



Street by Street

— BRINGING NEIGHBOURS TOGETHER —



COMMUNITY CONNECTOR KIT

www.streetbystreet.org.au



A project of the
Centre for Civil Society



An invitation to you.

Dear Kindred Spirit,



You may have already decided to be a Community Connector or you may be wanting to know more just so that you can decide if it's a role for you. Like me, you may have been active in community life and felt the benefits of belonging to a great community of people who do things together and care about one another. Or you may have heard stories from those who have, and wished you could experience it too.

While Community Connectors will come in all shapes and sizes, most would see themselves in the following description:

- You like people and relate easily to most people.
- You find it satisfying to contribute and have an idea how to organise things.
- You know that anything worthwhile takes some effort, and that there are always some bumps along the road.
- You know that the sky is the limit when people come together with a positive attitude and a willingness to work together.
- You lead in a way that encourages others to step up and lead also.
- You're comfortable with differences, and welcoming to all. You want to do what you can to create a successful group; you don't want to control it.

You may be experienced and confident in community work, or you may just be willing to give it a go, developing new skills along the way. Either way, you're not alone. You'll have support through the Street by Street Project – I can support you by phone, email or skype, as can other Community Connectors. You can use the ideas, examples and templates on our website. I particularly invite you to take a look at a video from Jim Diers, for a reminder about the joy and fun of creating vibrant neighbourhoods. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uwA02v9gfOc>

With this Community Connector kit, and other supports, we're doing our best to encourage you to start a Street by Street group that will build connections amongst your neighbours and explore the many exciting possibilities those connections bring. We hope you will do some amazing things together and reap the benefits of living life surrounded by people you know and like.

Together, let's create a neighbourhood movement.

Please contact me for further information at irene@streetbystreet.org.au.

Yours in collaboration,

Irene Opper

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1. The Street by Street Project

Street by Street is a national project to foster local neighbourhood community building. Our vision is that all over Australia, people will connect with their neighbours, help one another and make amazing things happen, street by street. The Street by Street initiative provides a central hub to facilitate the spread of neighbourhood groups by making it easy for groups to form. We do this by providing a range of resources, tips, tools and advice via phone, email and our website www.streetbystreet.org.au. We link up Community Connectors so we can keep sharing and learning about creating community.

2. The Community Connector's Role

Community Connectors are the most important people in this project – without you, there wouldn't be a neighbour group in your area. Connectors are women and men of action, who organise things and make everyone feel welcome.

Your role is, firstly, to bring your neighbours together for an initial gathering. We'll step you through the process and provide a sample invitation, contact forms and ideas for what your neighbours can do together. You will be providing the leadership that guides the group as it comes together and begins to make plans for how to build neighbourhood connections. You will probably be facilitating the initial gatherings.

In a nutshell, the role of the Community Connector is to inspire engagement. It's a matter of listening to people, drawing out their strengths, and helping to translate ideas into action. You won't be alone in doing this but as a Community Connector you will be keeping a watchful eye on ensuring that strong relationships are forming – what one wise person called 'weaving the social fabric.'

Ideally, you ensure that good records are kept of the group's progress and experience, that your group reflects on progress from time to time, solves any problems, plans ahead and participates in evaluation. Some Connectors are also on our Project Team, helping to grow the national project – we'd welcome your contribution.

3. Sharing the Connecting role

You might be starting this role solo but we believe it's far better, and more enjoyable, to find one or two others (or more) to share the role with you. You can ask the neighbours you meet in the early gatherings if anyone would like to join you as an organiser or you can invite the keenest people directly.





4. Starting a Street by Street Neighbour Group

1. Have a chat with us on the phone.
2. Have a look at our invitation template – it prompts you to consider where and when to have a gathering with your neighbours.
3. Choose a time for the first gathering: are your neighbours more likely to be free during the day or the evening? Weekdays or weekend? Daytime during the weekend can be a good place to start as those in and out of the workforce can usually make it.
5. Choose a suitable place for the first gathering. This could be in a local coffee shop, a community space within your neighbourhood (a library meeting room, for example, or school hall), a park or a home. Refreshments are always good and we recommend making it easy – everyone buying their own at a café, or everyone bringing a plate to a park or home. Check that the venue is accessible and that the acoustics are suitable: it's important that people can hear one another. If there are likely to be children attending the gathering, you might come prepared with some textas and paper or an iPad for them to play with.
6. Decide on an area in your neighbourhood that you would like to include. You can look at Google maps on a computer or look at a street directory and see what area around you seems logical. This might be just the houses in your street, the apartments in your building or complex, or a wider area of up to 200-400 households. Experience has shown us that only a minority of neighbours will participate so we recommend giving an invitation to a few hundred households – don't worry, most won't turn up! Make a guesstimate of the number of invitations you'll need, or take a walk and count the households.
7. Once you've set the time and place, prepare an invitation to place in the letterbox of all the households in your precinct. Make sure there is a way for those who are interested but can't make the first meeting to register their interest so they can be involved in future gatherings. You can email a draft to us, as sometimes we can spot something missing, and so we know you are going ahead.
8. Local services may be willing to help with photocopying, a venue or in other ways. The Resource Kit on our website includes more information on how to involve them.
9. Copy your invitations and letter-drop them to your neighbours. You may want to knock on doors and introduce yourself and invite people personally, leaving the invitation with them. Either way is fine.
10. Take RSVPs so you know how many to expect and collect email addresses from those who express interest but can't make the first gathering, so you can invite them to future get-togethers.

Date set ✓ venue chosen ✓ invitations out ✓ ...you are ready to meet!



5. Your first gatherings

Set a friendly, informal tone. You can ask everyone to share a bit about themselves, such as which street they live in, how long they've been in the area, what they like about it, what appealed to them about meeting their neighbours and any ideas they have of what they'd like to do together. Regular social get togethers are the key for neighbours to get to know one another and develop a sense of community, so checking when and where these should be held is a good thing to do early. Working out what the common interests are and what else you might want to do together can arise over time.

Check out our Resource Kit at www.streetbystreet.org.au/resources-and-inspiration for ideas on how you might break the ice or get a discussion going.

Don't forget to print off the Street By Street Contact Sheet to take along to record your neighbours contact details for follow up!

6. Respecting privacy

Our Contact Sheet template explains that sharing of at least email addresses will enable neighbours to communicate with each other. If anyone is not comfortable with this, they can ask someone pass on the information to them. Sharing of further details is at the choice of participants. It is important to only share information that you have been given permission to share. Obviously, neighbours can ask to be taken off the list should they wish.

7. Photos

It's great to take photos and share the best of them with your neighbour group and with us for our website, facebook page and/or other means of promoting neighbour groups. To respect privacy, please ask people if they are comfortable with photos being taken for this purpose and ask anyone who isn't to please step aside before photos are taken.

8. Follow up after your get-together

After you have met for the first time, you should have a better understanding of the types of people interested and how keen they are to keep meeting.

A follow up email after the first meeting is a good idea, including those who attended and those who expressed interest but couldn't make it. Thanking people for coming, giving a quick review of the success of the event and sharing photographs will help keep up the momentum of the first meeting and for participating in future events.





It's a good idea to ask for ideas for a name for the group; as people are not drawn from an entire suburb, using the suburb as the name might result in people from further afield wanting to join. We suggest people outside your area contact us for support to start a group in their area.

Having everyone contribute shares the workload and can help nurture a stronger commitment from group members who have a bigger stake in the group's success. More leaders / organisers make more activities possible.

9. Communicating between gatherings: How will we stay in touch?

The easiest way to communicate within a group is via email and phones. We can share with you tools that enable you to survey your group or allow everyone to write on the one document.

10. What will our neighbour group do?

Each group will be different. We encourage you to experiment. Depending on what your group decides there could be a set time each week/fortnight/month when some members will be at a nominated coffee shop or park? Or, if people are too busy to gather very regularly, a designated few people in the group might set some dates for four or five different gatherings over the year.

For more ideas of ways to bring your group together, [see the ideas for connecting with neighbours](#) at the website.

11. More help

A Resource Kit is available to support Community Connectors in running a neighbourhood group. It includes more information on connecting with community partners, planning and running a more formalised gathering, dealing with challenges and creating a safe and comfortable neighbourhood group. www.streetbystreet.org.au/resources-and-inspiration

You can talk to us or email us to discuss your neighbour group. See the Contact Us section of the website.

12. The national team of Community Connectors

You and your co-Connectors are part of a team of people who are building community across Australia. We provide a forum for you to share what is happening in your neighbour group, discuss issues and ideas and ask questions, so please ensure we have the details of all Connectors for your group.

Thanks for being part of the Street by Street Project!