

TOWNSVILLE

REGION

Neighbours Party Kit

AN EASY GUIDE TO ORGANISING
A NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTY



Neighbours Party Kit

A Neighbours Party is an opportunity for neighbours to get together, meet each other, have fun and build relationships with others that live close by.

TOP 10 REASONS TO HOLD A NEIGHBOURS PARTY

- 1.** To have fun! No excuses or reasons are needed to celebrate.
- 2.** To provide an opportunity to get to know your neighbours and where they live.
- 3.** To establish new friendships.
- 4.** To increase a sense of belonging to a community, especially for new residents.
- 5.** To meet neighbours in your street or local area who might be able to help you with a gardening problem, or lend you that needed ingredient for your recipe.
- 6.** To encourage neighbours to look after the neighbourhood and look out for each other.
- 7.** To help with safety and crime prevention by knowing who lives where.
- 8.** To learn a little about your neighbours and what interests they have.
- 9.** To increase a sense of trust with your neighbours and encourage wellbeing with the community.
- 10.** To learn about community history from neighbours who have lived in the neighbourhood for a long period of time.

As friendships grow, so do opportunities for borrowing and sharing of tools, skills, resources and information etc.





PLANNING YOUR NEIGHBOURS PARTY

THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN ORGANISING YOUR EVENT

GETTING STARTED

The idea of a Neighbours Party is to bring neighbours together and provide a proactive approach in getting to know others who live nearby. It's a good idea to find one or two neighbours who can help you with the event and provide support to bring it all together on the day. You could take the 'Lone Ranger' approach to organising the Neighbours Party, however, it may make it more difficult to find someone else to organise it next time. As they say, "many hands make light work" and it's a great start to getting to know people.

The first step is to create a working party (or decide to go-it-alone). It is important to provide opportunities for all people organising the event to help in the decision making process. Planning should start 2 – 3 months in advance and you may need 3 – 4 meetings with the working party to discuss and plan the event.

If this is the first time a Neighbours Party has been organised in your area, you may want to send out a letter/flyer with the following information:

- » Explain what a Neighbours Party is.
- » Encourage attendance.
- » Share some of the benefits of holding a Neighbours Party, and;
- » Seek feedback from your neighbours about their interest in attending a Neighbours Party and identify possible dates and times to have the event.

If you have a working party, get their support to help develop the flyer, distribute it to neighbours and collate the response that you receive. You may even want to ask some youth in your neighbourhood to drop the flyers in the mailboxes on behalf of the working party. For an example of a letter to gauge interest from your neighbours, have a look at the Tools and Templates section on page 9.



TYPES OF NEIGHBOURS PARTIES

WHICH TYPE OF PARTY WILL WORK BEST IN YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD?

- » **BBQs:** Everyone brings their own meat, salads and drinks. There may even be an option for everyone to share. If you chose this option, ensure there is access to one or more BBQs.
- » **Picnics:** Everyone brings their own meal.
- » **Pot Luck:** Everyone brings one dish to share. This may be an ideal way to sample cuisines from other parts of the world and share stories of your neighbour's cultural heritage.
- » **Tea Party:** Everyone brings along their coffee/tea cups and you have a cuppa together.
- » **Catered:** Everyone shares the cost and the food is purchased. If it is agreed to use this option, ensure you consider the cultural/dietary needs of people attending. For example, you may need to consider having vegetarian, gluten free or halal options.

When deciding on the type of Neighbours Party to hold, also consider whether guests will need to supply their own items, which may include:

- » Chairs
- » Picnic Blankets
- » Cutlery
- » Plates
- » Cups
- » Drinks

Remember! Try to keep it as simple as possible.



HOW BIG TO MAKE IT?

In most circumstances, it is best to start off with a smaller event rather than a large one. This will allow you to test the waters and if it is a positive experience, you can always grow the event in the future.

In selecting who to invite, use natural neighbourhood boundaries where possible, such as the end of a street, a road junction, vacant blocks etc., and you must invite everyone from within the selected boundary area.

If the working party has a good idea of who lives in the selected boundary area, you may be able to estimate how many adults, teenagers and children there might be in attendance. If you are not familiar with your neighbours and who might attend, it could be worth asking in the RSVPs for the number of people who may attend from each household and their names.

The working party should decide early if the Neighbours Party is restricted to those who live on the street/block only, or whether people can invite friends/relatives who live elsewhere, and if yes, how many can attend. Also think about whether pets are able to come to the Neighbours Party. Make it clear in your invitation who can be invited.



LOCATION

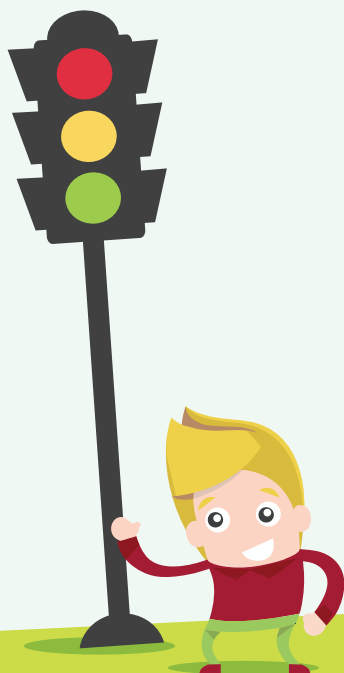
When choosing where to hold the Neighbours Party, the safety and accessibility of a location is an important factor to consider in your planning. Not only should a location be safe for all people attending, it should also be accessible for seniors, people with disabilities and parents/guardians of small children in prams.

» **Parks or other public open space:** If you are planning a picnic-style party or using a council BBQ at a park, no bookings are required, however it is good practice to let Council's Venues Team know that you will be holding a Neighbours Party at a park. They will be able to provide further advice about facilities available at the proposed parkland, for example, BBQs, toilet amenities, taps and ease of access etc.

The Venues Team will also be able to tell you if there are any other events planned in that park on the day you have proposed your Neighbours Party and provide advice about any rules and regulations associated with the use of parkland. For more information on the use of public park facilities visit the Townsville City Council website at www.townsville.qld.gov.au/facilities/bookings or call Venues on **1300 878 001**.

» **Open space or nature strips in housing developments:** You will need to visit the sales office of the developer and get permission to use the space for your Neighbours Party. Again, it is important to consider what facilities you will have available on site in relation to running water, toilets, BBQs and ease of access.

» **The front/back garden of someone's house in your street:** Someone may volunteer to hold the Neighbours Party in their front or back garden. This is definitely a more casual approach; however, this person should be fully responsible for hosting and managing the party, as it will be on their property. They will need to make decisions on how their yard will be used for the Neighbours Party and these rules should be shared with those people attending.



WHEN TO HOLD THE NEIGHBOURS PARTY

The end of April to mid-October is a good period during the year in Townsville to hold an event. These months tend to be cooler and it's less likely to be raining.

A weekend or public holiday is often the best times for a Neighbours Party, however, also take into consideration that your neighbours may have other commitments during these times, such as work or sporting obligations. Consider times and dates when people would most likely be home.

Daylight hours are generally the best time to hold a Neighbours Party. Remember to keep in mind who lives in the neighbourhood when setting the hours for the party and keep the duration of the event to a maximum of 2 – 3 hours.

GETTING THE WORD OUT

If it is agreed that a Neighbours Party will be held, it is important to keep all of your neighbours informed through both written and verbal communication. Here are some ideas on how you can get the word out:

- » Create an invitation/flyer for the Neighbours Party and distribute to your neighbours with a request to drop back their RSVPs for the event in your mailbox. Ensure you outline any specific details guests should know about attending the party. For example:
 - What type of Neighbours Party (theme).
 - Date and Time (be specific about start and finish times)
 - Who can attend (inc. pets).
 - What to bring.
 - What will happen at the Neighbours Party.

For an example of an invitation have a look at the Tools and Templates section on page 12.

- » Information or invitations can be shared with your neighbours by going door-to-door. This adds a personal touch and people may offer to help. This approach also helps to get to know any new residents in the area.
- » A casual approach can be used to inform neighbours as you see them out walking the dog, gardening or cleaning their car.
- » If you know your neighbours' phone numbers, you may like to give them a call to discuss the event.
- » Take every opportunity to talk about your plans in the neighbourhood as often as possible prior to the event.



ALLOCATING TASKS

As many hands make light work, it is important to consider the allocation of tasks amongst the working party, and anyone else that is willing to take on one or two tasks associated with planning and delivering the Neighbours Party. Tasks will include things that will need to be done leading up to the event and on the day itself.

Compiling a list of tasks or a checklist is a good way to keep on track and ensure all tasks have been allocated and completed. For more information on ideas of what to include in your checklist have a look at the Tools and Templates section on page 11.



A FEW EXTRA THINGS TO CONSIDER

- » It is good practice to register your party with your local police station. QLD Police Service has a state wide dedicated Party Safe Program which has helpful advice and resources to support you to organise a party that is safe and abides by the law.

To register your party and for more information on the Party Safe Program, as well as links to helpful resources, go to **www.police.qld.gov/party**. To find your nearest local police station, consult your local telephone directory or search “station locator” on the QLD Police website.

- » Remember! Invitations should not be distributed to neighbours until all details have been locked in, such as, date, time and location.
- » Wherever you decide to have your Neighbours Party, always be mindful of noise levels and respect others privacy, rights and wellbeing.
- » Consider the use of marquees to provide shade and have sunscreen on offer to help protect from the sun. Remind guests in the invitation to bring hats and sunglasses if they are required.
- » Are there any neighbours who might come along to the Neighbours Party that may require some assistance to attend? Some consideration may need to be given to assist seniors or people with disabilities to carry chairs, eskies or other items to the Neighbours Party.

- » Some other things you may also wish to include are:

- Having a first aid kit accessible during the event.
- Seeking permission to take photos at the event (everyone at the event has a responsibility to ask if it's ok to take photos of others).
- Appointing someone to be a key contact person for the event. This person's name and number can be used on invitations and any other documents (with their permission) used to register the Neighbours Party.
- Considering ways to increase safety for everyone by placing seating, activities, games etc away from BBQs, electrical devices or other hazards. Ensure there is a mutual understanding that safety is everyone's responsibility and all parents should be accountable for the safety of their children at all times at the party.
- Taking into consideration a wet weather contingency. Ensure guests are well aware of what will happen if it rains on the day of the scheduled Neighbours Party.
- Ensuring any resources utilised are in good working order. For example, BBQs, cooking equipment, chairs, tables, or marquees.
- Having a layout plan of where equipment/chairs/tables/ BBQs etc will be set up. Also outline where activities will occur, especially if the activities are pre-planned.
- Avoiding the use of social media (e.g. Facebook, Instagram), SMS, email or notice boards for distribution of invitations to the Neighbours Party.

ON THE DAY OF THE NEIGHBOURS PARTY

ROLE OF THE ORGANISERS

- » Oversee the set-up of the Neighbours Party and provide direction to neighbours as to where they can put their equipment etc.
- » Greet the guests as they arrive at the Neighbours Party and hand out name tags.
- » Introduce neighbours and help people to make connections.
- » Facilitate activities or games that are played on the day. Someone will need to be prepared to guide others through how to be involved.
- » Ensure that the event stays on schedule and concludes at the specified time.
- » Manage the clean-up at the end of the event. Encourage everyone to do their part to help out.



SET UP

- » Set up a sign-in book in which neighbours may like to share their contact information with others for future contact and organisation of Neighbours Parties.
- » Provide name tags for guests (sticky labels are fine) and invite your neighbours to use them as a way to get to know others.
- » If you are going to have marquees, set these up to provide shade for guests.
- » Allocate one or two people to assist neighbours who might need support to get to the Neighbours Party or carry items.
- » Set up tables for the food and have plenty of garbage bins or bags available to collect rubbish. You may consider having a bin for general waste and one for recycling.
- » If utilising BBQs, ensure they are clean and functioning and set up items that will be needed to serve.
- » Hang decorations (if you are having them). Remember, decorations should be fully disposed of at the end of the party, along with rubbish.
- » If guests are bringing food to share, have tags for each of the dishes, so people know what they are eating.



ACTIVITIES DURING THE NEIGHBOURS PARTY

- » Ice breaker activities are great and provide opportunities to meet new people. For some ideas on icebreaker activities, see the Tools and Templates section on page 13.
- » Over the centuries food has always had a very social component in many societies. If there are dishes to share that have a cultural element, encourage the makers to tell their story about where the food or recipe came from. There may be an opportunity to swap recipes between neighbours.
- » Plan a few activities that children can be involved in. For the most part they should be able to come up with their own games to play, however you may help them get started by having activities such as hopscotch, chalk art or jump rope.
- » Take time to introduce one another and point out your house. This can be done in a game format and you may go around in a circle and each person introduces themselves.
- » Group games are fun and you might see if someone wants to organise a game of cricket, bocce or volleyball.
- » Encourage talented neighbours such as musicians or magicians in your neighbourhood to share their talents.
- » To ensure it is a casual event, allow the majority of the neighbours to determine what happens during the event.



ACTIVITIES AFTER THE EVENT

After the Neighbours Party, you may want to check in with those who attended to see what they thought of the event. This will gauge interest in future Neighbours Parties and collect ideas on what could be organised next time.

Alternatively, why not think about other ways you can interact with your neighbours on a regular basis. You might:

- » Design a streetscape project.
- » Set up a community garden.
- » Develop a walking group.
- » Form a dog walking group.
- » Establish an exercise group.
- » Have regular get-togethers including BBQs.
- » Start a gardening group.
- » Have a neighbourhood garden competition.
- » Coordinate a regular fruit and veggie swap.
- » Organise a regular community clean-up day.
- » Arrange a mega-garage or car boot sale.



TOOLS AND TEMPLATES

1. Example Letter of Interest to Neighbours.
2. Ideas on what to discuss at the working party meetings.
3. Example Checklist/Task List for planning the Neighbours Party.
4. Example Invitation.
5. Suggested Activity Ideas.

1. EXAMPLE LETTER OF INTEREST TO NEIGHBOURS

John Smith
1 Sample Street
Sampletown QLD Postcode
Phone: 4766 1111 (5.30pm to 7.30pm weekdays or weekends)
Email: john.smith @bigpond.com
DD/MM/YYYY

Dear Neighbour,

Holding a Neighbours Party would be a great way for us all to get to know each other.

I'm willing to be an organiser and I was wondering if you would be interested in helping out?

I have accessed the Townsville City Council's NeighboursParty Kit online at www.townsville.qld.gov.au The kit will provide some guidance on how we might go about organising the Neighbours Party.

If you would like to be involved in organising the Neighbours Party, can you please get back to me by (allow at least 8 days, for work-ways and shift workers to see this) and I'll arrange a meeting.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed)

Your name.



2. IDEAS ON WHAT TO DISCUSS AT WORKING PARTY MEETINGS

Informal meetings help to determine what will be planned for the Neighbours Party. When setting up a planning meeting, ensure you provide at least three days' notice to your neighbours who are willing to help. Set a suitable date, time and location for the working party to meet.

THINGS TO DISCUSS AT THE FIRST PLANNING MEETING

- » Neighbourhood interest in the Neighbours Party.
- » How much commitment is required from the Working Party.
- » Date of Neighbours Party.
- » Time of Neighbours Party.
- » Location of Neighbours Party. (E.g.: Local park or a neighbours yard).
- » Size of Neighbours Party. (Who will be invited, e.g.: Just the street, or the apartment block?).
- » Type or theme of Neighbours Party. (BBQ, Potluck, Picnic etc.).
- » Equipment/resources required.
- » Budget for Neighbours Party. (How will costs associated with holding the event be covered? E.g.: Guests to supply their own food and drinks).
- » Development of a task list.
- » Wet weather alternatives. (E.g.: Neighbours party will be cancelled if it rains on the day it's scheduled).



3. EXAMPLE CHECKLIST/TASK LIST FOR PLANNING THE NEIGHBOURS PARTY

TASK	DATE TO BE COMPLETED	TASK ALLOCATED
1. Identify possible location for Neighbours Party.		
2. Seek permission to utilise location, (if required).		
3. Develop list of required resources/equipment/support.		
4. Design invitations.		
5. Print invitations.		
6. Deliver invitations.		
7. Collate RSVPs.		
8. Identify resources/skills/equipment/support neighbours can provide.		
9. Register party with QLD Police Service, (via Party Safe).		
10. Follow up RSVPs.		
11. Collect resources/equipment for activities.		
12. Conduct risk assessment.		
13. Source first aid kit.		
14. Source decorations.		
15. Develop site plan for set up.		
16. Allocate “on the day” jobs.		
17. Facilitate activities/games on the day.		
18. Facilitate clean up after the party.		
19. Develop follow up evaluation form.		
20. Distribute follow up evaluation form.		
21. Collate follow up evaluation form.		

NB: This is not an exhaustive list of tasks. The Working Party will need to develop a task list based on their own needs and actions that are required to be undertaken to organise the Neighbours Party

4. EXAMPLE FORMAL INVITATION

DD/MM/YYYY

To: All residents who live at 1-14 Sample Street,

The Neighbours Working Party invite residents in your home to a Neighbours Party for the opportunity to get to know your neighbours and who lives in your street.

Date: _____ Time (From/To): _____

Location: _____

Catering: _____ (State what type of party it will be. E.g.: BBQ with BYO food or Pot Luck etc.)

Drinks: _____ (State if drinks will be provided for or if it will be BYO)

Please Bring: _____ (Identify what else guests should bring. E.g.: Hat, chair, table etc.)

Dress: _____ (Is it casual? Themed? Wear or bring something to signify country of origin?)

If you have a talent that you would like to share at the party, or a simple activity that you would like to organise, please let us know on the RSVP slip below.

Can you offer to provide or help with any of the following? (List what you need support with, e.g. additional equipment, cooking the BBQ, etc.).

For the comfort and safety of all attending, we ask that you please leave your pets safely at home.

Please detach and return the RSVP below:

RSVP: GET TO KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOURS PARTY

Please return this form to: (Name) _____ at: (Street address) _____ by: (RSVP date) _____

☐ Yes. I/we are able to attend the Neighbours Party.

☐ No. I/we are unable to attend the Neighbours Party.

I/we live at (Please give your street address): _____

We can supply/help with: ☐ Tables ☐ (Or add whatever you have listed above.)

How many will be attending from your household?:

Adults: ____ Teenagers: ____ Children: ____ Babies (u3): ____

Please list your names below for name tags:

Name: _____ Name: _____

Name: _____ Name: _____

Name: _____ Name: _____

Name: _____ Name: _____

I/we are willing to offer or organise the following: _____

For more information contact: (Add name and mobile/home phone number.)



5. SUGGESTED ACTIVITY IDEAS - ICE BREAKER GAMES

MATCH THE CARDS

- Take the total number of attendees expected and divide by two.
- From an old pack of cards take that number of cards and cut the cards diagonally in half.
- Put the cards in a shopping bag. When everyone has arrived, go round and invite each person to take out a card, and find the matching card. When you have found your partner introduce yourself and tell each other a bit about yourself.

'GET TO KNOW YOU' BINGO

- Prepare one sheet of paper for each attendee with a 4 x 4 grid and 16 easy to find personal traits (see sample on the right).
- Have a supply of pens and pencils ready.
- Have a designated "timer" (allow about 12 mins max).

RULES:

- Each person puts their own name at the top.
- FIND someone at the party who fits the description and write their name in the square.

This game is also great for identify peoples interests and developing groups after the event. (See page 13 for Activities After The Event.)

Your Name: _____

Is Wearing Sandals <i>Sam</i>	Has A Sister <i>Bonny</i>	Likes Exercise <i>Stephen</i>	Has A Pet, Cat, Dog Or Bird <i>Noel</i>
Is Wearing Jeans <i>Trevor</i>	Has A Great Smile <i>Ailsa</i>	Likes Gardening <i>Luan</i>	Likes Playing Team Sport <i>Antonio</i>
Wears Glasses <i>Natasha</i>	Born In Australia <i>Kevin</i>	Speaks A Second Language <i>Maria</i>	Supports The Cowboys <i>Phil</i>
Has Brown Eyes <i>Enzo</i>	Wasn't Born In Australia <i>Amelia</i>	Likes Going To The Theatre <i>Florence</i>	Supports The Townsville Fire <i>Julie</i>

CULTURAL CONNECTIONS

- Invite anyone who was born overseas to teach everyone present to say "hello" in their first language. This helps to break down any language barriers and encourages neighbours to say hello when they next see each other.
- Access a large world map and invite everyone to place a sticker as close as possible to the location of their birth. Neighbours may find they have some cultural heritage in common.
- If you have chosen to ask everyone to bring a one-pot dish to share, invite the cooks to share any stories about that dish that they have brought. There may be some interesting stories behind the dish or variations on a popular meal.

The internet provides many other ideas on icebreaker games and activities that you might conduct during the Neighbours Party.





Neighbours Party Kit

For more information visit www.townsville.qld.gov.au
call **1300 878 001** or email enquires@townsville.qld.gov.au

Prepared by the Inclusive Communities Advisory Committee 2014.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

City of Stonnington, Victoria. Greater Shepparton City Council, Victoria.
Marrickville Council, NSW. Streets Alive, United Kingdom.

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