



Merri-bek
City Council

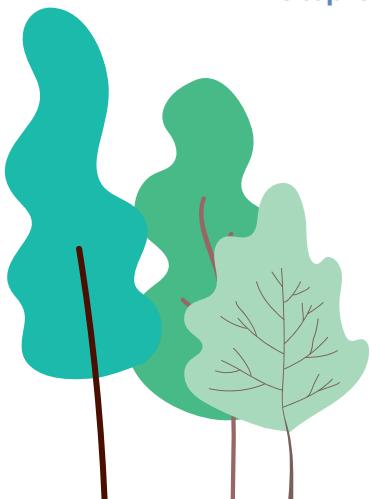
Play Streets Toolkit

Connecting neighbours and activating local streets



Contents

What is a Play Street?	3
Application checklist	5
Step 1: Is your street suitable?	7
Step 2: Talk to your neighbours. Are they supportive?	8
Things you can do to get neighbour support	9
Step 3: Organising a safe event	10
3.1 Traffic Management Plan	10
3.2 Signage	12
3.3 Traffic marshalling	12
3.4 Risk and Safety Plan	12
Step 4: Let's get ready!	14
Plan the activities and let your neighbours know	14
Play Box and Organisers' Box	14
Making your Play Street fun for all	14
Get the word out	14
Who's doing what - create a running sheet	15
Step 5: Let's play!	17
Step 6: After your Play Street	17



What is a Play Street?

A Play Street is a chance for neighbours of all ages to gather, play and connect. They are small events, usually lasting a few hours, held on quiet local streets.

Play Streets allow people to come together on the street, without car traffic, to meet and socialise. They are organised and run by local residents, for local residents.

Want to host a Play Street?

If you are interested in organising a Play Street, this toolkit will help by providing planning advice, step by step instructions and templates.

Follow the 6 steps in this toolkit and download the editable forms.

You will need to submit your completed application **6 weeks** before the day you want your Play Street.

Where to apply

Submit application online: merri-bek.vic.gov.au

Hand printed application in person: 90 Bell St, Coburg 3058

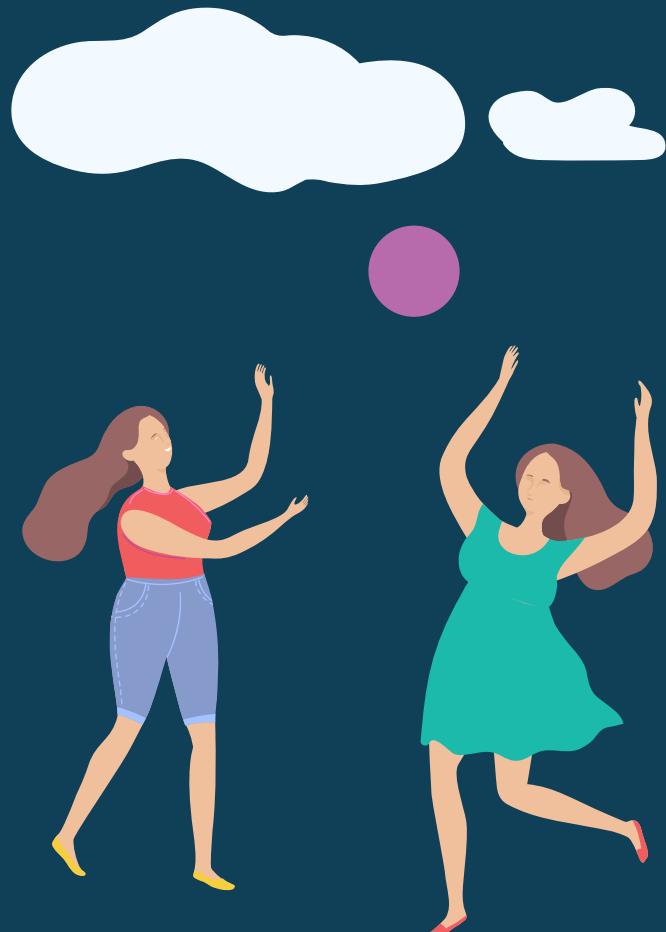
Quotes from previous Play Street Attendees

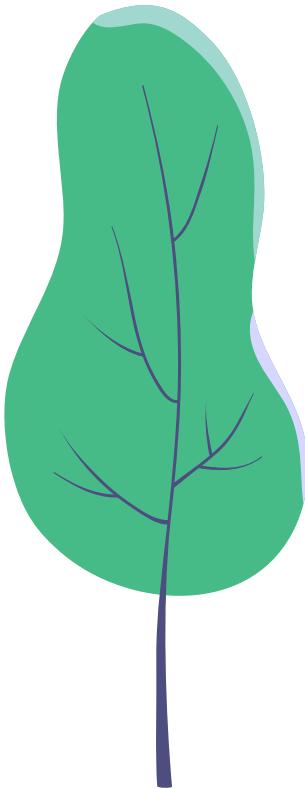
“Great opportunity to meet the street and learn everybody’s names. There has been a friendly vibe in the street since with everyone stopping to have a chat. It was also great to have the actual road closed for the event so that the kids could play.”

Play Street Attendee 1
Boronia Street, Pascoe Vale, 2022

“I have made ongoing friendships with my neighbours, I have swapped phone numbers and been invited over for dinners. I have swapped veggies and visited elderly people in the street (who told me they were lonely) since the Play Street. People wave and stop for a chat when they walk by now”

Play Street Attendee 2
Boronia Street, Pascoe Vale, 2022





What are the Play Street requirements?

- On a quiet road with no public transport routes
- Supported by other residents in the street
- Approved by Merri-bek City Council

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

- Get to know your neighbours and make better connections among the people who live in your street
- Create a safe and connected neighbourhood where you look out for each other, promoting safety and a sense of belonging
- Get your kids playing outdoors in a way that is fun, safe, and close to home
- Work with Council to create a great street for your family and community.

What you will provide	What Merri-bek City Council will provide
Completed application forms	Application approval
Proof that neighbours support the Play Street	Traffic Management Plan and relevant permit
3 volunteer Traffic Marshals	Road closure equipment/signage
Toys/bikes/scooters/sport equipment/chalk/first aid etc.	Contact for any queries/support
	Outlet for feedback after the event

6 Steps to Organising a Play Street

First things first: make sure that a Play Street will work for you and your neighbours. Consider the following questions to make sure Play Streets is the right choice for your street. Work through this step-by-step checklist to help you plan your Play Street event.

APPLICATION TO COUNCIL - 6 weeks before your Play Street

Step 1: Is your street suitable?

- Is your street suitable?

Step 2: Talk to your neighbours

- Get support from your neighbours
- Tell us where you would like the Play Street and provide 2 date options

Step 3: Organising a safe event

Required for application

- Traffic Management Plan
- Signage
- Traffic marshaling: nominate 3 traffic marshals
- Fill out the Risk and Safety Plan
- Submit the application - Application checklist can be found on page 6

Step 4: It's approved, let's get ready

- 3 weeks before:** Make a list of what needs to be done, and who will do each task
- 1 week before:** Let your neighbours know and plan the activities

Step 5: Let's play!

- Keep the running sheet on hand
- HAVE FUN!

Step 6: After your Play Street

- Celebrate a job well done
- Update Merri-bek Council, we'd love to receive feedback!
- Share your experiences with others online via Play Street Australia's Facebook group

Application to Council

Before the jump ropes come out, there are a few important details to cover off to ensure a safe, easy and fun day. All the ingredients for success are there: your street is suitable; your neighbours are excited, and you have some helpers.

Let's get the nitty gritty out of the way so the play can start.

You will need to submit your completed application 6 weeks before the day you want your Play Street.

How to apply for a Play Street?

You can apply for your Play Street by completing the application form. You can do this [online](#) or you can print the form, fill in and bring it in to our Council offices at the Coburg Civic Centre, 90 Bell Street, Coburg.

As part of the application, you will submit:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Details about the location, time and date of your Play Street
<input type="checkbox"/>	Proof of neighbour support
<input type="checkbox"/>	Street diagram to assist in creating the Council Traffic Management Plan
<input type="checkbox"/>	Names of 3 volunteer traffic marshals who will help on the day
<input type="checkbox"/>	Completed Risk and Safety Plan
<input type="checkbox"/>	Signed Terms and Conditions

Step 1: Is your street suitable?

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

A quiet, local street

This means:

- The street is not a major road, does not have a lot of traffic, and is not on a public transport route.
- A quiet road with less than 1000 cars a day
- Not on a bus route
- Over half the properties on the street are houses
- A road that is not used by trucks
- An easy alternate route provided for cars that need to be diverted
- No road or footpath works scheduled at time of the Play Street
- No rubbish collection scheduled at the time of the Play Street

Quiet, welcoming and safe

The street is in a residential area that feels welcoming and safe for people to gather. It should not be too steep, dark or next to industrial land.

Once you submit your application, Council will assess whether your street is quiet enough for a Play Street.

If you would like to use your own guide, you can count the number of cars passing within half an hour during peak hour. More than 50 cars means your street will most likely have more than 1000 cars a day. This means that it is too busy.

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?

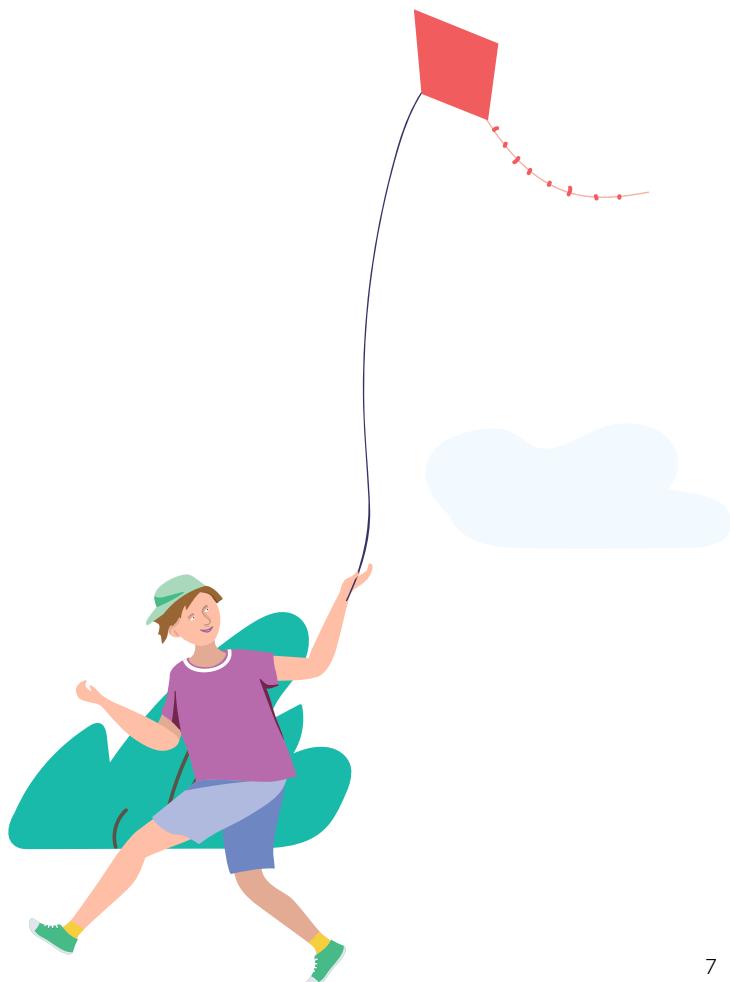
If your street isn't suitable, consider other options nearby. Do you have friends or neighbours nearby who might be keen to have a Play Street on their street?

Need help?

If you need assistance with the toolkit or understanding whether your street is suitable, please contact:

Email: playstreets@merri-bek.vic.gov.au

Phone: 9240 1111 – Ask for Social Cohesion Officer or Sustainable Communities Officer



Step 2: Talk to your neighbours. Are they 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.

You must provide Council with at least 2 options for dates as there might be work scheduled or other activities that may mean your first preference isn't suitable

When applying for a Play Street, you will need to get support from **at least 75% of households** on your street. For example, if your street has 12 houses on it, you'd need at least 9 to be OK with you running the event.

You will need to have this support before applying to Council. We've provided some advice for how to garner neighbour support on the next page.

Questions neighbours might have...

Will residents of the street be able to access their homes by car during the Play Street?

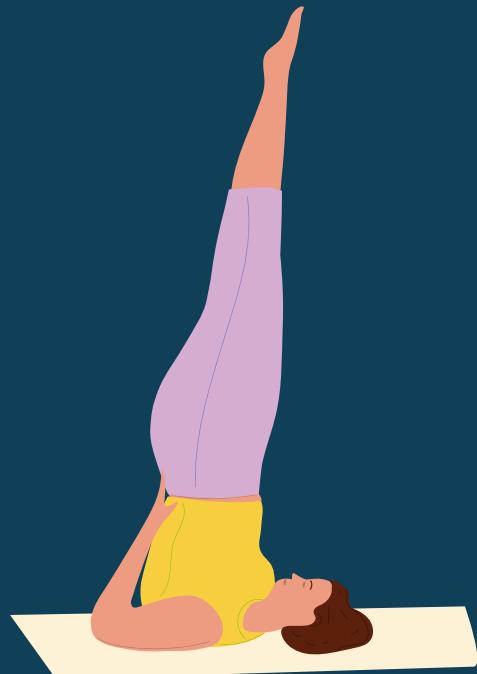
We recommend that local car traffic (ie. people that live on the street) be allowed through the temporary road closure, guided by a Traffic Marshal volunteer. Council will guide you through the safest way to do this.

Can cars still park on the street during a Play Street?

On street parking is still permitted. You may want to suggest that your neighbours park their cars in their driveways or outside of the Play Street area as this will make it more accessible for play and connection. Council does not have the authority to move legally parked vehicles.

What happens if there is an emergency during a Play Street?

The street must remain accessible to emergency vehicles and those with disability access requirements. Traffic marshal's will clear the street and allow these vehicles through.



Things you can do to get neighbour support

Door knock and speak to your neighbours

- We have provided a suggested script for you to use below!

Letter to leave behind if your neighbours are not home

- If your neighbours are not home, we have provided a template of a letter you could use to leave for your neighbours.

[Click here to download a draft letter](#)

Neighbourhood meeting

- You might like to organise a neighbourhood meeting to talk in more detail about your Play Street with your neighbours. We have provided some items to discuss during your meeting.

During the neighbourhood meeting, we recommend Play Street Hosts

- Welcome creative ideas from residents about what they want their Play Street gathering to look like. Play Streets don't require a lot of set up. Think chalk, bikes, scooters, bat & ball, skipping rope, chairs for adults, maybe a spot for tea/coffee or some snacks.
- Remember to ask children for their ideas as well. What's their favourite outdoor activity?
- Ask adults if street play was part of their childhood. This is a great way to explore an individual's personal connection to play and to support them to talk freely.
- Ask about the ideal length of time, day of the week and regularity.
- Log any concerns and address as appropriate, whether that be in a group setting or it may be better to have individual discussions.

- Reflect on whether there is energy on the street for Play Streets to work. Don't be surprised if more willing helpers are recruited – many hands make light work!
- Remember, Play Streets are not just for children! Everyone is welcome – you don't have to play, just come out and have a cup of tea with us!

Script example

Hi, I'm (Name) from (address).

A few neighbours and I have been talking about hosting our own Play Streets event!

This means we would close the street to cars for a few hours to allow our kids to play outside safely, and to get to know everyone in the neighborhood, kind of like a small street party.

Merri-bek City Council can support us and supply road closure equipment.

We think it's a great idea and are planning a meeting on the (DATE) at (LOCATION) at (TIME) to work out the finer details and it would be great if you can come along.

Are you interested in participating?

Yes or No ____ address

Are you interested in helping to set it up?

If Yes, what's your number?

Step 3: Organising a safe event

There are 4 parts to making sure your Play Street will be safe and convenient for both residents and drivers:

- Traffic Management Plan
- Signage
- Traffic marshaling
- Risk and safety plan

3.1 Traffic Management Plan

A Traffic Management Plan sets out how a street can be safely closed to traffic and how the traffic should be redirected.

You will need to submit a basic diagram, either hand-drawn or digital, of where you are planning to run your Play Street. You can use the example below to help. You will need to submit your diagram with your Play Streets application at least **6 weeks prior** to when you are planning to run your play street.

Council will then review your plan and, if approved, provide you with a permit for the road closure. Council will also supply a Traffic Management Plan of where you will need to place road signage and a guide to close the street safely.

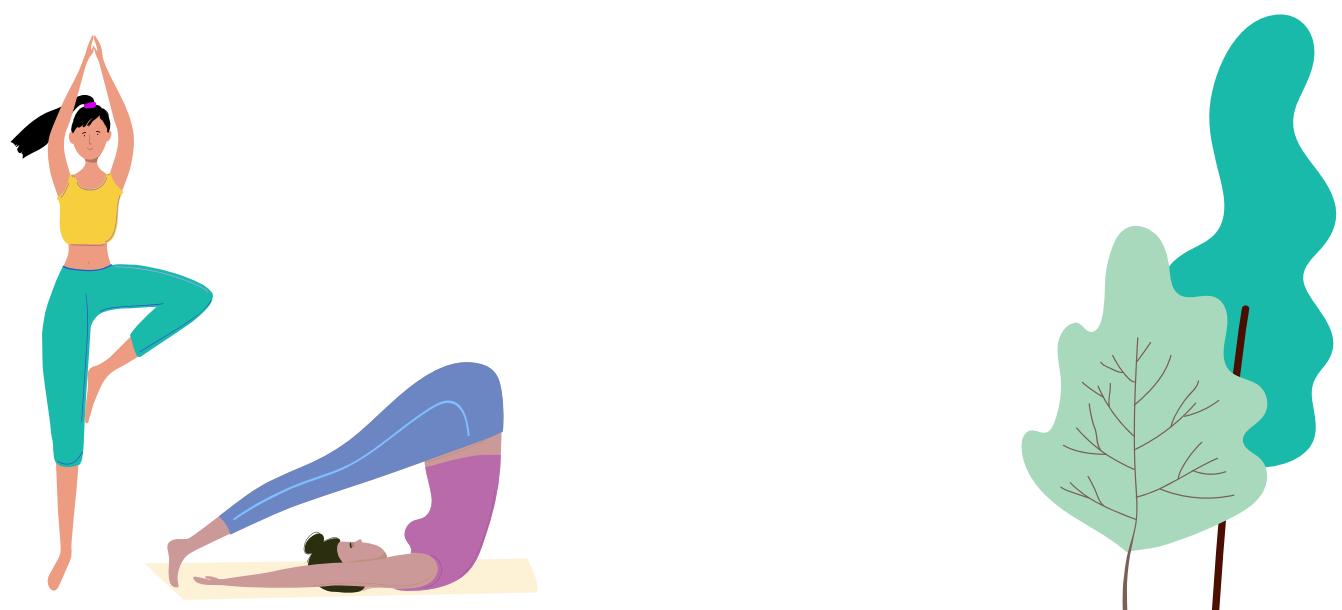
An example of what the Traffic Management Plan sent by Council will look like is shown opposite.

What you need to submit

You will need to submit a basic diagram, either hand-drawn or digital, of where you are planning to run your Play Street.

What Council will do

If approved, Council will provide you with a permit for the road closure along with a Traffic Management Plan of where to place road signage and a guide to close the street safely.



Example of the basic diagram, either hand-drawn or digital, of where you are planning to run your Play Street:



An example of what the Traffic Management Plan sent by Council will look like:



3.2 Signage

Council have road signage you can use for free to close the street. Council will let you know what signage will be needed for your Play Street, and where to place this signage.

You will need to organise collection and return of the equipment with Council's Play Streets officer using your own vehicle, from the Merri-bek Civic Centre. You will need to make sure you have space in your car for the signs (a station wagon is ideal).

Collection and drop off at Merri-bek Civic Centre - 90 Bell St Coburg, Victoria.

What you need to do

Organise collection of signage and equipment ahead of your Play Street.

What Council will do

Council will provide the signage used to close down your street.

3.3 Traffic marshalling

You will need to nominate at least three Traffic Marshal volunteers to install the signage on the street and manage the road closure over the duration of the event.

If your play street application is approved, our Play Street Lead will email the 3 traffic marshals some training material 2-3 weeks prior to your selected date. We will require marshals to complete and pass a short traffic safety quiz online to ensure marshals understand how to close the street safely.

What you need to submit

You will need to submit the details of 3 Traffic Marshal volunteers. Those 3 Traffic Marshals will then need to complete an online quiz.

What Council will do

A member of Council will contact you or the volunteers about the online quiz.

3.4 Risk and safety plan

Your Play Street should be easy and fun, but it is still important to think about how to keep yourself and others safe whilst playing on the street. To support this Merri-bek Council requires a completed Risk and Safety Plan to be submitted to Council prior to your event.

Some of the potential risks associated with a Play Street event are set out in the example provided. [An editable version is available for download by clicking here.](#)

Please add any other risks you can think of as well as steps to address them and who will be responsible on the day. Please provide a copy to all organisers and helpers before your event and talk it through with them before the event and on the day before the event begins.

Note: This is a draft to be adapted by each street. The hazards and actions below and in the template are provided as examples. A risk discussion should be undertaken by the organisers before the day of the event to identify and plan how to address potential hazards. If the nature of the hazard is potentially serious, please consult with Council officers before proceeding with the event.

What you need to submit

Please submit a completed Risk and safety plan. An editable template can be downloaded online.



Risk and Safety Plan Example

We have provided an example Risk and Safety Plan below. [An editable template of this can be downloaded by clicking here.](#)

What is the danger?	What will we do to reduce the risk?	Who is going to do it?
A car could enter the street during the Play Street and harm somebody	Follow the Traffic Management Plan (TMP) (This will help to clearly indicate the road closure for the Play Street)	Write in the name of the person responsible
	Let parents know to keep an eye on their children (they are still responsible for them during the event)	
	Any residents driving into the street are asked to travel at walking speed behind a marshal with hazards lights on	
	Ask organisers to wear something that makes them easily identifiable	
	Make sure there is no one still playing on the street before moving the closure barriers	
Children or adults could become dehydrated, sunburnt or be injured by other weather conditions on the street	Helpers will bring water bottles and hats	
	Make sure the Organisers Box has sunscreen available for everyone	
	Remind kids and adults to stay hydrated and appropriately dressed. Being locals they will have access to their own homes or neighbours' if needed	
	If the weather becomes dangerous (i.e. extreme heat, high winds or lightning) cancel the event	
Helpers could be injured during set up by carrying heavy things	Brief the team on how to safely set up and pack down games and street furniture	
Somebody could trip over something in the street and injure themselves	Brief the team on monitoring tripping hazards around any furniture or activities; secure any loose cables or cords	
Any other particular hazards on your street?		
Injury or illness	Organisers should call 000 if any participants are seriously ill or injured	

Step 4: Let's get ready!

Plan the activities and let your neighbours know

Getting toys and people ready to go can be almost as fun as the day itself. Once we have approved your application, 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.

Important!

No one should be selling drinks or food, let's keep it free and fun!

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 and be filled with materials you already have available. E.g. 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 (Council will provide) and important paperwork such as your permit. To keep costs to a minimum, check what your neighbours have available before heading to the shops.

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.

Get the word out

Make sure to pop a notification 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.

[An editable template of a Resident Notification Letter can be downloaded by clicking here.](#)

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.





Who's doing what - create a running sheet

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

We have provided an example below.

[An editable template of this can be downloaded here.](#)

Roles and Running Sheet Template

Note: This is a draft to be adapted by each street.

Time	What needs doing	Who will do it	Contact phone
11:45am	Organisers and helpers meet on site Undertake a site assessment and review hazards/risks. Does anything need to be added to the risks register and responsibilities? Agree to risks and roles.	Organisers / marshals	Name and mobile number
11.45pm	Site set up • Set up traffic signs to close the street	Traffic marshals	Name and mobile number
11:55am	Put Play Box on street Organisers Box to be kept at one barrier Marshals to supervise the closures at each end of the road wearing hi-vis vests.	Organisers / traffic marshals	Name and mobile number
12.00pm	Play Street event begins A range of on street play activities self directed by participants.	Organisers / traffic marshals	Name and mobile number
2:00pm	Play Street event ends • pack up Play Box • clean up any street rubbish • move participants out of area • remove Play Street signs	Organisers / traffic marshals	Name and mobile number
4.00pm	Remove traffic management signage and street reopened to traffic.	Traffic marshals	Name and mobile number

Contact List

We recommend completing a sheet with the contact details of everyone involved. We have provided an example below.

Name	Role	Contact details
Name	Organiser	
Name	Organiser	
Name	Traffic Marshal	
Name	Traffic Marshal	
Name	Traffic Marshal responsible for picking up road equipment and dropping it off	
Name	Merri-bek Council Play Streets Lead	playstreets@merri-bek.vic.gov.au
Emergency		000



Step 5: Let's play!

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:

1. Keep the running sheet close by

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. Remember having someone at each end of the road closure is essential.

2. Dealing with local traffic

While a Play Street is closed to traffic, residents in the closed-off section must be able to leave or reach their homes. You will also need to designate people to be responsible for escorting cars through the street if needed and to slowly walk in front of the car to guide the car safely in/out of the street. More details will be provided through Council as part of the Traffic Marshal quiz and in your Traffic Management Plan.

If any incident involving personal injury or property damage is suffered by a participant or member of the general public in relation to a Play Street then email playstreets@merri-bek.vic.gov.au and staff will log an incident report.

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.



4. Photos and supervision

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

All parents are responsible for their childrens' supervision.

People love taking photos at Play Streets, but encourage people to only take photos of their own kids. Before taking photos, understand not everyone will want their photos taken.

Ensure you get permission before publishing any photos in a public place from the person photographed or their guardian.

Step 6: After your Play Street

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. Email us your feedback at playstreets@merri-bek.vic.gov.au.

You can join the Play Streets group on Facebook to share ideas, experiences and advice with others planning Play Streets in Australia.

This Play Streets toolkit has been adapted for the Merri-bek community from the toolkit prepared by Play Australia.

Play Streets Australia was inspired by and builds on international play streets practice, including the great work of Playing Out based in the UK.

Merri-bek City Council welcomes your feedback on how this guide can be improved.

Contact us at playstreets@merri-bek.vic.gov.au

