<date>

**NEW LOCAL WALK AND TALK INITIATIVE AIMED AT REDUCING LONLINESS**

<CDAT name> is inviting local community members to participate in a new program of check-in walk and talks, designed to strengthen community connection and reduce isolation and feelings of loneliness.

Designed for people from all age groups and abilities, the <CDAT’s> Walk with Me program will run <physically in local parks adhering to the relevant physical distancing rules or virtually using Zoom>.

Chair of <Community Drug Action Team> <name> said the new initiative, has been developed by the Alcohol and Drug Foundation in response to COVID-19 lockdowns, which saw many people experiencing heightened feelings of isolation and loneliness.

“We are thrilled to be a part of this exciting new program. We know that we’ve got a strong and supportive community and we want to make sure that everyone feels connected,” said <role>, <name>.

The first local walk and talk event will be happening <on Zoom or physical location> on <date> at <time>. To register interest visit <this link> or contact <name>.

Participants will have access to an online library of videos, podcasts, games and stories to inspire discussion at the fortnightly events, which will have different themes around topics such as happiness, vulnerability and community.

Alcohol and Drug Foundation’s New South Wales State Manager Lorenzo Woodford said the <Community Drug Action Team> should be applauded for their efforts in keeping the community connected at this challenging time.

“The last few months have been incredibly hard for everyone, particularly for those who have lost work, social connectedness and especially for those who have lost loved ones. We know people have been experiencing heightened feelings of stress and loneliness which are risk factors for alcohol and drug use,” Mr Woodford said.

“By participating in the Walk with Me program, <CDAT name> is showing they really are about the wellbeing of their community as the initiative offers people a way to connect and engage with others. This can help boost mood and reduce feelings of loneliness,” Mr Woodford said.

Social media pages have been created to support Walk with Me to enable participants to share their thoughts and connect with other walkers across the state.

To join in your local Walk with Me or find out more about <Community Drug Action Team> visit <link> or contact <name> on <number>.

To find out more information about the Walk With Me program visit: <website link>.