



neighbour day

Sunday 31 March 2019

Neighbour Day for community organisations and groups



Neighbour Day is Australia's annual celebration of community, encouraging people to connect with those who live in their neighbourhood.

Whether through a cuppa, a picnic in the park, or a message of support, Neighbour Day is the perfect opportunity to say thanks for being a great neighbour and for helping out.

Neighbour Day is celebrated on the last Sunday in March every year with the aim of fostering strong personal connections that last the whole year round. The principal aim of Neighbour Day is to build better relationships with the people who live around us, especially the vulnerable and elderly.

The annual theme for Neighbour Day 2019 is **Loneliness: what neighbours can do to create connections.**

Community organisations and groups are great supporters of Neighbour Day and integral to the success of the movement. They have the ability to inform and engage large numbers of community members in

neighbourly pursuits, using the Neighbour Day celebration as an additional vehicle to help achieve their community development goals.

Those involved in Neighbour Day previously have identified the benefits as social participation and connection; building resilience and social capital; improved mental health and wellbeing; supporting vulnerable people; community development and education; recognition of community members; enhancing community safety; and embracing diversity and celebration.

Neighbour Day 2018 achieved great results this year with participation increasing by 23% (from 2017) with numbers conservatively estimated at more than 118,000.

Clear themes emerged from the Neighbour Day 2018 survey feedback from event registrants about the benefits of promoting and/or hosting Neighbour Day.

Host survey respondents in 2018 said Neighbour Day is a useful tool to assist people to connect with their neighbours with 92% planning to maintain ongoing contact with their neighbours and a further 6% indicating that they may do so. Ninety percent of people who engaged with the day told us they kept in touch with their neighbours throughout the year.

The top five reported benefits for hosts/organisers were 'I got to know my neighbours/community'; 'Help create a strong community'; Fun/enjoyment/celebration/hangout; I was able to raise awareness of the importance of neighbours; and 'Opportunity to learn and discuss what is happening in my neighbourhood'.

The top five reported benefits for participants as perceived by hosts were 'Get to know their neighbours'; 'Fun/enjoyment/celebration/hangout'; 'Help create a strong community'; an 'Opportunity to learn and discuss what is happening in their neighbourhood' and 'Learn about the importance of neighbours'.

Many community organisations leverage their association with Neighbour Day to promote and catalyse social connection in their communities. Other groups take the opportunity to weave Neighbour Day promotion and engagement into their calendars, drawing people together to celebrate at events they host in the lead up to, and on the day. For example, Senior's and Youth weeks, Harmony Day, Earth Hour, Easter holiday events, etc.

Easy Neighbour Day Ideas for community organisations and groups

Print Neighbour Day posters and display them in your organisation's buildings; local libraries; community halls; child and family health, youth and senior citizens centres and other relevant community premises in your local area. Your local council or state MP or territory MLA may be able to help you with printing Neighbour Day promotional resources.

Talk about Neighbour Day in your organisation's publications, e-newsletters, local newspapers and social media. You can also highlight your Neighbour Day activities at community meetings, networks, or groups focused on developing stronger communities and connected neighbourhoods.

Access the free Neighbour Day council and community organisations resources and e-kit available for downloading at neighbourday.org

Distribute Neighbour Day promotional flyers, connection cards and/or calling cards to your networks to your community members.

Support and encourage your organisation members and the communities you support to host their own Neighbour Day events with ideas, council (or other public land manager) approvals, equipment or other assistance.

Align your organisation or group's existing events with Neighbour Day, including events held before, or on or after the official day!

Register your event or action on the Neighbour Day web site at neighbourday.org. Remember 'Every day is Neighbour Day', so you may wish to choose to celebrate on other days that best suit your organisation, your community and your neighbours

The 2019 free Neighbour Day e-kit for councils and community organisations

is now available for download at neighbourday.org. The updated e-kit includes event ideas, Neighbour Day logo and posters (including a version with space for your logo or local sponsor logos), invitations, Certificate of Recognition template, e-cards, connection and calling cards, promotional flyers to use at community events, stands, or shop counter tops, and Countdown (to Neighbour Day) selfie and event marker signs. Also included are social media drafts, and an easy to use media template.

What does Neighbour Day look like for community organisations?

- Outdoor movies have proven popular across the country to attract neighbours to get together.
- [Neighbourhood Watch Victoria](#) promotes Neighbour Day to their communities on their website explaining the benefits of getting to know your neighbours and encouraging participation. Some Neighbourhood Watch groups celebrated Neighbour Day and used it as an opportunity to attract new members.
- A growing number of community groups use Neighbour Day to catch up with their neighbours to promote bushfire safety and others promote the event in their Fire Wise Group Communications.
- One community group did a 'show and tell', whilst others did 'cupcake and clothes swaps' and another did a 'book and garden tool swap!
- In Alice Springs a Neighbour Day Community Working group was formed with the support of [Relationships Australia NT](#). The group of local champions and community organisations have actively promoted Neighbour Day and the importance of being neighbourly in a multitude of ways – speaking at



community gatherings, churches, service groups, schools and catalysed more than 25 events. Through a small community grant they purchased and developed seed packets using a young local student's Neighbour Day drawing (8years old). [Local volunteers](#), with the support of the [town Mayor](#), presented at assemblies at the town's primary schools (including some prep students). They shared how (with their family/carer's support) they could safely connect with their neighbours and the importance of knowing your neighbours. Students were gifted seed packets to take home and to discuss with their family the idea of 'Growing our Neighbourhood'. The Alice Springs community also hosted the Neighbour Day 2018 national launch and were awarded the first Neighbour Day Very Neighbourly Community Award.

- Because dogs are neighbours too ... The City of Melbourne, Victoria Harbour and Knowledge Markets teamed up to bring locals together for an amazing family day out. The [Neighbour Day Docklands Dog Pawty](#) (now an annual event!) hosted doggie activities, puppycinos, stalls and dog behavioural experts. It was a pupstastic (!) way to meet neighbours and their best friends at the same time.



- [Junction Australia](#) included a copy of the [Neighbour Day Connection Card](#) in its hardcopy newsletter (a cut out version) encouraging its 2,200 residents to connect with a neighbour.

- Some primary and high schools celebrate in the weeks before Neighbour Day with a lunchtime special guest talking about the importance of being neighbourly and catalysing neighbourly action during their school holidays. Topics like planned and random [or spontaneous] acts of kindness were included and how kids can work with teachers, parents and carers to connect with neighbours to ensure child safety.
- The Queensland African Communities Council and Camp Hill Community and Sporting Club invited the public to join them in celebrating Neighbour Day. With some help from the Queensland Government, the Queensland African Communities Council and Camp Hill Community and Sporting Club are co-hosted a festival for their local community. There were food trucks, market stalls, live music, traditional dances, craft activities, jumping castles, face-painting, barefoot bowls and more!
- Sunbury Community Health (a regional primary health care organisation in VIC and [Very Neighbourly Organisation](#)) have hosted a Communi-Tea van in the park to help people connect over a cuppa.
- Four nearby regional towns decided to connect in the most central town to celebrate Neighbour Day!
- The Oxley Ridge Neighbourhood Watch, QLD celebrated christening a new BBQ next to a playground inviting the community for a sausage sizzle breakfast on the new barbie and a coffee van - and to meet their neighbours. Police Beat officers and Volunteers in Policing (VIP) also attended and showed kids the police cars, and helped them make a cool police badge to take home. Four legged friends were also looked after - dog owners were given a Neighbourhood Watch dog tag which the friendly VIP's engraved.
- The Copacabana Community Association encouraged street parties, car port or verge parties, and challenged kids to get crafty, show off their talents and to set up tables or stalls in their street. Kids sold homemade lemonade, cupcakes, friendship bracelets, paper dream catchers, homemade bookmarks, and painted flowerpots. A great way to get to know their neighbours and also make some pocket money!

- GPs and family clinics downloaded and printed the free Neighbour Day posters from the e-Kits and displayed them in their waiting rooms in the month leading up to Neighbour Day.
- Many community centres hosted free morning or afternoon teas during the week before Neighbour Day encouraging their neighbours to visit the centre and to get to know each other and their staff.
- [Houndwave in Adelaide](#) is a fun annual music festival for dogs and those who love them with the aim to encourage everyone to come together and have a great day out. This musical neighbourly event is a collaboration between Adelaide West End Association and Splash Adelaide and scheduled when it best suits their community, sometime around Neighbour Day.
- [The Carlton Residents Association](#) utilised Neighbour Day (2nd year running) to bring their community together to transform a street into a vibrant and fun zone of community led family friendly all age inclusive activities including a long lunch. The Carlton Community Welcome Lunch for Neighbour Day 2017 had: Play [simple and free]; Learning [reducing energy consumption and reducing and reusing waste]; Food [using the [Welcome Dinner](#) model]; Art [drawings from 'My Neighbourhood' competition]; and Music [local musicians and buskers].
- One group handed out cards with neighbourly messages on them, whilst another set up a local [Random Acts of Kindness Facebook page](#). [Albury/Wodonga].
- Neighbourhood Bake-Offs are a favourite with both children and adults.
- [Katalyst Church](#) cancelled services [2nd year running] on Neighbour Day Sunday, encouraging their community to connect with their neighbours instead. They also shared a swag of ideas and Neighbour Day resources on their website to make getting involved easy. Being a nationally recognised day; they said, "Neighbour Day is an excellent open door to initiate something that may be awkward at other times."
- One community established a Facebook group named [Cowra Community Compliments](#), on behalf of Cowra Information and Neighbourhood Centre, to provide locals with the opportunity to spread their happiness and goodwill to the community via genuine, heart-felt compliments to one another in celebration of their accomplishment.
- [CoDesign Studio](#) is a social enterprise inspiring people to shape their neighbourhoods and they developed a Neighbour Day postcard activity to produce local neighbourhood cookbooks!
- [Each year Conservation Volunteers Australia \(a Very Neighbourly Organisation\)](#) promote conservation projects in March as a great way to support your neighbours and celebrate Neighbour Day with teams of volunteers joining in across Australia.



- Some Landcare groups and community gardens use Neighbour Day as a reason to get together, get some work done and also attract new members.
- [Neighbour Day Sunraysia](#) (2017) joined with Greening Mildura and Mildura Central shopping centre on the Friday before Neighbour Day. They hosted a mock Neighbour Day garden party with a popup front-yard picnic in a garden with the local Bunnings providing chairs, umbrellas and other garden stuff to green up the 'yard'.
- A group of previously 'stand-alone' businesses came together celebrate Neighbour Day to create a hub, as a practical display of their shared core values.

- One school in the Northern Territory co-ordinated a cricket game on the school grounds for the neighbours that live in the same street as the school.
- Country Women's Association members have hosted morning teas to connect with their neighbours.
- One community group organised the Neighbour Day Olympic Games with sack races, egg and spoon, quoits, hula hooping, you name it!
- In 2018 Lane Cove Community Chaplaincy hosted a Neighbour Day games and sausage sizzle event in the park (which



they host every Sunday of the year!). Volley ball (not seriously), park chess, face-painting, corn throw), and many

more games were played. In 2017, Lane Cove Community Chaplaincy, FoodFaith and Lane Cove Rotary with the support of [Lane Cove Council](#) (provided resources, signage, flyers and some giveaways) hosted a Neighbour Day event which included music, dancing, BBQ, damper and pesto making, face painting (by Elsa from Frozen!), nail art, learning to make an eco-bag and some large games. The Mayor and organisers made a few short speeches, and gardening expert Meredith Kirton spoke on worm farming in the new community garden. Organisers provided a loop bus servicing the area from the centre of Lane Cove, due to limited parking.

- Community organisations across Australia organised Neighbour Day breakfasts in offices and business parks on the Friday before Neighbour Day to engage their local neighbours and get to know each other better.
- A shopping centre handed out jam, teas and other goodies for people to share with their neighbours.
- You can follow Neighbour Day on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Community organisations can use social media to cross-promote neighbourly events and information. We'd really appreciate you tagging Neighbour Day in your posts!

Find out what some councils and shires have done and how you might connect with them

What people say about the benefits of getting involved ...

"Catching up. Communal well-being is my well-being."

"I feel hopeful as a result."

"Our community is more aware of specially bushfire safety."

"Our children got to know each other better as well".

"For my son (whom has a disability) to be well known in his neighbourhood. This we know will keep him safe."

"I found neighbours who have lived here for 20+ years did not know each other, and that made me feel good about hosting and connecting those people."

"It gives people reason to connect with their local community."

"Highlights the importance of looking out for your neighbour and works to alleviate social isolation."

"It has the ability to take a local area and build a community"

"Provides a date and resources to use to promote the community coming together - particularly new residents."

"A fantastic conversation starter to approach local people you don't know or have lost touch with."

“Connections are made and friendships grow as a result plus, the young connect with the more elderly and everyone develops a greater sense of community belonging.”

“This is the first time we have hosted a Neighbour Day party and we were overwhelmed by how many people came. This is the beginning of an annual event in our neighbourhood that will strengthen our community to look out for each other and thrive.”

“I really believe it was a momentous turning point in how my community relates to one another and thinks about ownership and neighbourly responsibility.”

“We had a great BBQ in the park and plenty of food and drink. We found there is a common interest in music!”

“Met some new neighbours and some that have been around for a long time that had never met! Have since popped in for a cuppa to follow up on one lady who lives alone and had never previously come to things in the street. Catching up with another lady (who is deaf) next week to teach her how to use facebook so she can join our street group and stay up to date.

“We held a working bee followed by afternoon tea. We improved the amenity of the street and had the opportunity to discuss a new bridge design with residents all together. We have had a few deaths in the street, so it was an opportunity for members to talk about this and make sure everyone was OK.”

“Getting to know our neighbours, not just immediate ones. Having a great deal of fun. Six families shared the cost of purchasing a log splitter, which is shared among us. The splitter was used for a neighbour in her late 70s to split enough wood for her winter use.’

“Our regional suburb has only 2 schools and only 1 IGA shop and many families don’t have transport to get to town. Our public transport isn’t as good as many families tend to feel isolated, but holding events like this help bring people together. Such as many families from overseas with younger children were invited to Playgroup and weren’t aware of the family group at the school and gave them a new opportunity.”

“I had always wanted to have a great connected neighbourhood but didn’t really know where to start. Neighbour Day gave me ideas, tools and an excuse to get on with it. Most people say they have been meaning to get to know their neighbours, but many don’t get around to it. Neighbour Day gives a time frame and a sense of urgency.”

Finally... The Neighbour Day website contains resources and guidance to start connecting in your neighbourhood. If you have other good ideas, or would like to feed into our understanding of community connection, please provide us with that feedback, and your story. It is the stories about real human connection at the local neighbourhood level that inspire all of us to rise above our reserve and knock on the door of the person down the road whose burden may be lightened, or even life transformed by that small kindness.



The community you want starts at your front door!™