

80 GREAT IDEAS

for building neighbourly connections



Visit us for free support and resources to help you connect with your neighbours at www.neighbourhoodconnect.org.au.

||| TALLY MARK THOSE YOU LIKE!

Street focussed activities

1. Roaming Gnome

This is a street gnome that roams the street. If the gnome ends up in your yard it is your turn to relocate him in the neighbourhood. You might even dress him up in different themes and get local kids to look out for him.

2. Street Library

Use a recycled cabinet put in a front corner of someone's property for leaving/sharing books. Look at Littlefreelibrary.org for inspiration.

3. Walking school bus

If your street is within walking distance of the local school, gather parents and kids from your neighbourhood to walk to school as a group, creating a walking school bus.

4. Photography competition and/or exhibition

Invite neighbours to take photos of the things they love about their street. Exhibit the photos in the street and ask a local elected member or other person of interest to judge. Request a donated prize from a local business. Host a celebration for the photography competition.

5. Dress up your verandah

Decorate your front verandah and post it on Instagram. Check out your neighbours' decorations and start conversations about them. Put the challenge out to others via your community social media groups.

6. Selfie booth *

Set up a marquee with simple props and invite neighbours to come and use the "selfie booth". Ask them to share the photos on the street's social media pages.

7. Fairy lights

Put fairy lights in trees in your front yard and invite your neighbours to do the same. You can even host a get together under the lights once they are up.

8. Have a listening booth *

Have a street project to dress up letterboxes around different themes-Halloween, Christmas, Harmony Week etc. Walk the streets with your neighbours to look at the creative projects.

* **Note:** these activities might be easiest to be included at another local event where people are gathering, for example the local swap meet, or Farmer's market. This makes it easier to run this activity with the wider community and a ready audience of participants.

9. Dress up your letter box

Have a street project to dress up letterboxes around different themes-Halloween, Christmas, Harmony Week etc. Walk the streets with your neighbours to look at the creative projects.

10. Car washing Day

Set up an area for the children in the street to wash the neighbours' cars. Kids create a flyer to promote and letterbox drop to invite people along.

11. Street cricket

Host a game of cricket in yours and your neighbours' front yards. Invite all the children and parents to get involved.

12. Birthday party for your street

Have a birthday party for your street. It does not have to be a true date, just choose a date and each year that date becomes your street's birthday. Celebrate with a children's style birthday party in the street, in a park or on the front lawn. Invite all the households on the street. In place of a present, everyone brings a plate. Go all out and decorate, have games etc.

13. Walking group

Start a street walking group – with or without dogs, where children in prams and on bikes are welcome. Set a regular time each week to talk and walk.

14. Community project

Develop a community project for your whole street. Example: build bird feeders for the trees in your street, a street library or a street seat.

15. Street Christmas Tree

Decorate a significant tree in your street and dedicate it to be a Street Christmas Tree. Have an event to decorate the tree with neighbours.

Food and cooking

16. Roaming morning tea

Get together with your neighbours and plan a roaming morning tea for each month, with a different neighbour hosting each month and everyone brings a plate of food to share.

17. Local long table lunches or dinners

Invite every house on your street and ask them to bring a plate. Or consider a progressive dinner-see the how to guide over at:
www.neighbourhoodconnect.org.au/things-to-do-with-neighbours/.

18. Cake Bake-off

Have a street competition to showcase your neighbour's best baking efforts. Invite a local café owner or street celebrity to judge and celebrate over afternoon tea. See this how to guide to run a street bake-off here.

19. Group meals

Put a call out to people who like to eat with company and take in turns preparing meals and sharing or eating together.

20. BBQ

Make a regular time for a barbeque in the park and whoever is free comes along.

Culture, movies, music and books

21. Book club

Start up a book club by inviting your neighbours along for an afternoon tea. Take turns choosing a book to read. Meet as often as suits you and your neighbours.

22. Culture nights

Celebrate your street's diverse cultural mix through local gatherings across the year. Get together with your neighbours from different backgrounds and plan a shared meal, traditional music or a cultural performance.

23. House concerts

Gather your talented musicians, singers or poets for performance nights in each other backyards or homes. BYO drinks and shared food.

24. Walking tour

If a resident knows about the history of your area, they can lead a walking tour for all the newer residents.

25. Front yard movie night

Set up the TV, or projector if someone has one, set up chairs and blankets, make popcorn and have a family movie night. Families can bring a picnic dinner, drinks and snacks.

26. Art show

Showcase the street's artistic talent with a local exhibition in your home, apartment or laneway.

Families: Things to do

27. Footpath chalk drawings

Get some boxes of chalk and ask your neighbours and their children to decorate your street footpaths with images and welcoming messages. Extend the activity by having a street art competition.

28. D.I.Y. mud kitchen

Children love mud kitchens. Set up a mud kitchen in the front yard and invite the neighbours to bring their children to play in it. Parents can have a cuppa together while the children play.

<p>29. Have a weekly 'Happy Hour'</p> <p>Whoever is free drops in to say hello at a designated house or front porch. This may or may not include having a drink – it's more about being social!</p>	
<p>30. Treasure hunt</p> <p>Organise a street treasure hunt – finish with a BBQ.</p>	
<p>31. Street cubby building day</p> <p>Bring local children together to build a cubby together or visit each other's cubby houses. Keep it simple; think cardboard boxes and recycled materials!</p>	
<p>32. Front yard sporting match viewing</p> <p>Bring the TV into the front yard and neighbours come together to watch the match. Everyone brings their own refreshments.</p>	
<p>33. Create a Mothers or Fathers group</p> <p>Make a regular time for parents and kids to meet at the park to play games together.</p>	
<p>34. Games afternoon</p> <p>Set up the TV, or projector if someone has one, set up chairs and blankets, make popcorn and have a family movie night. Families can bring a picnic dinner, drinks and snacks.</p>	

Kids activities

<p>35. Hello Cards</p> <p>Children can create a hello card and put it in a neighbour's letterboxes. Each household with children creates them for different houses, particularly for residents who do not have children or live on their own.</p>	
<p>36. Ice-cream party</p> <p>Organise a street ice-cream party. Each household brings a different flavour tub of ice-cream to share.</p>	
<p>37. Random acts of kindness</p> <p>Encourage your children to do random acts of kindness for others in the street particularly the elderly or those who live on their own and new residents.</p>	
<p>38. Stargazing night</p> <p>Bring your children out into the street or front yards to do stargazing. This will work best if the house lights are off to reduce light pollution. Neighbours with binoculars or telescopes can bring them along.</p>	
<p>39. Lego building</p> <p>Put a blanket and some boxes of Lego in the front yard and invite the neighbours to come and build with Lego. Remember, no one is ever too old to build with Lego so don't just invite neighbours with children.</p>	

40. Rhyme-time or Storytime

Hold a Rhyme-time or Storytime in your front yard. Invite your neighbours through a letterbox drop. Neighbours can take turns in running each one.

41. Talent show

Set up the TV, or projector if someone has one, set up chairs and blankets, make popcorn and have a family movie night. Families can bring a picnic dinner, drinks and snacks.

42. Homework club

Start a homework club where children can do their homework together and help each other. This is especially good if you have neighbours from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds as it can sometimes be difficult for parents to help their children with their homework. Invite neighbours to be involved. Include neighbours without children as they may enjoy helping the children in ways such as listening to them read.

Activities for anyone

43. Create a dog walking group

With other dog owners in the street and plan dog walks together.

44. Making new friends

Find out if you have a group home for people with a disability in your area and if you do, visit and find out how you can connect with the residents, many of whom would love to be a part of their community but may not know how.

45. Coffee date

Make a regular time for socialising over a cuppa, at a local café or at someone's home.

46. Start a choir and sing together

A community choir lets anyone in – no need to be able to sing, it's all about having fun! The choir might be as simple as singing in each other's homes or, as confidence builds consider a neighbourhood performance.

47. Walking group

Try and set a designated time for a group walk or run with neighbours. This might happen via a specific What's App group for neighbours who want to be motivated and meet regularly.

48. Pot- luck dinner

Everyone brings a dish to share. This could be in a home, backyard, front yard or as a long table dinner.

49. Card game

Invite your neighbours to a street card game. Set up a table in the front yard or a park and invite neighbours to come along and play some cards.

50. Make use of local businesses

For meeting with neighbours – this provides a place to meet and encourages people to support their local businesses chat when you see your neighbours.

51. Group meals

Put a call out to people who like to eat with company and take in turns preparing meals and sharing.

Planting, growing and gardening

52. Bunnings gardening workshop

Some Bunnings stores will host free community garden workshops for groups. You can learn tips and tricks for DIY or gardening, and you invite all your neighbours to get involved. Contact your local Bunnings Activity Organiser for more information.

53. Compost bin or worm farm

Create a communal street compost or worm farm for everyone's vegetable waste. Some residents will need to take the lead on this one to ensure it is managed properly. Everyone can share the compost or worm juice that is produced.

54. Plant a lemon tree for the street

Lemons are the go-to produce someone call always make use of. A great street resource!

55. Verge planting day

Organise a street verge planting day – be proud of where you live. Check out your local council to see how they can support this project.

56. Communal fruit trees

Plant fruit trees in your front yard and invite others in your street to do the same. Nurture the trees together and as trees grow, encourage children to pick fruit whenever they like. In bountiful harvests times, consider communal picking and cooking together.

57. Garden Blitz

Find others who enjoy gardening and take in turns working on each other's gardens for short busy bees to get jobs done.

58. Share or swap fruit, herbs or veggies

If you grow more than you need, share or swap fruit, herbs or veggies!

59. Olive harvesting

Take a team of neighbours around the streets to harvest each others olives and find a local presser that can make it in to oil to share.

Sharing stuff

60. Buy food in bulk

Buy food in bulk with neighbours to save money and reduce packaging.

61. Book swap/ street Library

Use a recycled cabinet put in a front corner of someone's property for leaving/sharing books. Look at <https://littlefreelibrary.org/> for inspiration.

62. Sharing list

Share a list of everything you are happy to share with your neighbours (tools, recipes, skills, advice, help with specific things) along with your requests and then call on neighbours to help when you need it.

63. Develop plans

Develop plans to handle possible disasters and unusual weather events: fire, flood, storms, heatwaves.

64. Make an offer

Offer to collect mail, feed pets and keep an eye on each other's property when going away.

65. Plant swap

Organise a plant swap day and invite your neighbours to take cuttings from your garden and you take some from theirs.

66. Work exchange

"I will mow your lawn this month, you mow mine next month" or "I mow your lawn in exchange for you doing something different for me" This works well and saves people money on services while creating relationships.

67. Have a clothes / household stuff swap

Have a clothes / household stuff swap and donate what's left to an op shop.

68. Guest speakers

Find speakers to talk with the group about any topics of interest (council, local services, businesses or others may help find speakers).

69. Garage sale

Invite all your neighbours to come together for a combined garage sale on the same day. Check out <https://www.garagesaletrail.com.au/> for inspiration and resources.

70. Street book exchange/library

Build a street exchange box. It can be as simple or as fancy as you like. Neighbours can then swap books, magazines, jigsaw puzzles or board games.

71. Buy solar panels

Buy solar panels jointly, particularly if you're in an apartment building.

72. Street swap meet

Organise a street swap meet in your garage or in the local park. Invite all your neighbours to attend and share/swap things they no longer need.

73. Take actions to live more sustainably

Consider joining with your neighbours to take on a sustainability project or learn more. Check out <http://www.transitionnetwork.org/> or additionally, if you are in WA or SA check out <https://livingsmart.org.au/>.

Welcoming new neighbours

74. Share contact details

Give your number to elderly neighbours or people with a disability or their carers in case they need a hand and check in on them – phone or visit – in a heatwave, disaster or if the power goes out. This could save a life.

75. Run a Neighbour Day event

Run a Neighbour Day event each year (end of March) and invite all the new and old neighbours together via a letterbox drop. More at <https://neighbourday.org/>

76. Look out for elderly neighbours

Look out for elderly neighbours and ones with a disability and be sure to include them in your neighbourhood events. Ask them how you can provide any support to help them live independently: Bins? Changing a globe? A lift to the shops or an appointment?

77. Be visible

Walk more, relax on a front porch or garden open to the street so that you get to interact more with your neighbours. Make the first move and say hello!

78. Social media

Create a closed street Facebook or Instagram group. Invite your neighbours to join via a letterbox drop. Use the group to share ideas, swap items or services and generally support each other.

79. Stop and chat

When you see your neighbours, ask their name and get to know them.

80. Street directory

Include everyone's contact details and ask each person to provide a fun fact about themselves to make it interesting! You can even include a section where people can write what they are interested in being involved in.

Neighbourhood Connect is a national community organisation which helps people across Australia create neighbourhood groups to encourage happier, safer and more connected communities. Because life is better when we belong.

References: this list comes from a variety of sources including City of Kwinana-52 Ways to Connect with your Neighbours.