

# SPECIAL STORIES FROM THE VIRTUAL SOCIAL CENTRE

## Ending loneliness through meaningful connections

**Name**  
**ANN**

### Personal Situation

74, lives with her 89 year old husband, no other family or close friends, is a carer for her husband who has dementia, and is wheelchair bound.

### Social Situation

No interactions with others, only with care staff once a week.

### Virtual Social Centre

Participates in 4 sessions per week (on average).

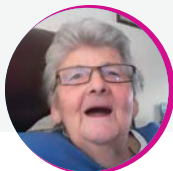
### Outcomes

Ann began her journey with the VSC by participating in a variety of different sessions, particularly enjoying exercise (such as Circulation, Balance & Stability and Gentle Yoga) and animal related sessions (such as Down on the Farm and Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary).

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Getting out is a very difficult problem – getting into the car is a case of clambering, and creates pain, then relying on my husband who has dementia to load the wheelchair is hard, it's heavy and bulky to lift for a 90year old – so we get out rarely and only when it's necessary. This means we sit at home a lot, and can tend to dwell on our problems – but the VSC offers an alternative – something stimulating to do. With all the different programs offered, and face-to-face chat with friends – it makes such a difference to our attitude, lifting our spirits and being able to laugh with friends and keep the brain active.

More than anything it has made me feel wanted, a valuable member of society instead of feeling useless and that there was nothing left for me.



**Name**  
**PAT**

### Personal Situation

76 years, lives on a large block of land, only sees her neighbour occasionally, and is a carer for her husband.

### Social Situation

Does not have much time for friends due to carer commitments, which limits her interactions with others.

### Virtual Social Centre

Participates in 3 sessions per week (on average).

### Outcomes

The VSC has allowed for Pat to develop friendships and participate in a community environment without compromising on her role as a carer. Pat has said that before the VSC she felt that she couldn't allow herself to have time for friendships but the VSC has changed that and has opened up a new way to have genuine relationships.

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For people who are on their own I think the VSC is fantastic – people are often too old to get out a lot and the VSC brings a social life to you.

On the VSC I feel 'special'. I feel important. Living on a large property means that I don't often see other people, my neighbours are far away, and I don't leave the property very much. Going on the VSC I get to speak with people who know my name.

It really matters to me that people say my name, they say 'hello Pat, how are you today'. I feel cared about.



## Name

**LORNA**

## Personal Situation

87, lives alone, has one leg and uses crutches.

## Social Situation

Limited interactions with others.

## Virtual Social Centre

Participates in 2–3 sessions per week (on average).

## Outcomes

Lorna joined the VSC in September 2017. Since then Lorna has participated in many events, particularly enjoying sessions where she can chat with other participants.

Since her health has declined Lorna has been using the VSC more and more for social interactions.

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The Virtual Social Centre has been wonderful for me at this time in my life. I am having health issues and suddenly I am home a lot more than I used to be. Before the VSC I was feeling very isolated and lonely. Being ill has meant that I haven't been able to go to church, visit friends or be an active part of my community.

The Virtual Social Centre has been a lifeline. I can chat with friends whenever I want, and see the world through the remote-streaming sessions.

There is so much to do on the VSC – I love to watch the live sessions but I also enjoy watching everything on catch-up as well. I usually sit and watch a catch-up while I am having my breakfast. I have made some good friends in the chat groups.

Any time I have any issues with the platform or with my device I am so supported. I never feel worried about using it because I know I will be helped.



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I really value the VSC. It means I can have a social life from bed, which is important as I have chronic-fatigue. I like that I have made some friends. I join in on the Saturday catch-up and I like that the ladies know my name and we can have a talk about how our weeks been. I get lonely so the VSC is very nice indeed.

The VSC is so important to me. I need it in my life. Now that I have it, I cannot imagine my life without it. It is a reason to keep going and gives me motivation and purpose.

I am in bed a lot with the chronic fatigue, I live on my own and the VSC has been wonderful, though if I to the doctor's or something, the times may clash. There is always catch up. Please keep going!!!

**ELISABETH,  
VSC PARTICIPANT**



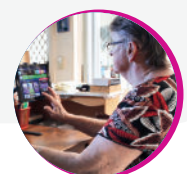
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I love it. It is fun. I like chatting with the ladies and the hosts are always so kind.

Everyone should get involved. It means I can exercise from home but still get support from the trainer.

The VSC really matters. It is such a special program and really helps change people's lives. It can be so hard to 'get-up-and-go' at our age. Going 'out' isn't easy. You have to get ready, if you can drive you have to think about parking and where you're going. If you can't drive you have to arrange a lift from a family member or navigate public transport. It is big and exhausting sometimes to go out into the community. It can become easier to just 'hide away' at home. The VSC is a great tool to help feel connected to community without the pressures and stresses of going out. It also helps encourage more social connections and makes me feel braver to tackle new things.

**BARBARA,  
VSC PARTICIPANT**



To learn more about the Virtual Social Centre visit [feroscare.com.au/vsc](https://feroscare.com.au/vsc)

Stories are from former and current participants of the Virtual Social Centre.