



Why Neighbours Day?

Background to Neighbours Day in Aotearoa New Zealand

Neighbours Day Aotearoa originated from the principles and experience of the *Know Your Neighbours Project*, an initiative that started through a Takapuna Methodist Church and LIFEWISE partnership. By working alongside streets and neighbourhoods, it was found that many residents were keen to know their neighbours more, but sometimes wanted support to know where to start and encouragement to take action.

The message of 'know your neighbours' connects across different ages, ethnicities, cultures, and geographical locations; it is relevant for all of us. Because the Know your Neighbours Project believes that strong neighbourhoods are crucial to a healthy, happy, and sustainable New Zealand, we wanted to find a way to spread this message and celebrate neighbourliness across the country.

Elsewhere around the world, other countries have run successful campaigns similar to Neighbours Day. Many of these campaigns started small and built up momentum each year. To check out similar Neighbours Day movements, check out: www.world-neighbours-day.org.

Getting Started with Neighbours Day 2009 - Auckland

Inspired by these international campaigns, LIFEWISE wanted to give New Zealand the opportunity to build its own Neighbours Day movement. Working alongside an enthusiastic team of community organisations and local council representatives, LIFEWISE took the step to facilitate and promote Auckland's first Neighbours Day in October 2009. Pulled together within a tight time-frame and a small budget, the first Neighbours Day was still a success and generated much interest.



TVNZ's Asia Downunder captured a glimpse into the impact of Neighbours Day 2009 in a short five-minute documentary featuring the Meadowood neighbourhood (Albany, Auckland).

You can see this clip here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gXFUKYtdhGM>

Neighbours Day 2009 gave inspiration and opportunities for many neighbours to come together in a variety of ways in many different Auckland neighbourhoods. Cupcakes were devoured, coffee poured, sausages barbecued, and most importantly, neighbourly connections were ignited.

Working Together

Rather than work alone, LIFEWISE recognised the strength and benefits from working collaboratively with other organisations to build a successful regional campaign. Although LIFEWISE championed Auckland's Neighbours Day 2009, LIFEWISE realised that working in collaboration with other organisations was the best way to achieve scale and impact for the Neighbours Day message. For LIFEWISE, working collaboratively with organisations to promote and grow the Neighbours Day campaign resulted in new regional networks and relationships that have continued to grow and strengthen beyond the campaign.

What did we do?

In mid 2009, LIFEWISE began to talk with other colleagues from different organisations to hear their thoughts and ideas about how to develop a Neighbours Day campaign for Auckland. With the help of **Inspiring Communities**, LIFEWISE

facilitated an Auckland 'Neighbours Day Coalition' for organisations that were enthusiastic in being involved in developing a regional plan, promoting the campaign and inspiring grass-roots action in their areas. The Auckland Neighbours Day coalition involved a group of representatives from organisations such as:

- Inspiring Communities
- Community Waitakere Charitable Trust
- Ka Mau Te Wero Charitable Trust
- Manurewa Pacific Leaders Forum
- Otara Health
- Raeburn House
- Takapuna Community Facilities Trust
- Takapuna Methodist Church
- North Shore City, Auckland, Waitakere, and Manukau City Councils

In 2009 the team worked with tight timelines. From August – October, we met together as a Neighbours Day coalition four times to plan, feedback, and encourage one another to keep spreading the word. Some of the topics discussed at our meetings included:

- Getting to know everyone
- The background to Neighbours Day
- Why we were enthusiastic about Neighbours Day
- Why strong, connected neighbourhoods were important to us
- Our vision for Neighbours Day in Auckland
- Content for Neighbours Day flyers, website, other promotional material
- How to promote Neighbours Day and how to share the good news stories
- Sharing and feeding back planning and progress with Neighbours Day in our various parts of town – the highlights and challenges
- Media updates and advice

Each of the organisations involved in the coalition took responsibility for delivering flyers, sending emails, and talking to others in their networks about Neighbours Day.

After Neighbours Day, we met together for a celebration and debrief over lunch. The group worked together to help gather stories and photographs after Neighbours Day and to give feedback about what worked and what could be better for next time.

Forming a Neighbours Day coalition provided a fantastic vehicle to bring different groups together to work towards a shared vision of stronger and more connected neighbourhoods in Auckland.

Creating a national campaign: Neighbours Day Aotearoa

Many people and communities across New Zealand are keen to see the Neighbours Day movement spread throughout the country to help turn more streets into neighbourhoods.

In 2010, LIFEWISE, Inspiring Communities, and Methodist Mission Aotearoa formed a partnership and began working together to promote New Zealand's first **Neighbours Day: 26-27 March 2011**.

Join the movement! Help bring Neighbours Day Aotearoa to your place.

Email: kiaora@neighboursday.org.nz