

# StreetLife



An easy guide to creating fantastic street parties  
in your neighbourhood



## Acknowledgements

Streetlife is produced by the Community Development Team at the City of Port Phillip in collaboration with the Port Phillip Community Group. The StreetLife concept was first introduced in Perth in 1999 as 'Streets Alive'.

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# Welcome to StreetLife

Many residents would like to do something to make their streets friendlier and their community stronger, but feel swamped by the demands of work and families, and do not know where to start. By obtaining this kit, you've taken a small step towards making a big difference in your local community.

## What is StreetLife?

StreetLife is a partnership between the City of Port Phillip and the Port Phillip Community Group (PPCG), designed to help you hold a fantastic party on your street. StreetLife offers:

- Assistance with the road closure process
- Public liability insurance for party organisers
- Portable gas BBQ
- Delivery and set up of the road closure barricades
- Practical, creative ideas to make your event a success

## What is a Street Party?

The StreetLife project has been designed to support people holding a party for residents of their street for the purpose of local community building. The parties may be held on the street itself (with or without a road closure), in a resident's home or in a local shared space such as a park.

StreetLife is also happy to consider supporting other community celebrations that are broader than one particular street provided that:

- They are small in scale (approx 150 people or less)
- They are non-commercial, not for profit, and not for fundraising
- The organisers do not have public liability insurance already
- They are not seeking to close busy streets/declared roads. Declared roads are managed by VicRoads and cannot be closed by the city of Port Phillip. Refer Melways maps for those roads coloured red or black – they are VicRoads declared roads.
- They are local in nature i.e. bring together people from a particular neighbourhood or local community.

If your event does not fall within these guidelines, please contact Assist on 9209 6777 to be referred to the appropriate department of City of Port Phillip.



## Why throw a Street Party?

We asked our first street party organisers about how the street had changed since their party. Here's what they said:

- *The best sense of community I've ever had.*
- *You feel like you're part of somewhere. It's a nice feeling.*
- *There is much more interaction in the street since the street party.*
- *I know if anything happened I could run into any house on the street and they would know who I was.*
- *The kids play together now.*
- *We all have each other's phone numbers and look after each other's houses when we're away.*
- *There's a real trust and honour. It's a beautiful thing to have in a community.*

## Costs of holding a Street Party

A road closure permit from the City of Port Phillip will cost \$50. This cost covers the provision of a trained staff member to erect road closure barriers as is required by our insurance company. It is not a revenue generating cost for CoPP. Organisers may choose to cover this or ask each party-goer for a small contribution.

If you do not close the road then there is no cost.

## Getting Started

You will need a lot of lead time to organise your party (at least 6 weeks). Contact **Anthea Teakle** at the Port Phillip Community Group on **9525 8746** (Monday, Tuesday or Friday) or leave a message on **9534 0777** other days to get the ball rolling.



# Guide to Successful Street Parties

Street parties in the City of Port Phillip are organised through ***The Port Phillip Community Group***.

Contact **Anthea Teakle** on **9525 8746** (Monday, Tuesday or Friday) or leave a message on **9534 0777** other days to discuss your ideas.

## Why celebrate your street?

There are many reasons that a street community may like to come together for a street party such as holiday season, springtime etc.. But there may be other interesting reasons to get together:

- What is the history of your street name? If it is named after someone – who were they? Celebrate on their birthday?
- Any famous or infamous ex-residents – celebrate their life?
- Any famous houses or sites or famous or infamous events?

## Getting people on board

- Share the concept with some neighbours you think will like the idea
- Invite two or three people to join you as a 'contact people' to help you get things started.
- Share the task of inviting people – door knocking and hand delivering works well and it starts the connecting process.
- If you wish to close the road, you'll need to gather the written support of 75% of affected residents in order to get a council permit (see guidelines attached). This is a great opportunity to make contact with your street and identify others who may wish to help organise the event.

## Deciding on a venue

- It's fun to 'take over' the street for a few hours and reclaim spaces usually reserved for traffic.
- The process for organising a road closure is a very straightforward one (see guidelines attached), but as an alternative you may wish to consider the kerbside, a driveway, someone's front garden or shared grounds in an apartment block.
- If the street itself is not suitable you may like to use a local park or community centre (see list of available community spaces attached).
- If the weather is poor, you can relocate to someone's house or even rig up tarps on the street and keep partying!



## Invitations

- If you're going to close the road, you'll need to notify people about the proposed party at least 4 weeks in advance (see road closure guidelines attached). You could do this by delivering a form (example attached) that people can drop back into your mailbox or you may prefer to door knock.
- Once the permit for road closure is obtained, distribute party invitations at least 3 weeks ahead.
- Be clear about information; including start & finish time, clear BYO requirements, contact details and any other information about the event.
- Be inclusive; invite everyone. (*They may not all show up, but they will feel pleased to have been invited.*)
- You may want to invite other friends or community members, but remember that if there are too many people who are not from the street, it won't be easy to identify who actually lives on your street.

## Involving peoples' skills

- Are there any local or budding musicians, artists, performers, storytellers, historians, chefs or simply long term residents on the street who may like to assist with the event?
- Ask people to design invitations, play music at the event, make lanterns or decorations, share local stories or their favourite recipe.

## Decorating the space

Create a festive atmosphere for your street party by inviting people to help decorate the street. You could try streamers, flags, bunting, balloons and lanterns after dark. Provide chalk for kids to draw street art on the road and footpaths.

## Food & drinks

- A BBQ is great and StreetLife will provide one free of charge
- BYO everything works well and allows people to contribute.
- Be very clear on the invitations about what you would like people to bring eg. '*Bring a chair and some drinks*' or '*Bring a sausage and a plate*'.
- Make sure you ask people to BYO crockery and cutlery unless you arrange paper plates and cups.
- Is it appropriate to have alcohol?
- It is not legal to **sell** food or alcohol at a street party without obtaining the necessary food trading and handling permits. This procedure is not covered in this kit, but can be accessed by contacting the City of Port Phillip Health Services Unit on 9209 6292.



## Enjoying the Street Party

- Introduce yourselves and children
- Wear name-tags (these can include people's street numbers and number of years lived in the street).
- Play cricket or volley ball on the road (if you have a road closure)
- Listen to acoustic music (have a sing-a-long)
- Ask people to bring their favourite CDs
  
- Children's performances
- Children's paddling pool
- Hire toys from the local toy library
- Keep note of who attends and common interests, to build on for any future events

At smaller parties you could try the following:

- People could be invited to tell stories about and when and why they moved here
- The funniest or strangest thing they ever saw on the street
- Identify who are the oldest and the newest residents

## Privacy and Safety

- Each resident has the right to participate only as much as feels comfortable.
- You may wish to inform your local police that you will be holding a street party.



# Public Liability Insurance

Street party organisers do a great service for their community but may leave themselves vulnerable without insurance.

As the organiser of your street party, you are responsible for the smooth running of the event, and should a neighbour attending the party incur an injury or loss as a result of the way you have organised or run the party, they could take legal action against you.

**By registering with StreetLife as a volunteer organiser for the Port Phillip Community Group, you, as a volunteer of Port Phillip Community Group will be covered by the Port Phillip Community Group public liability insurance cover.**

This means that residents attending the party are assured that there is an accountable and responsible organiser and you will be covered should they sustain an injury related to the organisation of the party. However, should they injure themselves at the party in an incident unrelated to the organisation of the party, they would have to take responsibility for this.

Examples:

1. You, the party organiser, ask someone to move the BBQ and they hurt their back. They may sue you, but you will have insurance cover for claims made against you.
2. A resident attending the party gets drunk and decides to lift the BBQ to show how strong they are. As a result, they suffer a back injury. There is no one they can claim compensation from for this injury.

## Police Check

In order to become a volunteer of the Port Phillip Community Group for the purposes of organising a street party, you must undergo a police check, as stated in our funding guidelines and volunteer policy. This is simply a matter of filling in the 'Consent to check and release national police record' form and providing a photocopy of your drivers licence. Any information provided by the police is strictly confidential and will only be released to the Executive Officer, Port Phillip Community Group.

Police checks have been introduced into the area of community events in recent years in the interests of public safety. Traffic offences and minor misdemeanours will not prevent you from being a volunteer StreetLife party organiser. If you have any enquiries about the police check please contact Sandy Joffe, Executive Officer, Port Phillip Community Group ph: 9534 0777.



# Road Closure Information

If you would like to hold a party on the street you will need to obtain a road closure permit from the City of Port Phillip Council. The Port Phillip Community Group (PPCG) will help you to do this. Commence the road closure permit process at least 4 weeks prior to your proposed party date.

The procedure is as follows:

1. Determine the area to be closed off in discussion with PPCG project worker.
2. You will then be required to submit:
  - Written evidence of support of closure from 75% of affected residents (use attached drop-back forms as desired or you may prefer to door knock).
  - A simple map or plan showing where the road will be closed
3. Supply PPCG with required documentation and fee of \$50 for the road closure permit, payable to Port Phillip Community Group.
4. You will receive a letter approving the road closure.
5. The road closure barricade equipment will be dropped off at your street by Standard Roads and PPCG staff member will supervise set-up on the day.
6. You will dismantle the barricades at the appropriate time and leave them at pre-arranged point on the street for collection by Standard Roads.
7. A \$30 replacement fee will be charged for each lost or damaged sign.

PPCG can assist with any step in this process if required.



# Tips from the Experts

Each year we ask party-throwers what works well at their events:

## ❖ **Making people feel welcome**

It was very important to make sure that someone is available to meet and greet people as they arrive and to introduce them to their neighbours. People can take turns doing meet and greet at the party.

*“When you do that people don’t leave.”*

## ❖ **Decorating**

Decorating the street was highlighted as a fun activity by several party-throwers.

*“We used about a third of the street and decorated the street with flags and balloons and lanterns and tea lights, as it got dark. People brought out their own chairs and market umbrellas and when it rained, people brought out tarps.”*

## ❖ **Sharing Food**

The collaborative provision and sharing of food by all was unanimously reported as a key element of a successful street party.

*“Our Greek neighbours organised a spit. One resident was a café proprietor and provided magnificent food for everyone.”*

## ❖ **Physical Activity**

One street organised a game of street volleyball with odd and even street numbers as the teams. Everybody joined in.

*“We had a 68 year old Greek lady playing volleyball on the street!”*

## ❖ **Getting to know you**


At least three parties organised residents to wear nametags with their street number and number of years they had lived on the street.

*“There was one old woman who attended who had lived in the street for 52 years and another for 82 years.”*

## ❖ **Personal Invitation**

All of the organisers found that people are much more likely to come to the party if they are door-knocked and personally invited, rather than receiving an invitation in the letterbox.

*“They looked at me like I was a freak, but everyone who I invited face to face did come.”*



### ❖ **Kids' Activities**

Kids played games on the street. Some parties organised Santa Claus to come with presents for the kids. (Others arranged a paddling pool and hired toys from the local toy library.

### ❖ **Music**

Those organisers who encouraged attendees to bring musical instruments and CDs said that this worked very well and the parties were “full of music”. Most parties had CDs and some even had dancing in the street!

## Are there flats in your street?

Many party organisers found that the residents in flats did not tend to come to the street parties. It can be very difficult to contact people in flats because of intercom systems etc. Many residents in flats live alone and it would be wonderful if they were included in any street celebrations.

StreetLife is committed to helping party organisers overcome this barrier and we suggest the following strategies:

- Make contact with one resident from a block of flats and ask them to help you spread the word.
- Put notices up in the foyer or lifts of apartment blocks
- Buzz the intercom and introduce yourself.
- Talk to the PPCG about contacting flat residents in your street. They can assist with access to body corporates to get the message out.

# Facilities for Hire

<p>Alma Road Community House 200 Alma Road, East St Kilda 3183 Phone: (03) 9209 6351 Email: <a href="mailto:dfratzes@portphillip.vic.gov.au">dfratzes@portphillip.vic.gov.au</a></p>	<p>Elwood St Kilda Neighbourhood Learning Centre 87 Tennyson Street, Elwood 3184 Phone: (03) 9531 1954 Email: <a href="mailto:esnlc@yarranet.net.au">esnlc@yarranet.net.au</a> Website: <a href="http://www.esnlc.asn.au">www.esnlc.asn.au</a></p>
<p>Elwood Beach Community Centre 63a Ormond Esplanade, Elwood 3184 Melways Ref: 67/C1 Phone: (03) 9209 6351</p> <p>This centre is located near the beach at the rear of the popular Beach House Café, adjoining an outdoor playground. Disabled access, toilets, tables, chairs, kitchen facilities are some of the many features you will find.</p>	<p>Garden City Neighbourhood House &amp; Fisherman's Bend Community Centre cnr Dunstan Pde and Centre Ave, Garden City 3207 Telephone: (03) 9646 5977</p> <p>Large hall caters for functions from 20 to 250 people. Facility includes a kitchen, polished floor boards, heating, disabled access and toilets.</p>
<p>Middle Park Community Centre corner Nimmo and Richardson Streets, Middle Park 3206 Melways Ref: 2J/E11 Telephone: (03) 9209 6351</p> <p>Located up on the first floor, this venue features a main hall with kitchen and caters for a range of occasions.</p>	<p>Sol Green Recreation Centre Corner Coventry and Montague Streets, South Melbourne 3205 Melways Ref: 2J/K2 Telephone: (03) 9682 8803</p> <p>Amenities include: tables, chairs, white board, heating/air conditioning, big kitchen, outdoor courtyard with electric barbecue and pergola</p>
<p>Betty Day Centre 67 Argyle Street, St Kilda. Telephone (03) 9209 6371 Melways map ref 58 C9</p> <p>Well equipped kitchen, dining area, large multi-purpose area suitable for meetings, performances, large lunches, dances and active recreation.</p>	<p>South Melbourne Centre Corner Park Street and Ferrars Place, South Melbourne. Telephone: (03) 9209 6782 Melways map ref. 2J B4</p> <p>A large hall with a stage and large dining room / multi purpose room, a number of smaller spaces that can be used for a wide range of activities. A well groomed Trugo lawn is attached to the building.</p>
<p>Mary Kehoe Centre 224 Dank Street Albert Park Telephone : (03) 9699 4904 Melways map ref. 2K A10</p>	<p>Cora Graves Centre 38 Blessington Street, St Kilda. Telephone: (03) 9209 6349 Melways map ref. 58 B11</p>



<p>Sandridge Centre and Trugo Club          1 Tucker Avenue,          Garden City.          Telephone: (03) 9646 6586 or          (03) 96451085          Melways map ref. 56 K2</p>	<p>Port Melbourne Centre and Trugo Club          219 Esplanade East,          Port Melbourne          (Next to Edward's Reserve, between          Liardet &amp; Bridge Streets)          Telephone: (03) 9646 6584 or          "Digger" Cullen: (03) 9646 3689</p>
<p>Port Melbourne Neighbourhood House  <i>(currently being refurbished, due to re-          open 2004)</i>          Corner Liardet &amp; Nott Streets,          Port Melbourne.          Telephone: (03) 9209 6361          Melways map ref. 2J E4</p>	<p>St Kilda Town Hall          Cnr Brighton Road &amp; Carlisle Street,          St Kilda          Melways Reference: 58 C11          9209 6501</p>
<p>South Melbourne Town Hall          202-208 Bank Street,          South Melbourne          Melways Reference: 2K C2          9209 6501</p>	<p>Port Melbourne Town Hall          333 Bay Street,          Port Melbourne          Melways Reference: 2J G3          9209 6501</p>
<p>Port Melbourne Life Saving Club          38 Beaconsfield Parade          Port Melbourne          (03) 9646 8773.</p> <p>Holds 80 to 100 people, full kitchen          facilities, located on the first floor. Please          note - no wheelchair access. Table and          chairs available for hire, Curfew 1.00 am.</p>	<p>Linden-Arts Centre &amp; Gallery          26 Acland Street, St Kilda 3182          Telephone: (03) 9209 6560</p>
<p>Gasworks          21 Graham Street, Albert Park 3206          Telephone: (03) 8606 4200</p>	



# Public BBQ facilities available

Alma Park, Alma Road, St Kilda East

Bowen Crescent Reserve, Kings Way, South Melbourne

Catani Gardens, Beaconsfield Parade, St Kilda

Elwood Park, Ormond Esplanade, Elwood

Elwood/ St Kilda Neighbourhood Centre, 87 Tennyson Street, Elwood

Gasworks Park, Richardson St, Albert Park

H.R Johnson Reserve, Canterbury Road, Middle Park

JL Murphy Reserve, Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne

Lagoon Reserve, Liardet St, Port Melbourne

Marina Triangle, Marine Parade, Elwood

Point Ormond Reserve, Point Ormond Ave, Elwood

Port Melbourne Foreshore, The Boulevard, Port Melb

Sandridge Beach, The Boulevard, Port Melbourne

Sol Green Reserve, Montague St, South Melbourne

South African Memorial Reserve, St Kilda Road, South Melbourne

St Kilda Foreshore (Rotary Park) Jacka Boulevard

Waterloo Crescent Reserve, Waterloo Crescent, St Kilda.



# How to Build Community

Street Parties are great for getting to know your neighbours, but there are many ways to build and maintain a sense of community on your street. Some of these ideas would be a great follow up to a street party and others you could try right away:

- ❖ Give extra lemons from your tree to neighbours
- ❖ Introduce yourself to one neighbour that you don't know
- ❖ Swap mail collecting and pet feeding when you go away
- ❖ Invite your neighbour for a Christmas drink
- ❖ Morning Coffee and Muffins
- ❖ Street cricket match
- ❖ Sunday brunch sausage sizzle
- ❖ Potluck meal (bring your favourite dish)
- ❖ Street garage sale
- ❖ Swap leftovers or cook extra one night and share with a neighbour
- ❖ Street trash and treasure exchange
- ❖ Street Skills log and Skills exchange (babysitting for guitar lessons, dog walking for dinner)
- ❖ Street newsletter (welcoming new residents, births, deaths, marriages, birthdays, new pets, street gossip!!!)
- ❖ Gardening / weeding / lawn mowing day (swap plants and cuttings)
- ❖ Street Book Club
- ❖ Grocery shopping for someone in need
- ❖ Street walking group (early morning or evening)
- ❖ Walk instead of driving and say hello as you go
- ❖ Sharing tools and resources (eg. Chainsaw, trailer)
- ❖ Christmas Carols
- ❖ Progressive dinner or drinks
- ❖ Street Pet Show
- ❖ Children's Concert
- ❖ Games Night

# Sample Notification for Road Closure

## Blessington Street Street Party

Dear Neighbour,

My name is Jan Greeves from No. xx Blessington Street and I am proposing to organise a street party with a Road Closure for Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2004, 2pm – 8pm (local traffic excepted of course).

In order to obtain a council permit for a road closure, written support for the street party is required from at least 75% of residents. If you have no objection to the road closure at the proposed dates and time, please sign and detach the form below and drop it into my mailbox by **Friday 20<sup>th</sup> November**.

Once a permit for road closure has been granted, I will distribute invitations to the party.

This will be a great opportunity to meet your neighbours and get to know who lives in your street.

Jan Greeves

### Please fill in and return:

I have been informed of the date and times of the Blessington Street Party and

I have no objection to the proposed Road Closure.

I object to the proposed Road Closure

Signed:.....

Name:.....

Address.....

.....

Date.....

I would like to be involved in helping to organise the party (designing flyers, playing music, brainstorming ideas, baking a cake, or other).

yes      phone no. ....

## Sample Invite



**Meet the neighbours,  
have fun, become an  
active Poe Street  
resident!  
Join us at our**

## Street Party

The residents of 101 Poe Street are planning a street party to celebrate the end of winter. We would love to have you join us.

There will be:

- A barbeque for cooking on
  - Live music
  - Street cricket



If you would like to help with organising the party, please contact John on 9534 0777

**PLEASE RSVP AND RETURN THE  
ATTACHED FORM—WE NEED IT TO  
CLOSE THE ROAD.**

**See you at the party!**

**Bring:**

- Food to Barbeque
- Paper plates, glasses etc
- Soft drinks and/or alcohol
- Music you like to listen to or instruments you play
- Your dancing shoes



# Health Benefits of Social Cohesion

“It’s a sad reflection on many communities nowadays that more people watch *Friends* than have friends.”  
Robert Putnam

It appears that living in a friendly community is not only enjoyable; it is also good for our health. After reviewing the scientific literature on the health benefits of social connectedness, Professor Robert Putnam (2001, p. 327) concluded, “Statistically speaking, the evidence for health consequences for social connectedness is as strong today as was the evidence for the health consequences of smoking at the time of the first surgeon general’s report on smoking”

In a municipality where residents have a significantly lower life expectancy compared to other Local Government Areas, and a relatively high number of residents living alone, it seems timely to do something to improve the social cohesion in our community.


In a review of the research that underpins the most important social determinants of health, Stansfeld, (2000; p. 169,173-4) concluded,

“There is increasing evidence that communities with high levels of social cohesion have better health than those with low levels of social cohesion...Social support has a wide spectrum action on health, from influencing mortality at one end through physical morbidity to psychological morbidity at the other end...At the level of society, social cohesion can have a powerful effect on health which transcends that available from individual social relationships.”

Professor Robert Putnam’s (2000, pp. 326-7) conclusion went further:

“Dozens of painstaking studies ...have established beyond reasonable doubt that social connectedness is one of the most powerful determinants of our well-being. The more integrated we are with our community, the less likely we are to experience colds, heart attacks, strokes, cancer, depression, and premature deaths of all sorts. Such protective effects, have been confirmed for close family ties, for friendship networks, for participation in social events, and for simple affiliation with religious and other civic associations.”

He also found that the **death rates of people who are socially disconnected were between two and five times greater than matched individuals who had close ties with their family, friends and the community, regardless of the cause of death.** A review of another study of 2754 people indicated socially isolated men fare worse than socially isolated women. After accounting for all



other factors, socially isolated men were 2 to 3 times more likely to die in the following 12 years than their well connected peers; whereas socially isolated women were 1.5 times more likely to die than their peers (Hassed, 2002).

Hassed's (2002) review of the medical literature found that people with more diverse social networks had greater resistance to upper respiratory illnesses; greater protection against depression, suicide, drugs and alcohol abuse, teen pregnancy, crime and violence; and recovered more quickly from conditions such as depression.

Putnam (2000, p. 318) added that it was particularly important to improve social connectedness in poor communities: "Precisely because poor people (by definition) have little economic capital and face formidable obstacles in acquiring human capital (that is, education), social capital is disproportionately important to their welfare."

Putnam also argued that neighbourhoods with high levels of social capital are good places to raise children, as they generally tend to be "cleaner, the people are friendlier, and the streets are safer" (p. 307). Communities with higher levels of social capital also tend to have lower levels of crime (Putnam, 2000).

Hassed (2002) cautioned that the health benefits may not flow if someone is merely provided with more opportunities for social connection. A person can feel isolated even when they are in a crowd. Both the opportunity and quality of contact are important.

Written by Peter Streker, 2003

### **References:**

Hassed, C., (2002) *Mind-Body Medicine in Health Promotion*. Paper for students of the Monash University Department of General Practice.

Putnam, R. (2001). *Bowling Alone*. NY: Touchstone

Stansfeld, S.A. (2000). Social Support and Social Cohesion. (pp. 155-179) In: M.Marmot & R.G. Wilkinson (eds) *Social Determinants of Health*. London: Oxford.

### **Other Reading**

Department of Human Services (1999) *Victorian Burden of Disease Study*.



# Contacts

Anthea Teakle  
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Tel: **9525 8746** (Monday, Tuesday or Friday)  
or leave a message on **9534 0777** other days 9534 0777  
Email: [anthea@ppcg.org.au](mailto:anthea@ppcg.org.au)