

PLAY STREETS



MAKE YOUR STREET
A PLAY STREET!

A STEP-BY-STEP TOOLKIT



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This Play Streets guide has been prepared by CoDesign Studio with the support of VicHealth and the Victorian communities of Glenroy, Kensington and Carlton, as well as their councils, who kindly hosted a series of pilot Play Streets. We welcome your feedback on how this toolkit can be improved.



01. IS YOUR STREET A PLAY STREET?

Welcome! You're taking an important first step towards making your street a more friendly and playful place to live with Play Streets.

Play Streets create play spaces by temporarily closing streets to traffic so kids and neighbours can play outside – just like a street party! For a couple of hours on the weekend or after school, your street becomes a safer place to ride bikes, draw with chalk, or kick a ball around.

This toolkit will help you work with your neighbours to plan the day and walk you through the steps to getting a permit to close a local road to traffic.

ABOUT THIS KIT

The Play Streets toolkit was developed by **CoDesign Studio**, an Australian not-for-profit placemaking consultancy that inspires people to shape their neighbourhoods and create great places that bring neighbours together.

We've put together this kit, with the help of a few friends, including **VicHealth** and the communities around Melbourne, to make hosting a Play Street easy and fun.

If you get to the end of the kit and feel you need a bit more help, read over the '**Need a Hand**' section on page 12 or get in touch with us: playstreets@codesignstudio.com.au

WHAT'S A PLAY STREET?

Play Streets run for a few hours at quiet times of day. They can be one-off events, but many communities have them on a regular day and find they become a treasured time of the week, fortnight or month – whatever works for you and your neighbours. Play Streets aren't meant to be big or complicated event, but rather an opportunity to meet your neighbours, spend time with friends and play freely and safely on local streets.

A Play Street is:

- > On a quiet road with no public transport routes
- > Supported by other residents in the street
- > Insured
- > Permitted by council
- > A recurring or a one-off event

Making your street a Play Street is a low-cost and simple way to:

- > Get your kids playing outdoors in a way that is fun, safe, and close to home
- > Get to know your neighbours and make better connections among the people who live in your street
- > Better understand how to work with the council to create a great street for your family and community.

WHAT'S IN THE KIT?

This kit is a step-by-step guide to organising a Play Street in your neighbourhood, including a number of templates to help make the process simple and easy. Feel free to use and adapt these to create your very own Play Street that best meets your neighbourhood needs.

The templates are:

- > **Play Streets Permit** template to pass on to your council. In most Australian cities, playing on the road requires a permit from the council to close the road to traffic. Some councils already have a way that residents can do this (often for street parties), but many don't – yet! This template provides your council with all the information they'll generally need to give you a permit, but you'll need to check if there are any other council requirements.
- > **Risk and safety plan** to help you keep everybody safe while you're playing in the street.
- > **Letters to your neighbours** inviting them to be involved in the planning, and letting them know about the Play Street once you've set a date.
- > **A letter to your council**, expressing your interest in making your street a Play Street and outlining some of the reasons why it would be great for the local community.
- > **Poster and flyer** templates so you can spread word of your Play Street around the neighbourhood.

The relevant templates are listed in each step. This kit is only intended as a general guide – check with your council and insurance company and follow your common sense to make sure your event is safe and meets all of the local requirements.

RESOURCES

Visit www.playstreetsaustralia.com to download any of these templates, and for more info, tips, and tools.

Join the community network on Facebook to share experiences with other residents running Play Streets across Australia: www.facebook.com/groups/playstreetsaustralia.



02. PLAY STREETS:

STEP-BY-STEP

Here's a handy checklist of everything in this kit. Feel free to refer to the list as you plan your Play Street.

STEP 1: BEFORE YOU START

- Is your street suitable?
- Are your neighbours supportive?
- Is your council supportive?

STEP 2: GETTING PERMISSION

- Get proof of support from your neighbours
- Get a Traffic Management Plan
- Get Public Liability Insurance
- Fill out the Risk and Safety Plan
- Submit the permit application with the items above
- Council approves the permit application

STEP 3: READY, STEADY...

- Get the word out, and notify your neighbours
- Create a Play Box and Organisers' Box
- Go over the Roles and Running Sheet before the day with organisers

STEP 4: ...GO!

- Keep the running sheet to hand
- Plan for next time by capturing stories and feedback
- HAVE FUN!

STEP 5: NEXT STEPS

- Celebrate a job well done.
- Update council, they'd love to hear if it went well!
- Apply for a recurring event.
- Share your experiences with others online via Play Street Australia's Facebook group



STEP 1: BEFORE YOU START

First things first: make sure that a Play Street will work for you and your neighbours.

Some streets are better suited to being Play Streets than others. Consider the following three questions to make sure Play Streets is the right choice for your street.

1. Is your street suitable?

Think carefully about your own street, or one that's very close by. A safe and convenient Play Street meets the following criteria:

- > **Traffic:** The street is not a major road, does not have a lot of traffic, and is not on a public transport route.
- > **Character and safety:** It's in a residential area where families and kids live, and is a place where kids and families would want to play. For example, it's not too steep, dark or feels unsafe.
- > **Convenience:** Closing a section of the street won't block access to a major driveway, building or school, and people will be able to use other routes to get where they need to go.

Can you think of anything else that might make your street good or bad for holding a Play Street? If your street isn't suitable, consider other options nearby. Do you have friends or neighbours nearby who might be keen to have a Play Street on their street?

2. Are your neighbours supportive?

Before you get started, make sure at least one other parent, neighbour or family is committed to helping out. Since we all live busy lives, it's useful to have a second person to help, so talk to your friends and neighbours to see who's interested.

It's also a good idea to door-knock your neighbours to run the idea past them. Think about inviting them to a short informal meeting on the street to decide which day and time would work best.

3. Is your council supportive?

As the final step before you get started, touch base with your council to make sure they understand what you are aiming to do.

While street play is a simple concept, most councils don't yet provide permits for street play road closures. To make it easy, we've created a handy Play Streets Permit template with the steps generally required by councils to safely close a street.

Reach out to your council with these steps:

- > Find the best contact at council, ideally someone who can help you navigate the permit process. Departments such as Community Development, Health and Recreation or Family Services are a good place to start. Start by explaining the impact you'd like to have for your neighbourhood. For example, "I'd like to create a friendlier and happier neighbourhood and introduce new families to the long-time residents on the street."
- > Send your contact the Play Streets Permit template (no need to fill it out yet), so they can alert you to any requirements that are missing.
- > Ask if there's funding offered by council for the minor costs involved in setting up a Play Street, like insurance and traffic management.
- > Ask if council can support you in other ways – they may be able to draw up your traffic management plan themselves, provide staff for your road closure, print flyers and letters, or translate your letters to your neighbours into languages other than English relevant to your neighbourhood.



KEEP IN MIND...

The first Play Street takes a bit more work, but after that it should be smooth sailing as you've done it all before!

Useful templates to download: Invitation to Neighbours, Notification to Neighbours, Letter to Council, Play Streets Permit

Find them at www.playstreetsaustralia.com

STEP 2: GETTING PERMISSION

Before the jump ropes come out, you might have to jump through a few hoops to ensure a safe, easy and fun day.

All the ingredients for success are there: your street is suitable, council is happy to support a Play Street, your neighbours are excited and you have some helpers. Let's get the nitty gritty out of the way so the play can start.

1. Play Streets Permit

- > Complete the permit template and submit it to council, with the items below, including any additional requirements specific to your council.

2. Neighbour Support template

- > The Neighbour Support template is part of the permit for collecting signatures of support; include this with your application. If a neighbour isn't home, leave a flyer in their letterbox to let them know. It may help to print a map of the street and highlight the section you plan to use.

3. Traffic, safety and insurance

- > Council may require a traffic management plan, prepared by a qualified traffic manager. See the yellow box on the right for details.
- > Council is also likely to require proof of public liability insurance. Once again, see the yellow box for details.
- > You're out there to have fun, but you still need to consider risk and safety. Ensure you have a Risk and Safety plan (see our template) and a first aid kit on hand.

All done! Once you've submitted the above and received a thumbs up from council, you're ready to go.



TRAFFIC AND INSURANCE

Your council is likely to require all events in the street – like a street party or Play Street – to have public liability insurance and a traffic management plan. **Public liability insurance** covers injuries or damage to property that could happen during an event. A **traffic management plan** sets out how a road can be safely closed to traffic, and how the traffic should be redirected.

These are the two main costs involved with running any type of road closure event.

Your council may be able to provide a traffic management plan for you. Otherwise search 'traffic management plan' online to find local providers. A plan typically costs \$100-\$200.

Insurance also typically costs around \$150-\$200. Ask around or check online for the best rates. For example, Local Community Insurance Services offer competitive coverage for one-off community events in Australia.

Ask your council if they have any available funding to cover the cost of insurance and traffic management.

Useful templates to download: Play Streets Permit, Neighbour Support Template, Invitation to Neighbours, Notification to Neighbours, Risk and Safety Plan

Find them at www.playstreetsaustralia.com

STEP 3: READY, STEADY...

Almost there! Getting toys and people ready to go can be almost as fun as the day itself.

Once your permit has been approved, it's time for the fun stuff! Gather a kit of toys and supplies, get the word out, and get each organiser take on a role to share the load.

1. Play Box and Organisers' Box

You and your neighbours may have toys and supplies laying around the house. Gathering these things together in a kit will make it easy to pull out every time you host a Play Street.

- > A **Play Box** can be simple; think about the materials you already have available. Balls, chalk, and skipping ropes are low cost and versatile. Think about 'loose parts' you might have around for free play, such as cardboard boxes, fabric, milk crates, pieces of rope and string – we all know a child's imagination can go a long way. Kids in the street can bring their own bikes, skates, and balls too.
- > Create an **Organisers' Box** including sunscreen, a first aid kit, hi-vis vests and important paperwork such as your permit. To keep costs to a minimum, check what your neighbours have available before heading to the shops.

2. Get the word out

Think about who might like to play on your street. What's the best way to let them know about the Play Street?

- > Chalking on the footpath is a handy and creative way to spread the word. Adding a playful hopscotch with the date and time at the end might be a nice touch.
- > Make sure to pop a letter in the letterbox of anyone who lives on the part of the street that will be closed to traffic. You can also leave the same note on cars that are parked on the road. You might also want to encourage your neighbours to move their cars to create even more play space.



3. Who's doing what?

Go over the running sheet, safety plan and roles outlined in your permit with your fellow organisers.

This doesn't have to be dull – Play Streets can be just as fun for adults as kids! If you like, ask volunteers to take on fun roles or characters in their jobs, like a superhero crossing guard or a cleaning crew with magical powers to make litter disappear.

4. Making your Play Street fun for all

Think about how to make neighbours who don't have young kids feel welcome and able to join in as well. You could bring out garden furniture to create a seating area for adults to hang out and chat, or invite neighbours to bring a plate to share or a pot of tea.



Useful templates to download: Letter to Neighbours, Poster/Flyer, Risk and Safety Plan, Roles and Running Sheet

Useful Items: Play Box, Organisers' Box, Chalk

STEP 4: ...GO!

Get outside and have a ball!

The day is here! Keep it simple and let the good times roll – while the **Play Box** will prompt different types of play, kids find ways to play on their own.

To keep things running smoothly, here are a few tips from our experience:

1. Keep the running sheet to hand

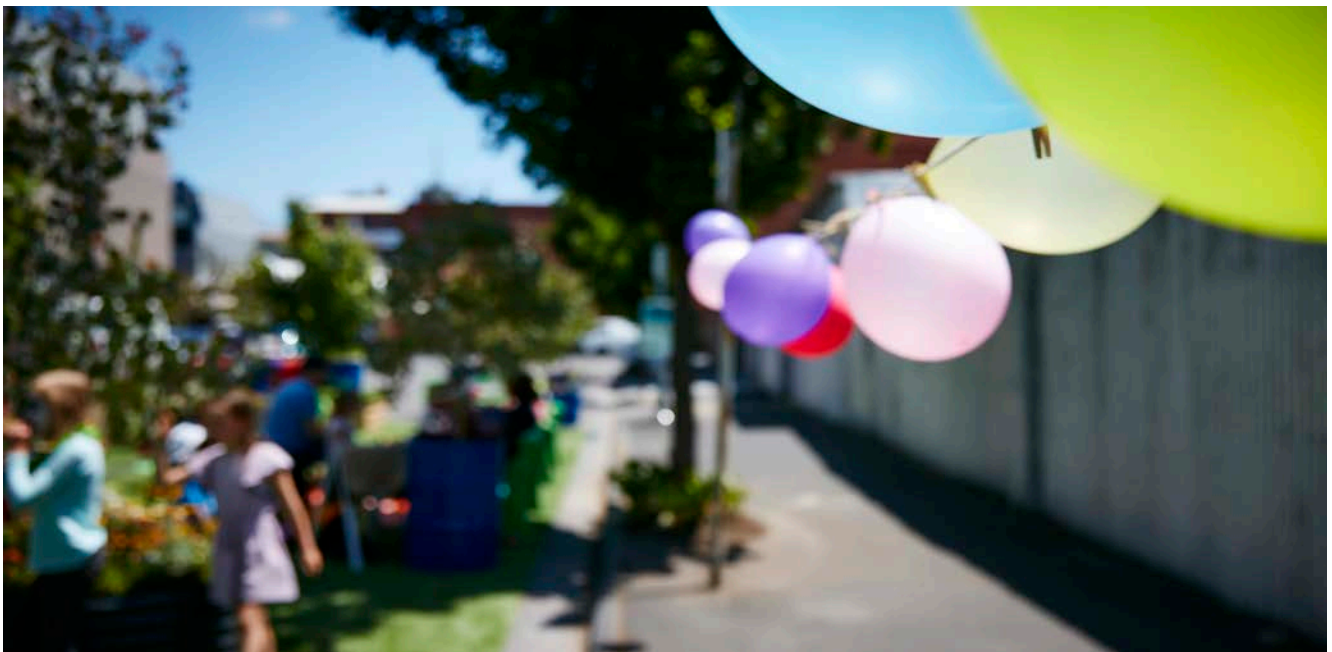
Follow the running sheet and safety plan set out in your permit, and make sure neighbours who are taking part know what they are responsible for. Share each others contact phone numbers ahead of time.

Having someone at each end of the road closure is essential, in particular to talk to people as they come and go, as well as motorists.

2. Dealing with local traffic

While a Play Street is closed to through traffic, residents in the closed-off section must be able to leave or reach their homes.

If a resident needs to leave or reach their home, have an organiser marshal or trained traffic controller escort the car through the Play Street at walking pace. More details are set out in the **Risk and Safety Plan** template and in your traffic management plan.



3. Capture all the smiles

How was your day? Capturing the success and positive impacts of your Play Street can be useful for seeking support or even funding for future events. This can be part of the fun.

Here are few tips:

- > Have kids (and adults!) draw their favourite thing about the day.
- > Count the number of attendees by handing out stickers to each person. At the end of the day, count how many stickers are missing from the sheet.
- > Write down great stories from the day.
- > Ask parents about their favourite street games from their own childhood, and capture their stories.

4. Tips for parents

These are a few useful pointers to share with participating grown-ups:

- > All parents are responsible for their kids' activities and food.
- > People love taking photos at Play Streets, but encourage people to only take photos of their own kids. If you really want to take photos, get written approval from the relevant parents, being clear about how the photos will be used.

Go out and have a ball! We hope you, your neighbours and all the lucky children enjoy a lovely day.



Useful templates to download: Risk and Safety Plan, Running Sheet, Posters/ Flyers, Corflute Sign

Useful Items: Play Box, Organisers' Box, stickers

STEP 5: NEXT STEPS

You've just run your first Play Street – congratulations! Celebrate your success and thank your friends and neighbours for attending and helping out.

Talk to people who came along and ask them what they liked about Play Streets. Getting quotes can be great to capture your results and areas for improvement.

Let council know how your Play Street went and what you're planning next. You might be able to apply for a recurring event. Join our group on Facebook to share ideas, experiences and advice with others planning Play Streets in Australia.

KEEP IN MIND

The first Play Street takes a bit more work, but after that it should be smooth sailing as you've done it all before.

NEED A HAND?

We recognise that it's not always easy to get a new idea off the ground or do it right the first time around. CoDesign Studio has a range of services to help get you up and running, including:

- > Presentations and training
- > Workshops
- > Support and logistics for pilot Play Streets
- > Tailoring the Play Streets Kit to your unique needs

Parents & neighbours: We can help you get in touch with your local council. There's often funding available, such as community grants, and we can work with you and your council to get your Play Street going.

Councils: We can help you to tailor Play Streets for your community. Get in touch to talk about your community needs.

Contact us at playstreets@codesignstudio.com.au or 03 9417 0020.



