

COMMUNITY ORGANISING DURING THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK

UNOFFICIAL HOW TO GUIDE

This guide is adapted for Western Australia from the original, put together by people in the UK who have direct experience with creating these mutual aid local networks during the coronavirus crisis.

The original can be [downloaded here](#).

HOW TO ORGANISE YOUR STREET INTO A TIGHTER COMMUNITY FOR COVID 19

We've got two aims that we're trying to balance:

Making sure everyone (**especially the most vulnerable**) are supported in their community, and that **support carries on throughout the outbreak.**

Trying to **minimise contact to minimise the risk of spreading the virus** while we're supporting each other. There's evidence showing that a lot of people don't have symptoms but can still be carriers of it, so even if you feel fine, play it very safe. This is explained more in this document.

1

Map your Street

Walk around your street and write down what the house and flat numbers are. Be thorough and check side roads that you might not have been down before, we don't want to miss people.



2

Start building a team

Contact some neighbours. If you know some already, call them and ask them to get involved.

Create a WhatsApp group and add them to it. If you don't know any neighbours or their phone numbers yet you can still do the next steps on your own.

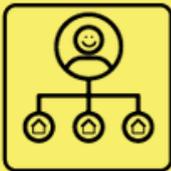
A lot of people won't have WhatsApp but we'll use this for group organising and make sure people without the app have a buddy in the groups that can chat to them on a landline.



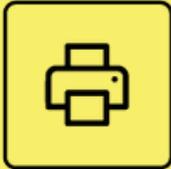
3

Make a plan

Have a meeting (online video is safest to not spread infection, most people use zoom.us because it's free) and decide who's going to contact each household. Also think about what you need to know and what you can offer each house/flat. Don't worry too much about being perfect, this can be updated over time.



Who is going to contact each household?



Who's going to design and print the flyers? [Download a template here.](#)



What do you need to know? (Whether they might need to self isolate due to age, health condition, do they have kids or pets that might need looking after)



How will you keep track of all the above information?
[Download a template here.](#)



What you can offer? (going to the shops, picking up prescriptions, friendly phone calls etc)

NOTE - people's information may be sensitive - you need to ask permission to collect and record their information.

4

Contact as many people as you can over the phone

With your team you'll hopefully have some more numbers to call. Phones are great because you can't pass infection with a phone call. Introduce yourself as a neighbour, be really friendly and explain you're just here to help and ask them the questions on your questionnaire based on your plan above. Ask if they have any of their other neighbours numbers so you can call them too!



5

Fill in the gaps by flyering door to door

You'll need your flyers, in ziplock bags, and another sheet that can be where you record their details such as name, address, phone number, special needs. There are different ways to get in touch with your neighbours:

- Flyer through their letter box is low risk of spreading disease, but a lot of people might just think it's junk mail and not engage
- Knocking on their door is higher risk so maintain a 2 metre distance and keep the conversation short. People are much more engaged and you can get their info then. You could also just get their phone number and then call them up later.

HOW TO LEAFLET SAFELY

It is important to follow safety guidelines when distributing leaflets to ensure that as far as possible we are not exposing people to the virus. The steps below have been reviewed by a Public Health professional.

Do not undertake any of these steps if you are feeling unwell at all, or have been in contact with someone who has, even if you/they are only experiencing mild cold/flu symptoms.

Printing

Wash your hands thoroughly before putting paper into the printer and taking leaflets out of the printer. Cut them up if needed, and put the leaflets directly into a ziploc bag (a small pile up to about 40). Start small! You don't want to be handling phone calls and messaging your whole suburb! Start with your street, a couple of dozen houses. Don't stockpile excess leaflets.

Distributing Leaflets

Do not leaflet if you are unwell at all, even if you're only experiencing mild symptoms. Leaflets should be stored in smaller piles within ziploc bags.

Listen to social distancing guidelines (stay 2 metres away from anyone) and don't leaflet in large groups. If leafleting in small groups, avoid physical contacts, maintain at least 2 metres distance and do not exchange resources.

Make sure to wash your hands well before starting leafleting and use hand sanitiser if you are able to at regular intervals.

Only one person should handle leaflets from each ziplocked pack, putting them directly from the bag through the letterbox or door for each house and minimising contact as far as possible.

Make sure to wash your hands after you are finished.

Do not wear gloves. You cannot disinfect them as you go round, as you can with hands. The virus could potentially build up on gloves.

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Add people's information to your spreadsheet or list and add them to the WhatsApp Group.

Your WhatsApp group should start filling up, and people will start getting to know each other!



7

Split your street into small groups for better connection.

Now you know people's numbers and addresses, split people into small groups of 5-6 households. This should include the households that haven't joined yet. We want to make the groups of people interacting as small as possible to slow the spread of the virus.

It's also easier to take responsibility for a smaller number of people and this will stop the main WhatsApp chat getting too busy. If one of the small groups needs help, they can always ask the main group.

Important: Make sure there aren't groups that have only vulnerable/self isolating people in, as we need people to support each other.

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Join the XRWA Mutual Aid Network WhatsApp group

This group is for people doing the things listed above, to share experiences, resources and generally to keep in touch as things develop.

Extinction Rebellion WA are putting together a whole set of online resources and meetings, discussion groups and other things to support our communities through this challenging time.

Join here: <https://tinyurl.com/xrwa-mutualaid-network>

Useful links

Links to local mutual aid groups & advice: <https://viralkindness.org.au/>

Safety advice: <https://queercare.network/our-work/resources/covid-19/>

HealthDirect - for Current Australian Health advice including Symptoms-Checker:
<https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/coronavirus>

Volunteering: <https://www.volunteeringwa.org.au/resources/covid19>

TinyUrl - for making WhatsApp join links: tinyurl.com