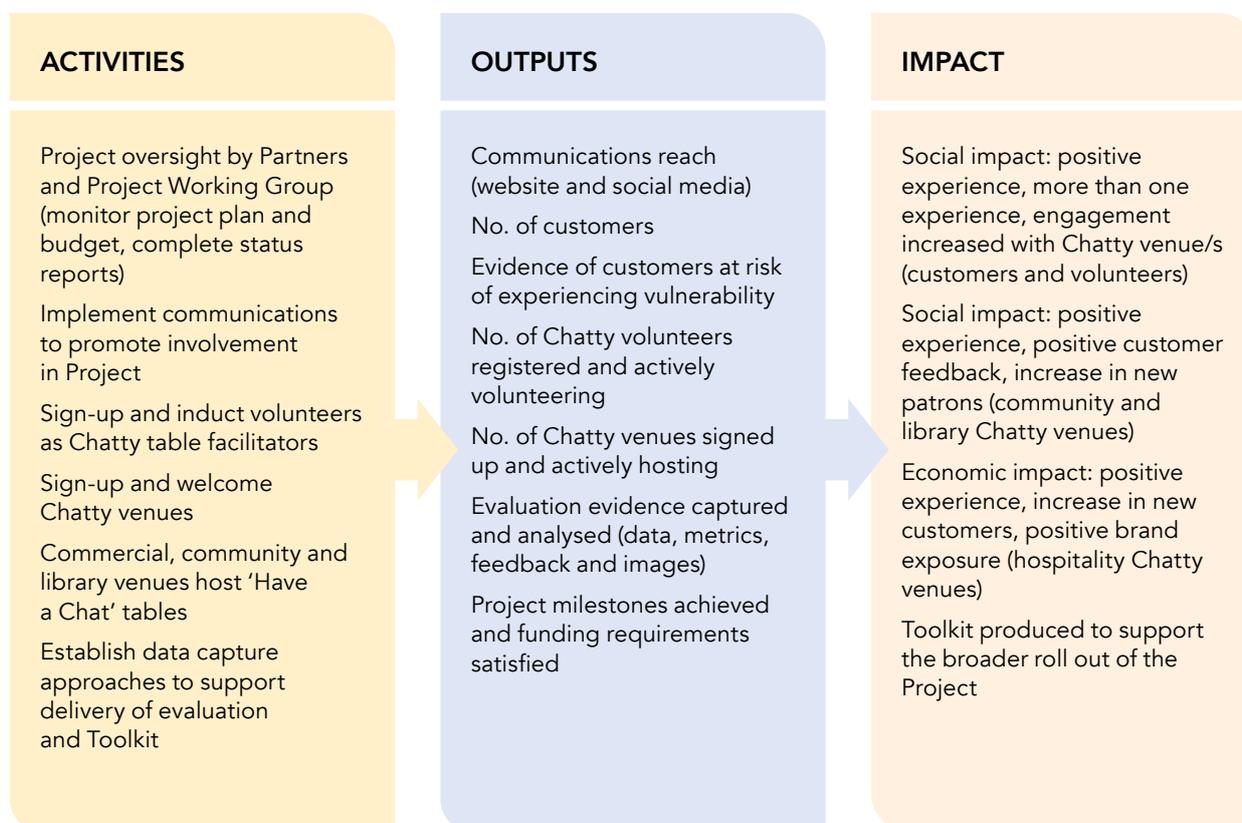
Evaluating the success of your Chatty Café Project

For a range of good reasons, it is important to track the progress being made and your achievements for your Chatty Café Project. Monitoring progress against your Project plan and budget allows timely decision-making, interventions, adjustments, and milestone celebrations. It also means there are no surprises for the overseeing project team, key stakeholders, funding bodies and contributors.

An Evaluation Framework and program logic model is often developed to guide and streamline activities to efficiently measure and evaluate outputs and impact. In relation to the Bayside Chatty Café Project, the evaluation sought to:

- Satisfy grant acquittal requirements
- Demonstrate delivery of intended outcomes
- Understand the positive social and economic impacts of the Project
- Generate insights to inform the production of this Toolkit to support the broader roll out of the Project.

A sample program logic model based on the Bayside Chatty Café Project is presented below



The positive social and economic impacts anticipated were:

- **Social impact for individuals:** Positive experience and reduced sense of social isolation and loneliness, and increased sense of personal wellbeing (for customers, particularly people experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, vulnerability), and increased community connectedness (for Chatty customers and Chatty volunteers)
- **Social impact for organisations:** Positive experience, positive brand exposure, and increased number of new patrons (for community and library chatty venues)
- **Economic impact for organisations:** Positive business experience, positive brand exposure, increased number of new customers/ patrons and increased community connectedness (for commercial chatty venues)

The following evidence, feedback, and information was gathered to evaluate the Bayside Chatty Café Project:

- Self-completion surveys: Chatty customers (pre- and post-chatty café surveys [printed]), Chatty volunteers (online), and Chatty venues (online)
- Phone interviews: Chatty customers and Chatty venues
- Observations of Chatty café events in action
- Self-reflection worksheets: Project Delivery Team
- Online workshop discussions and optional worksheet: Project Working Group
- Online and digital metrics - website, social media, and digital engagement information

Approaches for gathering evidence or feedback

[View or download the surveying instruments used to evaluate the Bayside Chatty Café Project on the Chatty Café website.](#)

Insights from the Bayside Chatty Café Project

- There can be an element of subjectivity and optimism when setting targets so it is important to recognise that it can take some time for a Project to build momentum
- Consider COVID-19 related impacts: Some activities may be affected by COVID-19 restrictions or community members may be cautious about social environments
- Discuss evaluation considerations and requirements when preparing your Project plan and budget:
 - Why is feedback being gathered?
 - Which participants need to be heard?
 - What type and depth of feedback is desirable?
 - What is the best approach for gathering feedback (i.e., paper survey, online survey, interview, focus groups, observations or self-reflections or a combination)?
 - Are websites configurations and social media platforms set up to capture metrics?
 - What resources are available to support the evaluation process (i.e., access to people, funds, online survey platforms, data analysis and reporting)?
- Gathering evidence or feedback from all participants is a comprehensive and resource-intensive evaluation approach, from data gathering through to reporting the findings



We're hosting in person and online Chatty Café events across Bayside. Come join us for a cuppa and a chat!

Chatty Café Bayside events

Sandy Beach Kiosk	Bay Road
When Tuesday, 15 February	When Monday, 28 February
Time 10am – 1pm	Time 10am – 12noon
Where Sandy Beach HQ & Kiosk 36 Jetty Road, Sandringham	Where Bay Road Nursery 112 Bay Road, Sandringham
Beaumaris Concourse	Online
When Thursday, 10 March	When Every Monday and Friday
Time 10.30am – 12.30pm	Time 1.30pm – 2.30pm
Where Beaumaris Concourse Green Reserve Road, Beaumaris	Where Visit chattycafeaustralia.org.au for Zoom links

Ongoing Chatty Café venues
There's also our regular Chatty Café venues and tables, view these on our website at chattycafeaustralia.org.au/find-a-chatty-table and use the search term "Bayside".

Find out more
Visit chattycafeaustralia.org.au
Call 0412 653 504
Event details bayside.vic.gov.au/events
ChatBayside [/chattycafeaustralia](https://www.facebook.com/chattycafeaustralia)



SECTION 5:

Resources to help you get started

Recommended reading

Clear Horizon (2019). *Social Isolation and Loneliness Project Report*. Prepared for the Inner South-east Metropolitan Partnership Working Group. https://www.suburbandedevelopment.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0021/62652/Social-Isolation-and-Loneliness-Project-Report-Final-2019.pdf

The Chatty Café Scheme UK (2022). *Tackling loneliness and social isolation: The Chatty Cafe Scheme Interim Report*. Coventry University. <https://thechattycafescheme.co.uk/2022/06/09/tackling-loneliness-and-social-isolation-the-chatty-cafe-scheme-interim-report-may-2022/>

Thurnell-Read, T. (2021). *Open Arms: The Role of Pubs in Tackling Loneliness*. Loughborough University. <https://hdl.handle.net/2134/13663715.v1>

Sample social media posts and videos from the Bayside Chatty Café Project

- Chatty Café Program – Inner South-East Metropolitan Partnership: <https://youtu.be/r8sGwcAy7r8>
- Facebook video Chiefs Club Social event: <https://fb.watch/eziOOq3Gku/>
- Facebook video first week of campaign: <https://fb.watch/eziLG69WhA/>
- Facebook video during campaign: <https://fb.watch/eziSq9D3U/>
- Facebook - 26 Advantage reel: <https://www.facebook.com/reel/1280305676245514>
- Facebook highlights: <https://fb.watch/eziFydobC7/>
- Instagram highlights: https://www.instagram.com/reel/Ce0QKPBlvCe/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Informative podcasts relating to the Bayside Chatty Café Project

- Bayside Bubble Podcast (see 4 May 2022 - The Chatty Café): <https://baysidebubble.com.au/> or <https://podcasts.apple.com/au/podcast/bayside-bubble-the-chatty-cafe/id1538422399?i=1000559482148>
- Kerryn Powell (The Network Catalyst) <https://www.kerryn-powell.com.au/podcast>

For more information about the Bayside Chatty Café Project

- The Chatty Café Scheme Australia: <https://chattycafeaustralia.org.au/>
- Inner South-east Metropolitan Partnership: <https://www.suburbandedevelopment.vic.gov.au/metropolitan-partnerships/inner-south-east-partnership>

The Chatty Cafe Scheme Australia Ltd
ABN 66 639 017 173
PO Box 307, Hampton, Victoria, 3188

 ChattyAUS

 ChattycafeAUS



