



Neighbour Day in your workplace

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 being there to lend a hand.

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 elderly and vulnerable.

Australia is in the midst of a loneliness crisis, with many in our population experiencing a deficit of social connection.

When we reflect upon loneliness, many of us will think of social and emotional isolation. We may contemplate a lack of important and meaningful relationships, perhaps an absence of companionship and social interaction with others.

In 2020, Neighbour Day is looking to flip the loneliness discussion to get Australians to focus instead on the importance of belonging – to start people thinking about how they can put their energy into creating positive and meaningful social connections with people outside of their normal groups and relationships.

These social connections might be one-off moments or regular and lasting interactions that create one to one relationships or become the starting point for an ongoing group.

Encouraging social connection is the essence of Neighbour Day every day. During our 2020 campaign, Neighbour Day will be actively encouraging Australians to realise the social, emotional and mental benefits of connecting with others and joining and taking part in social groups.

A sense of belonging and connectedness in neighbourhoods can come from a large range of shared interests and activities.

In 2020, the theme for Neighbour Day is 'Social Connection'.

People living in neighbourhoods that are highly connected enjoy, overall, higher levels of physical and mental health with the converse also true. 55% of people who ring Lifeline's help line have been found to live alone and feel socially isolated and lonely.

beyondblue's research shows that lonely people are more likely to report symptoms of depression, are admitted to hospital more frequently, and have higher blood pressure and a greater risk of heart attack than others. There has been much research into this issue. While a friendly neighbour may not be the panacea, they may make a significant difference to someone's wellbeing and enthusiasm for life.

Many Australians spend as much, if not more time at work or doing work related activities, than they do at home. Issues of social connection and inclusion, compassion and resilience are just as important in the workplace. Good relationships with others can and do change communities. Social connection also makes us feel better as it helps prevent loneliness, isolation and depression.

What we have learned

- attending a Neighbour Day event often leads to people joining existing community groups, or organising their own groups and events;
- participating in Neighbour Day creates new relationships, renews past relationships, and deepens existing relationships;
- Neighbour Day helps create ongoing and enduring connections between people and their communities; and
- continued interaction after the event often leads to increased neighbourhood trust which in turn leads to neighbours experiencing a greater sense of safety in their neighbourhood, and offering support to each other. [[Swinburne University of Technology Report](#)]
- **Initial findings from Neighbour Day 2019** indicate that after people hosted an event or took some neighbourly action, they experienced:
 - an increased sense of identification with their neighbourhood;
 - an increased sense of belonging; and
 - perceived their neighbourhood environment more positively. [Australian National University Evaluation Report to be published October 2019.]

The role of the business

Business organisations and companies are recognised as important supporters of Neighbour Day. They are in a strong position to promote the Neighbour Day ethos to their staff and customers; where an association with Neighbour Day can be seen to be a practical demonstration of a company's core values.

Some businesses leverage their association with Neighbour Day to play a catalyst role to engage and support their communities of interest. Others take the opportunity to weave Neighbour Day promotion and engagement into their calendars, bringing their people together with business neighbours to celebrate at hosted public events. Most businesses celebrate Neighbour Day in the weeks prior. Staff and customers will likely choose to celebrate closer to the nominated day when they are back in the neighbourhoods they call home.

The Neighbour Day website contains resources and guidance to start connecting with 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.

Easy Neighbour Day Ideas for the workplace

Print Neighbour Day posters and display them in your buildings, store fronts, and related facilities (e.g. childcare, meal rooms, bathrooms) and wherever else you and your people have a presence. You may wish to offer these items to your staff to help them promote Neighbour Day in their respective neighbourhoods.

Talk about Neighbour Day in your publications, e-newsletters, and social media. You can also highlight your Neighbour Day activities at relevant meetings, networks or groups where developing stronger communities and connected neighbourhoods reflects your business values.

Access the Neighbour Day resources and E-kit which are available at neighbourday.org. Resources include posters, e-cards, calling cards, promotional flyers, and Neighbour Day signs for Instagram selfies.

Distribute Neighbour Day promotional flyers, calling cards to your people and encourage them to get out there and be neighbourly! [Subscribe to Verandah by Neighbour Day](#) monthly Enews, which you can share with your people and use in your communications.

Support and encourage your staff to host their own Neighbour Day events in their neighbourhoods.

Align existing business or company events with Neighbour Day, including events that are held before or on (or even after!) the day.

Register your event on the Neighbour Day website at neighbourday.org. You may wish to choose another day during the week that suits you and your business neighbours better. Whichever day you decide to celebrate, remember 'Every day is Neighbour Day'. [The E-kit for your workplace](#) is now available for download when you register at neighbourday.org. The E-kit includes, Neighbour Day logo and posters, connection and calling cards (for bulk printing), and selfie and event marker signs. Also included, 'How to Social' with email drafts and graphics ready to use.

Stuck for an idea?

Here are a few ideas to start you thinking:

- Organise a Neighbour Day breakfast in your business park or shopping precinct in the week before Neighbour Day to connect with local business neighbours. You could include a terrific barista, barby breakfast and tasty treats.
- Bring a plate morning tea for your office only to promote your involvement with Neighbour Day, or with nearby business neighbours to share the neighbourly vibe!
- A Very neighbourly Bake-Off (Julie Goodwin is one of our Ambassadors!) Everyone could bring something they've baked to share and the tastiest treat could win an award. Share the recipes via Neighbour Day social media.
- Conservation Volunteers Australia (a Very Neighbourly Organisation) promotes March as 'Neighbour Month' and uses the theme for all conservation projects held in March. You could round up some of your people and [volunteer for a day!](#)
- There are plenty of volunteering opportunities that would sit well with being socially inclusive and connected e.g. homeless shelters, 'soup kitchens', etc.
- Lunchtime sausage sizzle - who doesn't like a sausage, a bit of bread and tomato sauce? Low cost, the aroma attracts good interest and gets people talking.
- Photo booth - #CreateConnections - just about everyone has a smartphone. Print out the 2020 selfie sign, bring in some fun 'dress up box' type items, and perhaps even have a makeshift frame - and you have a fun activity for your people. You can share the neighbourly messages on social and other media.
- Engage in Neighbour Day social media. Follow Neighbour Day on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Councils, community organisations and businesses can use social media to cross-promote neighbourly events and information.

The community you want starts at your front door!™