

Good Neighbours Make Great Neighbourhoods

Know your neighbours, be the change where you live
Start by popping your head over the fence and saying “hello”.

WHAT is the Know Your Neighbour Campaign?

Know Your Neighbour is about turning strangers into neighbours and streets into neighbourhoods. It's not about big events, it's about Manningham residents taking the time to take part in small and local acts of neighbourliness. For some that may mean a first wave or smile, a chat over the fence, inviting a neighbour over for a cuppa or holding a street barbeque. Put simply, it's about going one step further in getting to know those 'next door'.



HOW it all began

The Know Your Neighbour Campaign, supported by Manningham Council, promotes Neighbour Day, Australia's annual celebration of community, held each year on the last Sunday of March. Neighbour Day was founded in Melbourne in March 2003 by Andrew Heslop after the remains of an elderly woman were found inside her suburban home. Mrs Elsie Brown had been dead for two years – forgotten by her neighbours, her friends and her family.

While Andrew did not know Mrs Brown he was appalled by the apparent ease in which the world had left her behind. Widespread local and national media interest followed and it was this coverage that prompted Andrew to suggest a 'National Check on Your Neighbour Day' in a letter to the editor in The Age.

Andrew was inspired by his own neighbour – an active resident in his street who mowed his neighbours' nature strips, picked up rubbish bins, mended loose gates and fence pickets, and took care of the odd jobs which needed to be done.

Andrew's concept was refined and renamed, and on Sunday 30 March 2003 the first Neighbour Day was observed. It generated widespread media coverage and support, primarily because of the simplicity of the idea and the ease with which Australians everywhere could take part.

Since 2003, the evolution of Neighbour Day has been quite remarkable. What started as a warning to check on elderly neighbours has grown into a wider annual celebration of strong communities and friendly streets. People of all ages participate because everyone everywhere is a neighbour no matter where they live or their personal circumstances.

Not only do residents hold barbeques and street parties to celebrate but councils and other local government bodies hold major festivals and community events.

There are plans to make Neighbour Day a global event as an official United Nation's Observance Day following ratification by the General Assembly; a great development for an Australian idea.

Do you know your neighbour? How strong are your *connections* to the local community? Do your children *play* with other children in the street? **Do you have an older neighbour who would enjoy a cup tea and a chat?** Who collects your *mail* when you're away? Can you call your *neighbour* if there's an emergency? **Need a local walking buddy, ask a neighbour.** Help the environment, *carpool* your kids and their mates to school. **Do you wave and say hello to your neighbour?** Do you *look out* for your older neighbours in a heatwave?

WHY knowing your neighbours is so important

When people make the choice to be a good neighbour, individuals, families and neighbourhoods benefit. We know that when Australian communities foster connection and everyday 'neighbourliness', they are soon safer, stronger and more resilient. Besides this, our neighbourhoods provide a great chance for us to meet people who are different from us, which can help us learn how to connect with a variety of people. What stops us from getting to know our neighbours better – fear, uncertainty, nerves? Whatever the reason, Know Your Neighbour provides the opportunity, support and knowledge to bridge a connection with those over the fence.

WHO is it for?

Know Your Neighbour is for all Manningham residents. Our long term vision is for every household in Manningham to join in the fun and to increasingly give a little more neighbourliness every day. This campaign belongs to everyday people, people, like you and me, who choose to make a difference in our neighbourhoods by starting in our own backyard.

Know Your Neighbour Ideas: we've got you covered

Share food

- Share food together; organise a street barbeque, morning / afternoon tea, pot luck dinner, or pancake breakfast. Ask neighbours to bring a plate to share.
- Progressive dinner party; move between houses for each course, entrée, main, dessert and coffee.
- Bake something to share; a cake, a batch of muffins or some biscuits for your neighbours to enjoy. Go door-to-door and drop them off.
- Share homegrown produce; if your veggie patch is overflowing, share some of the produce with your neighbours.

Games and activities

- Organise a sports or games afternoon for the kids in the neighbourhood. This could include egg and spoon, sack or relay races, chalk drawing, treasure hunt, or a soccer, aussie rules, or cricket game for everyone to enjoy.
- Lolly / Easter egg hunt; hide lollies / Easter eggs in a nearby park or a neighbour's large backyard for kids to find.
- Make up a list of questions for people to ask and find out about each other to break the ice.

Indoor activities

- Start a street book club; invite neighbours over to discuss your favourite books.
- Have a tea party; organise a group of neighbours to bring a plate of sandwiches, scones or muffins to share.
- Organise a DIY party; make natural cleaners, chutneys, homemade facials or learn to bake something new together.

Swap and share

- Do a street clothes swap; recycle clothes to update your wardrobe
- Mow their grass; next time you mow your nature strip mow your neighbour's as well.
- Organise a street clean-up / gardening working bee.
- Exchange phone numbers in case of emergencies. With their permission, help your neighbours by giving them all a copy of each other's contacts
- Keep safe; set up a Neighbourhood Watch group or organise a home safety gathering with your neighbours (visit www.nhw.com.au).
- Swap, meet and greet; grab your 'perfectly-useful-but-not-to-you-anymore' items and invite your neighbours to attend a swap meet.
- Exchange greetings in different languages; with neighbours' help, try to learn some basic phrases of the various languages spoken in your street / neighbourhood.

Get connected

- Join the Neighbour Day Facebook page: www.facebook.com/neighbourday
- Are you and your neighbours on Facebook? Set up a street / neighbourhood Facebook group to help people meet neighbours, organise get togethers, swap goods, and share information.
- Set up an informal and inclusive residents' group with a few neighbours if there isn't one in your area to keep the momentum moving after your Know Your Neighbour activity.

Out of the box

- Get creative with your neighbours and decorate your letterboxes together.
- Do you enjoy writing? Make a book of stories with some neighbours to record memories that celebrate great things about your street.
- Find out who plays what instrument in your street and organize a musical jam session.
- Start a neighbourhood library for things you and neighbours are happy to lend / share with each other (e.g. ladders, tools, books, toys, sports gear, music, art and craft supplies).
- Giant garage sale; invite your neighbours to join you in one big garage sale.

10 Steps to kick start your Know Your Neighbour activity

1. Start simple

If you already know one or two neighbours, ask them if they have any ideas and would like to help out. If you don't know any neighbours, introduce yourself or flier drop with your contact details asking for help to organise your local activity.

2. Decide on your local activity

What do you want to do? Decide on what, where and how you will organise your event. Start small; you could invite your neighbours over for a cuppa or say hello to them over the fence. Want to have a get together? See our ideas for what participants have done. Keep it simple and most importantly, have fun!

3. Follow up with your keen neighbours

Keep talking with them about ideas, make a plan and delegate tasks. Gather email addresses or phone numbers so you can keep in touch in the weeks leading up to your event.

4. Organise your invitations

Include all the details – what, where, when, who. Involve kids along the way; for example, you could ask your kids (or your neighbours' kids) to help design the invitation. Put the invites into your neighbours' letterboxes at least two weeks before the event.

5. Invite people in person

In the week before your event, go door-to-door and invite your neighbours in person. Make sure you go with someone else to stay safe. If some of your neighbours have limited English abilities, try to find ways to communicate and include them as this will help everyone feel welcome and part of the neighbourhood.

6. Keep everyone involved

Invite input from people and take up offers of help. The more people involved in organising, the easier it is for you on the day. Allocate activities and keep people informed on how the planning for your event is going.

7. Remind them again

A few days before the event, you could put a simple reminder note in your neighbours' letterboxes.

8. On the day, be a good host

Arrive early to set up and welcome people. Look out for neighbours who don't know anyone, and do your best to make everyone feel welcome. Name tags (with neighbours' house numbers) can be a great help.

9. Plan to stay in touch with each other

During the event collect your neighbours' contact details (if they are happy to share them). This way you can keep in touch throughout the year.

10. Turn your street into a neighbourhood

Try to keep the neighbourly connections going. What other activities can you get involved in during the year? Do you want to set up a Neighbourhood Watch group? Keep in touch with everybody and build momentum for local activities year round. Share your stories on www.neighbourday.org or www.facebook.com/neighbourday.

HAVE FUN!



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