

GOOD WORK 2026

Tenant Engagement in Australian Office Buildings

Good Work Report 2026 · Little BIG Foundation

Our annual pulse check on how connected people feel at work, and what is helping, in office buildings across Australia.

FOREWORD: THE BUILDING IS THE MISSING LAYER OF WORKPLACE WELLBEING

After four years of Good Work, one finding holds: **people make friends at work by doing things together, and the office building is one of the few places where people from different organisations can do that.**

Employers own culture inside the tenancy. Governments own public space outside it. The lobby, the lifts, the end-of-trip room and the shared floor in between belong to the property owner, and in most buildings no one is responsible for the relationships that could form there.

Good Work is Little BIG Foundation's program for that in-between space. Since 2023 we have run shared activities in office buildings and asked building occupants each year how connected they feel. This report shares what the 2026 pulse check found, and what we think the wider property sector can take from it.

88%

of people who met someone new through Good Work are satisfied with the program.

85%

of them say community and wellbeing programming at work matters to them.

64%

of people who joined a shoulder-to-shoulder activity, such as a food or creative workshop, met someone new in their building.

WHY CONNECTION MATTERS TO BUILDING OWNERS

Loneliness is common in Australia, and it follows people to work. Almost one in three Australians (32%) feel lonely, and more than one in six (17.5%) experience severe loneliness. Young adults aged 18 to 24 are the most affected.[1]

It also costs productivity. Lonely Australians are more likely to report lost productivity while at work (31%, against 22% of people who are not lonely) and overall work impairment (35%, against 24%).[1]

Lonely workers are also more likely to miss work because of their health (11%, against 8%).[1] AIA Australia estimates that 37% of the Australian workforce feels lonely, and that nearly a quarter of workers don't take part in activities to connect with colleagues.[2] With the office week settled at three to four days, the (now reduced) hours people do spend in a building matter more than ever.

For owners and asset managers, that makes connection part of the tenant experience. Lonelier, less productive workforces are a cost to tenants, and a building that helps its tenants' people feel part of something gives those tenants a reason to stay.

2026 AT A GLANCE

In 2026, 37% of respondents met someone new through a building program. For people who joined three or more events, that rose to 56%.

PULSE READING	WHAT IT TELLS US
37% met someone new through a building program in the past 12 months	More than one in three building occupants now knows someone new in the building
56% of people who joined three or more events met someone new	Every extra connection opportunity raises the odds of building a community that supports you.
64% of people who joined a shoulder-to-shoulder activity (food or creative workshop) met someone new	Against 50% for networking events (Christmas party, EOFY social), 50% for solo wellbeing activities (stretch and massage) and 20% for people who only attended giveaways
65% of program connectors say they now interact more with others in the building after events	Events change behaviour beyond the event itself, once you begin attending you're more likely to connect with others in the building
85% of program participants say community and wellbeing programming at work matters to them	A clear mandate for building owners
74% are satisfied with the Good Work program	Rising to 88% among people who met someone new

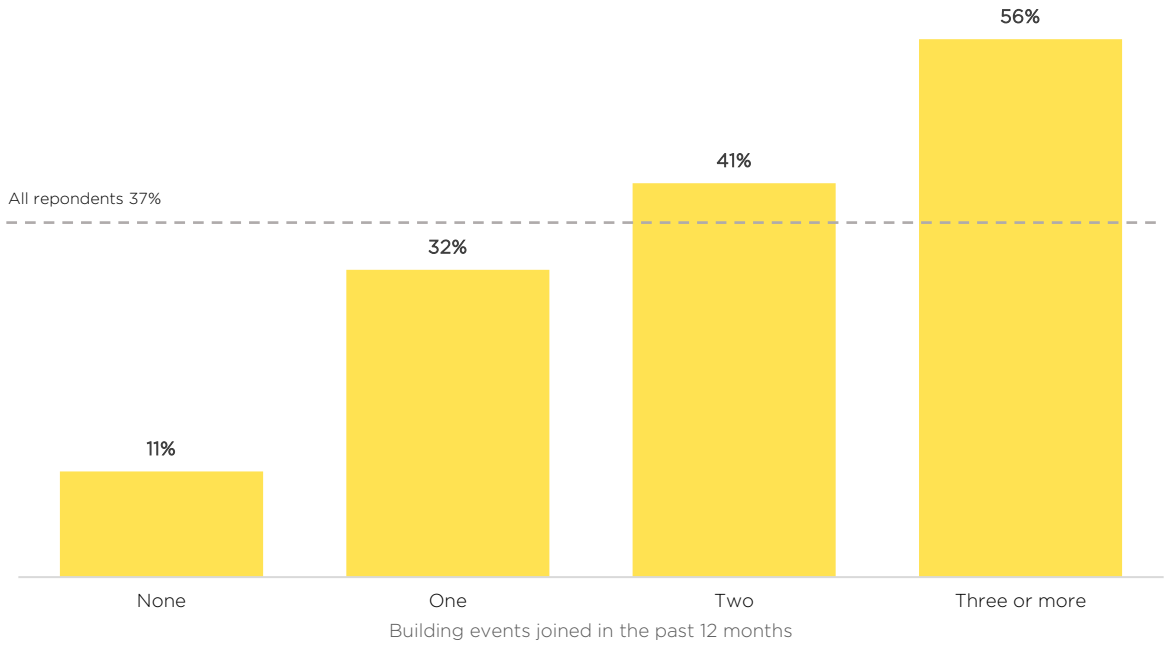


INSIGHT 1: FREQUENCY + SHOULDER-TO-SHOULDER = CONNECTION

The more events people join, the more likely they are to meet someone new: from 11% for people who joined none to 56% for those who joined three or more.

Every event people join makes a new connection more likely

Share who met someone new through a building program, by number of events joined

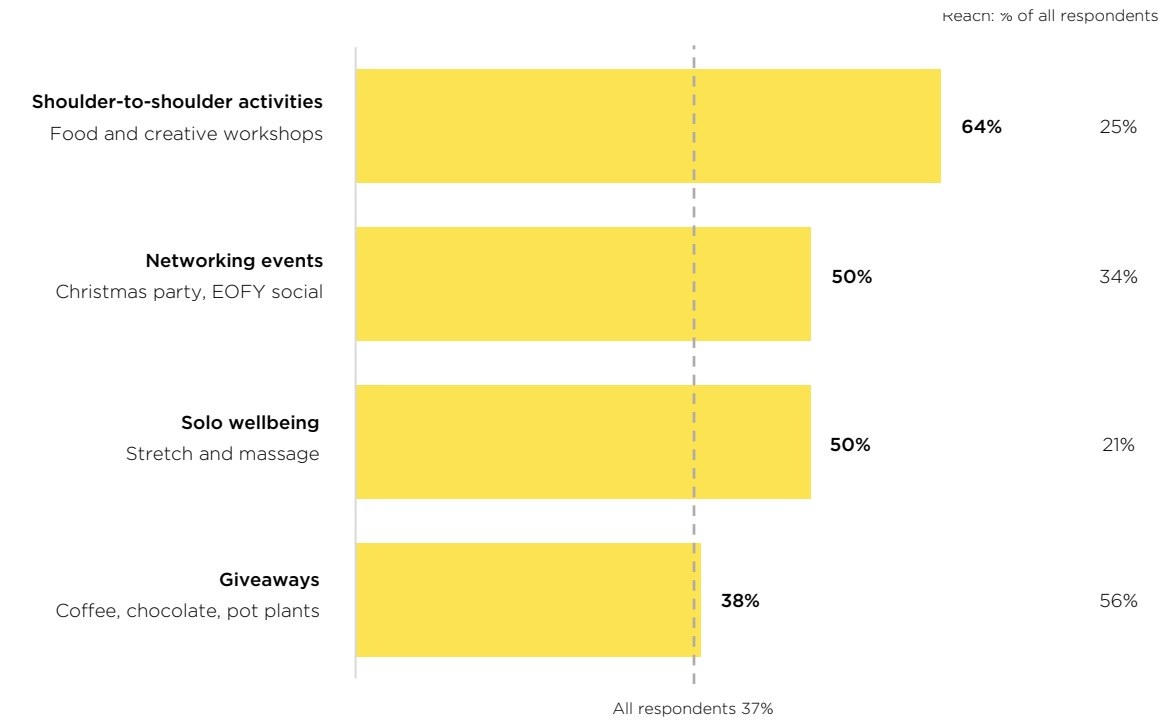


Good Work pulse check 2026 · Buildings A, B and D · everyone who answered whether they met someone new

The type of event matters as much as the number. Each building's events were tailored to what its occupants asked for in the previous year's survey, so the program listens before it acts. The free coffee giveaway reached the most people (41% attended), but only 40% of them met someone new. At creative workshops (scent making), 72% did, and at food workshops, 64%. Taken together, 64% of people who joined a shoulder-to-shoulder activity met someone new, against 50% at networking events, 50% at solo wellbeing activities such as stretch and massage, 38% at giveaways, and 20% among people who only attended giveaways.

Shoulder-to-shoulder activities turn attendance into connection

Share of attendees who met someone new through the program, by type of event



Good Work pulse check 2026 · attendees of each type of event who answered whether they met someone new · people could attend several types

A giveaway is a fleeting moment in a queue. A workshop seats strangers side by side, gives them a shared task and an easy thing to talk about. Giveaways still matter: they are how most people first hear about the program, but they only open the door to connection.

What happens next is the real outcome. Of the people who met someone new, 65% agree they now interact more often with others in the building, and 85% say community and wellbeing programming at work matters to them. Building occupants describe the payoff in small, everyday terms:

> *"Sitting with new people and then bumping into them in the lift."*
>
> *"Putting names to faces of people I regularly see around the building."*
>
> *"Getting to know people and realise how much we had in common despite coming from different backgrounds, which made me feel more connected."*

ACTION:

Connection changes how a building feels. Two in three people who met someone new at a Good Work event now interact more with others in the building. A building where people say hello in the lift is one occupants want to stay in.

INSIGHT 2: LONELY BUILDING OCCUPANTS SEE THE SAME BUILDING LESS KINDLY

Building occupants who don't feel lonely rate their building more highly on every feature we asked about, from the lifts to their own office. Lonely occupants in the same buildings give the same spaces lower scores.

BUILDING FEATURE (2026)	NOT LONELY: SATISFIED	LONELY: SATISFIED	GAP (POINTS)
Lighting	78%	54%	24
Your offices	82%	63%	19
Building cleaners	76%	59%	17
Temperature	69%	55%	14
Bathrooms (on your level)	72%	59%	13
End-of-trip facilities	75%	62%	13
Airflow	69%	57%	12
Lifts	64%	53%	11
Property managers	75%	65%	10
Lobby / foyer	85%	79%	6

The 2025 survey showed the same pattern, often more strongly: 82% of building occupants who weren't lonely were satisfied with their property managers, against 35% of lonely occupants.

Outside research points the same way. A UK study of more than 2,000 young adults found lonelier people rated their neighbourhoods as less friendly and cohesive, even compared with their own siblings living at the same address, and objective measures didn't support their lower ratings.[4]

Our survey can't say which way the link runs in office buildings. Loneliness may colour how people see their surroundings, or a building that works poorly may leave people feeling more isolated. Either way, it matters for owners: tenant satisfaction scores reflect how connected building occupants feel, not just how well the building runs. Helping building occupants feel part of a community may lift how they rate everything else.

INSIGHT 3: NEWCOMERS ARE THE LEAST CONNECTED, AND ONE EVENT ISN'T ENOUGH

People who have worked in their building for less than a year are the least likely to have met someone new through a Good Work event: 26%, against 37% of all respondents. Yet they are the largest group, at 38% of respondents.

Many newcomers chose to take part in this survey, which suggests they want to be part of the building community. They just haven't found a way in yet.

This matters because starting somewhere new is when people are most likely to feel lonely. Our 2024 report found that people in their first year with a new employer were 50% more likely to feel lonely.[3] Australian research backs this up: transitions such as moving interstate to a new neighbourhood or starting study without meeting people in person raise loneliness, because they cut people off from old groups and make it harder to join new ones.[5] Starting a new job or moving into a new building is exactly this kind of transition. The first few months are when a building can do the most good.

Meeting one person is also not enough on its own. Among people who did meet someone new through the program, one in three (33%) still felt lonely on at least one day in the past week. Most of them regularly talk to fewer than five people in the building.

ACTION:

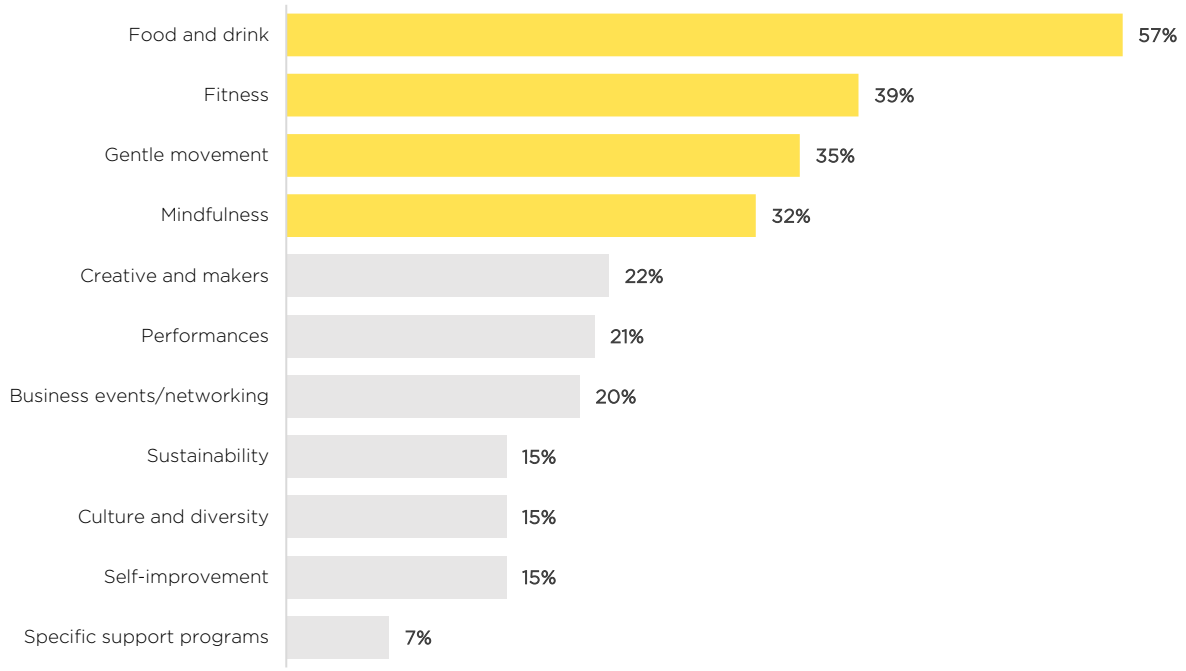
Arrival is the moment to act. Moving into a new building or starting a new job is a known peak time for loneliness. Employers can only connect people within their own business, but a lease start or fit-out is the one moment an owner reaches every newcomer. A first-week invitation, a newcomer lunch or a host who makes introductions catches people while habits are still forming and they are most open to connection.



INSIGHT 4: THE LONELY AND THE MORE CONNECTED OCCUPANTS DESIRE DIFFERENT WAYS TO CONNECT

Across all building occupants, food and drink is the clear first choice, and three of the top four activities are about wellbeing rather than networking.

Wellbeing leads; business events/networking sit seventh
Share respondents who want each type of activity in their building



People could choose several activity types.

Other building occupants told us what they want more of:

> *"Yoga / stretching class sessions are good ways to keep people engaged frequently, as events are sometimes too few and far between."*
>
> *"More cooking or scent making related things."*
>
> *"Encouraging fitness, movement away from the desk. Lunchtime fitness activities."*

Looking across multiple years of surveys, the difference is clear. Lonely building occupants single out programs that support their wellbeing and give them a small group to belong to and are nearly four times as likely to ask for mental health training, and more than three times as likely to ask for self-care seminars.

Lonely building occupants are also harder to engage. They chose fewer activities (2.2 each on average, against 3.5) and were less likely to say workplace programming matters to them (76%, against 90%).

WHAT BUILDING OCCUPANTS WHO ALREADY FEEL CONNECTED ASKED FOR

ACTIVITY	NOT LONELY	LONELY	SURVEY
Food and drink	73%	41%	2026
Fitness	57%	24%	2026
Cooking and food workshops	39%	24%	2025
Networking opportunities	22%	12%	2025
Business and networking	12%	4%	2025

> *"The food and music was amazing. Super nice, intimate vibe."*
>
> *"Please bring in fitness programs."*
>
> *"Getting to know new people and what the other businesses in the building do."*

Why buildings need both. Popular, high-energy events build the crowd, the atmosphere and the habit of turning up, which gives a program its reach. Quieter, smaller activities such as mindfulness, gentle movement and making things together are where people who find a busy room hard can take part without pressure. A program built only around the majority will feel successful while missing the people it could help most. One built only for the lonely will struggle to draw a crowd and may face stigma. A good calendar does both, and uses the popular events as a doorway to the quieter ones.

Timing. Noon to 3pm is the most wanted time on every weekday, peaking at 37% on Monday (despite Thursday marginally being the most populated day across all buildings). Late afternoon (3pm–5pm) is a strong second on Monday and Thursday

Lunchtime is the best time to bring occupants together, every day of the week
Share of respondents who would join an activity at each time, by day

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
6am-8am	8%	7%	5%	6%	4%
8-9am	16%	13%	11%	15%	10%
9am-noon	18%	17%	15%	17%	10%
Noon-3pm	37%	27%	26%	28%	20%
3pm-5pm	29%	21%	19%	28%	20%
5pm-7pm	22%	16%	15%	23%	15%
7pm-9pm	3%	2%	2%	3%	3%

Days preference to celebrate. Christmas (39%) and International Coffee Day (35%) lead, followed by International Women's Day (27%), World Mental Health Day (23%) and Easter (22%).

ACTION:

Don't let the loudest voices set the calendar. Lonely building occupants choose fewer activities and are less likely to say programming matters to them, so a calendar built on the most popular requests will always lean towards people who are already connected. The building occupants who need a program most are the least likely to ask for it. Plan for the popular majority, and set aside a deliberate share of the program for the quieter, wellbeing-focused activities the loneliest building occupants choose and benefit.

INSIGHT 5: SHARED SPACES ARE WHERE COMMUNITY HAPPENS, OR DOESN'T

When building occupants describe connection, they describe places: bumping into someone in the lift, a nod in the lobby, a chat at a shared table. An event introduces people, but the building's shared spaces are where those introductions turn into familiar faces.

Building occupants are asking for more of those spaces. In their open comments, people asked for somewhere to gather: a communal lunch area, a shared gym on a vacant floor, a community board in the foyer, or use of an empty mezzanine. Others said their foyer is too small for people to mix, or suggested a tenant discount at the ground-floor café so people would linger there. When asked how the building should mark special days, the most common place named was the foyer, lobby or common areas which shows a demand for third space.



WHY THIRD SPACES MATTER AT WORK

Sociologist Ray Oldenburg coined the term "third places" for the informal spots where people gather between home (the first place) and work (the second), such as cafés and clubs. He called them the heart of a community's social life: they put people on an equal footing, welcome newcomers and offer relief from isolation.[6] Research with more than 800 employees found that shared coworking spaces, a kind of third place, were more socially fulfilling than working from either the office or home.[7]

Tenants want this too. In CBRE's 2025 Australian Office Occupier Survey, 77% of tenant businesses said better amenity and services were essential before they would consider relocating, and 65% named improving employee experience through the workplace as a key priority.[8]

Building occupants are asking for spaces their employers, the tenants, may not be willing or able to pay for. Most small and medium businesses can't fit a lounge, a communal kitchen or a wellness room into a small tenancy. A building may be able to. Shared spaces run by the owner give smaller tenants an amenity they could never fund alone. They make the building more attractive to lease, and they contribute meaningfully to social outcomes.

How those spaces work also shapes how people feel about sharing them. Lobbies and offices rate highly, but lifts, airflow and temperature, the things people rely on to move through and spend time in shared space, sit just under 60%

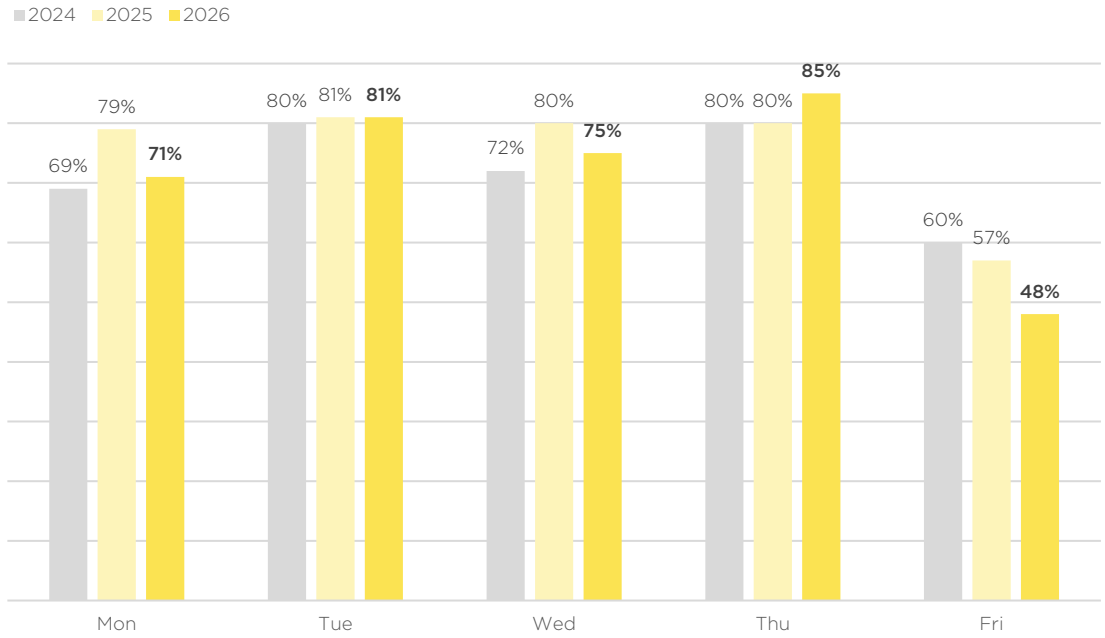
Building occupants link the two. When asked how to improve the community, many answered with a maintenance request: lifts that run one car at peak time, heating that fails through winter, bathrooms that run out of paper. To building occupants, a building that works is the starting point for a building that feels like a community.

ACTION:

- **Satisfaction scores are partly a wellbeing measure.** Lonely occupants rate the same building lower, so how people rate a building reflects how connected they feel, not just how well it runs. Helping people connect may be one of the most cost-effective ways to lift those scores.
- **Design shared space for lingering, not just passing through.** Seating in the lobby, a communal lunch area or a shared table turns a corridor into a place where neighbours meet.
- **Put vacant and underused space to work.** An empty floor or mezzanine can host workshops, fitness classes or a tenant lounge while it waits for a lease, and shows prospective tenants a building with a community.

FOUR YEARS OF GOOD WORK: WHAT HAS CHANGED

The office week has settled at around 3.6 days, but its shape keeps shifting: Thursday is now the peak, and Friday attendance has fallen from 60% in 2024 to 48% in 2026.



Good Work reports 2024 and 2025; Good Work pulse check 2026

For building teams, that means the Tuesday-to-Thursday window is where most people can be reached, and Friday activities will reach fewer people each year.

MEASURE	2023	2024	2025	2026
Average days in the office	3.6	3.6	3.8	3.6
Met someone new through a building program	—	26%	33%	37%
Felt lonely one day last week	30%	34%	21%	33%

LESSONS FOR THE PROPERTY SECTOR

Any building owner or manager can apply these seven lessons, with or without a formal program.

- **Use giveaways to reach people, and workshops to connect them.** A free coffee brings the most people into the lobby. A shared activity at a table is where they meet. Plan both, and use the first to invite people to the second.
- **Design for the third visit.** The chance of meeting someone new rises with every event joined, from 32% after one to 56% after three or more. Make it easy for people who came once to come back: a regular day, a familiar host, a reminder.
- **Start with newcomers.** More than a third of people in a building have been there less than a year, and they are the least connected. Add a welcome to every fit-out and every new lease.
- **Lead with food, movement and calm, not networking.** These are what building occupants ask for, and they lower the barrier for people who find networking hard.
- **Hold activities at lunchtime, and spread them across the week.** Noon to 3pm suits the most people on every day. Thursday is the busiest office day, but teams hold their own in-office days, so one fixed day misses some people.
- **Get the basics right first.** Lifts, airflow and temperature shape how people feel about a building more than any event will.
- **Measure the social side like the environmental side.** Owners already track energy and water. Asking the same few questions every year shows whether a building is becoming a community, and gives owners evidence for the social part of their ESG (environmental, social and governance) reporting.



NOTES, DEFINITIONS AND OPEN QUESTIONS

Terms. *Lonely* means felt lonely on at least one day in the past week. *Program connectors* are respondents who met someone new through a building program or event in the past 12 months. *Percentage point* is the simple difference between two percentages. Tenants are the businesses that lease space in a building, represented by their lease decision makers. Building occupants are the people who work there, who answered this survey.

About the figures. Percentages are rounded to whole numbers and calculated from the people who answered each question. Activity and special-day figures use all respondents as the base. Partial (unsubmitted) responses are included. No individual, organisation or building is identified, and quotes are edited to remove names and floor numbers. Source: Good Work Aggregated Results 2026 (deidentified).

Little BIG Foundation is a health promotion charity. This report shares what we have learned about reducing loneliness in workplaces.

SOURCES

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