



## Relationships Australia's update on Neighbour Day 2020 in response to COVID19 [as at 1 September 2020]

Every day is neighbour day.

Relationships Australia acknowledges that right across the country, Australians are facing unprecedented times. We are in the middle of a worldwide pandemic and the strength we draw from each other, from our relationships and our wider communities, has never been more important. Changing conditions, and new directives from government, have necessitated a shift in the way we interact.

We acknowledge the sacrifices being made by the incredible people working in 'frontline and essential services' across the country, who are exhausted and putting themselves at risk each day, to keep us all safe. And to everyone else juggling life during this uncertain time, be it work (or no work), school, family, your relationships, we acknowledge your hardship.

Neighbour Day 2020 took place on Sunday 29 March, providing all Australians with an opportunity to build creative connections within their neighbourhoods and wider communities. Relationships Australia firmly believes in the power of the Australian community to support its most vulnerable, to tackle loneliness, and to work together to ensure healthy and safe relationships throughout the pandemic and beyond.

As the country grapples with extended periods of isolation, physical distancing measures and a re-think of how we operate our day-to-day lives, we want to remind everyone of the importance of social connections and support. Every day is neighbour day and this current crisis provides good reasons (even opportunities) to expand our connections and understanding of community and 'neighbours'.

We stress the importance of adhering to government requirements and guidelines that are designed to stop the spread of COVID-19 and recommend that people make themselves aware of the public health authorities' advice. Visit <https://www.health.gov.au/> to stay up to date and informed, so that you can keep yourselves and your neighbourhood healthy. Also consulting the World Health Organisation's guidelines and the advice of Australia's Chief Medical Officer (CMO) and each respective state and territory's CMOs will help people make informed decisions.

Given all that Australia has faced in recent times, with drought, bushfires, other natural disasters - and now COVID-19 with further lockdowns and hotspots around the country, the impacts on people's relationships may be felt for years to come.

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We encourage anyone who is currently adapting to the change in circumstances to make use of services where necessary, including by reviewing the range of helpful information and tip-sheets that have been produced across the Relationships Australia network, below.

- [Relationships Australia Canberra & Region](#)
- [Relationships Australia New South Wales](#)
- [Relationships Australia Northern Territory](#)
- [Relationships Australia Queensland](#)
- [Relationships Australia South Australia](#)
- [Relationships Australia Tasmania](#)
- [Relationships Australia Victoria](#)
- [Relationships Australia Western Australia](#)

The official annual Neighbour Day is a catalyst to encourage people across all communities to build and strengthen their social connections throughout the year. While getting together physically is not safe in many places around Australia, we encourage everyone to be creative and find other ways to connect and engage with their neighbours and communities.

For example, this could be online/virtual connections or small acts of kindness such as leaving calling or connection cards with a kind message and your phone number for those who are isolated, so that they can call you for a chat. In all you do, remember the importance of maintaining strict physical distancing, personal hygiene and other key actions to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Relationships Australia has published a range of opportunities to make [#CreativeConnections](#) on the [Neighbour Day website](#) and will continue providing ideas and tips on Neighbour Day social media channels to help people create connections that do not require neighbours to engage in person.

We encourage building positive and sustainable social connections, in whatever form best suits individuals and the communities of which they are a part.

**From the Neighbour Day team at Relationships Australia**

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