

FOR DISTRIBUTION at 5.00am on Tuesday 31 August 2021

1000 Play Streets to aid COVID-19 recovery

Play Australia is proud to announce the national launch of 1000 Play Streets – a movement to reconnect our socially-isolated communities as we look toward COVID-19 recovery and to encourage more play for all, on our quiet residential streets.

Barb Champion, Executive Director of Play Australia says, “many of our communities are hurting at the moment, people are lonelier than ever due to restrictions and our children are suffering, due to a lack of opportunity to get outside and play.”

“Now is the time for our Local Governments across Australia to plan for a brighter future and join the 1000 Play Streets movement so we can all reimagine our streets as places for neighbours to come together and play, to ultimately improve community health and wellbeing” says Ms Champion.

Play Australia welcomes Local Governments to join the movement and download a free toolkit, full of planning advice on how to support temporary street closures for community Play Streets.

The toolkit is the culmination of a two-year national pilot delivered in partnership between Play Australia, La Trobe University, six Local Governments across four states, Community Partners and residents – involving 458 children, 308 adults and made possible by 37 Play Street Hosts.

And La Trobe University’s pilot findings* are encouraging with:

- **90% of adults surveyed reporting feeling more confident to talk to their neighbours in future; and**
- **100% of surveyed participants with children reporting they are now more likely to support their child/ren to play outside with other neighbours more regularly.**

* Findings from 25 attendee survey responses; 40 interviews with Play Street supporters; and observations at Play Streets.

Play Australia is committed to realising 1000 Play Streets across Australia by 2025 as part of their current five-year strategy.

What is a Play Street?

A Play Street is a simple concept, it is a quiet residential street where neighbours of all ages connect and play together, normally lasting 2-3 hours. These are small-scale gatherings for neighbours, ideally coordinated by residents themselves.

The movement is funded by Sport Australia's Move It AUS Participation Program and by Office for Recreation Sport and Racing's Game On Partnership Program in South Australia.

"The Morrison Government and Sport Australia recognise the importance of 1000 Play Streets to get more Australians connected and moving across our communities" says Federal Minister for Sport, Richard Colbeck, "as COVID-19 continues to impact our lives, it is more important than ever."

Now is the time for Australian Local Governments to start planning for community Play Streets to help reconnect communities facing isolation through COVID-19 and open quiet residential roads as important places for our children to play.

What are residents saying?

"For me it definitely helped everybody in the community, it wasn't just something that benefited the children, it benefitted the whole family and also individuals without children ...I felt connected to the whole community."

"We found a real sense of community for the children that hadn't been established yet. The children feel confident and happy when they see each other now, they are no longer strangers to each other"

Play Australia welcomes Local Governments across Australia to join the 1000 Play Streets movement today and download the free toolkit at: www.playaustralia.org.au

More quotes attributable to Senator the Hon. Richard Colbeck, Federal Minister for Sport:

- *Through the Move It AUS Participation Grants Program, we are proud supporters of 1000 Play Streets and celebrate the launch of the toolkit for local governments.*
- *As a nation we must do everything possible to encourage physical activity and community connection.*

Quotes attributable to the Hon. Corey Wingard, South Australian Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing and Minister for Infrastructure and Transport:

- *The South Australian government is proud to be partnering with Play Australia and saying Game On to bringing quiet residential roads to life through the 1000 Play Streets movement.*
 - *1000 Play Streets will see more communities connecting and children of all ages having fun and getting physically active – key objectives of the Marshall government's Game On initiative.*
 - *We encourage local governments in SA to contact Play Australia to get involved in this wonderful program. Together, lets open our streets for play!*
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AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW:

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Photos for use (Credit: Play Australia):



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