

☑ Date and Time

Give some thought to the dates and times when most people are available. Remember public holidays! Set workable time limits, e.g. 5.00 pm to 7.00 pm in summer, when the heat of the day is past its peak.

- Also, for a limited time, there will be less need for guests to use your facilities, i.e. bathroom.
- A variation is a winter lunch get together: for soup and bread.
- For a short time, even people with very different lifestyles can put aside their differences in taste, music, etc.
- We have heard of one cul-de-sac where a neighbour has an “open house” every Sunday from 4-6 pm, where neighbours are welcome to drop in. Perhaps you could try this once, and see how it goes, before committing to having a regular session.

☑ Boundaries

If you decide to hold a party at your place, decide what you will feel comfortable about allowing:

- socializing in your yard, rather than your house is probably sensible until you feel comfortable offering your home.
- are dogs welcome? If not, it's probably better to state this on the invitation, e.g. “No dogs, please!”



☑ Children

If there are likely to be children, make sure they can help themselves to water, and do a **safety audit** beforehand to make sure everything else is “child proof”, e.g. electrical leads, pools, water features, etc.

☑ Refreshments

If you decide to have a get together at your place, and are able to provide tea, coffee, water and something cool, that generates a sociable feeling. Don't go to great lengths or expense – others may be put off from offering to do the same next time. You could ask people to bring a plate with them anyway. In fact, you could make the whole thing a BYO event, and put on the invitation “BYO drinks and chairs, snacks provided. ”**There is no obligation to offer alcohol:** it's more expensive, and some people may over-indulge which has its own complications! See the information under “Party Planning” below.

☑ Party Planning

The Australian Federal Police have developed some short fact sheets for party planning, which are worth considering in the planning stages:

‘Party Smart’ information can be found by doing a search for it on the ACT Police website (www.police.act.gov.au).

Conflict Resolution Service

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Conflict Resolution Service

Partying in the Suburbs

Tips & Strategies for Organising a...



Getting to know your neighbours...even a little...is a powerful way to prevent neighbourhood conflict!

National Street Party Week 19-27 November

“National Street Parties (NSP) are the essence of Social Inclusion Week (SIW) as they are events created *by the community for the community*. These grass-root events can take many forms - dog walks, forums, BBQ's, music concerts, etc - but the main theme is that they provide an opportunity for community members to engage with one another and foster a sense of belonging.

How communities get together isn't as important as **why!** Through events of this nature, Social Inclusion Week hopes to encourage people to reconnect with one another, provide a forum for education and improve awareness on social inclusion issues. SIW has bookend weekends to allow people to more easily participate in NSP activities.”
(www.socialinclusionweek.com.au)

But it doesn't have to be National Street Party Week for you to have a get together in your neighbourhood. There are many good reasons to have one.

A street party is a great opportunity to:

- ☺ Create links between your neighbours;
- ☺ Develop a friendly and safe environment in your street,
- ☺ Meet people who live close to one another and enjoy conversation, shared interests, trust and maybe friendship,
- ☺ Enhance the experience of community in your street, and

- ☺ Include everyone in your street (including neighbours living in units, apartments and flats).

A street party lets you meet your neighbours in a fun way and let everyone join in - you don't have to become friends, just neighbours.

Basic Principles... 'Checklist'

☑ Venue

It doesn't have to be in someone's home or yard! Read on for other options:

Cul-de-sac

Some suburbs in Canberra have cul-de-sacs which have large traffic islands on which some trees have been planted. These may be natural gathering points for street socializing around festive occasions such as the New Year, or election night parties, etc. Ideally, it takes 1-2 people or households to mobilize enthusiasm for a social event.

Playground, Parks & Common Areas

Some of the older suburbs in Canberra have larger open areas interspersed with housing, and these are suitable locales for a party where everyone “brings their own”. People are more likely to be involved if the venue is literally outside their door, but even the local park is another option for a neighbourhood get-together where people can come and go as they like.

☑ Christmas Decorations Party

Perhaps your street, or part of it, would be interested in collaborating to have a Christmas decoration extravaganza, combined with some socializing for the householders.

- This takes minimal organisation: perhaps it is helpful to decide on a date by which the houses will be decorated, e.g. 1 December, and maybe an agreed “lights out” time!
- Christmas decoration displays may attract sightseers. Give some thought to off-setting any parking issues that may arise.
- Then have a get-together for the participants, where neighbours contribute food and drink to a party in someone's backyard – with daylight saving it should be light enough, and warm.

☑ Invitations

Be inclusive – invite every person or family in the street by dropping a note in every letterbox. If you live in a very long street, consider a “Half Section Party”, or invite every household on the same side of the street, or all the households that back onto others in your block: some logical grouping. Are you comfortable about including an email address or phone number for RSVP? It's good to know roughly how many to expect on the day.

Even if **you** are not sure about someone, hopefully others will know him/her. If not, at least there will be others to help talk to the person or people. (How would you feel if you were left off the invitation list for an event like this?) Be welcoming and inclusive in inviting people, but accepting and understanding if people don't want to be involved. Some people value their privacy and solitude.

