

Australians becoming less neighbourly, with younger generations leading the shift

New report reveals the friendliest and 'frostiest' neighbourhoods in Australia.

Sydney, June 2025 - New research reveals that Australians are becoming less connected to their neighbours, with the majority (72%) saying Aussies are less interested in knowing their neighbours compared to 20 years ago.

According to new research by Real Insurance, almost two-thirds (62%) admit to living next to someone for more than six months without ever meeting them. This trend is particularly pronounced among younger generations, with 71 per cent of Gen Z and 70 per cent of Gen Y having done so.

The [*Real Neighbours Report 2025*](#), commissioned in partnership with consumer research group MyMavins, surveyed 5,023 Australians aged 18 years and over. The report explores the state of neighbourly interactions across the country and highlights which cities and regions have the friendliest and frostiest neighbours.

Australia's most and least neighbourly cities

The report highlights significant differences between metropolitan and rural communities in terms of neighbourly interactions. Those living in regional, rural, or remote areas are more likely to know all of their neighbours' names (32%) compared to those in metropolitan areas and cities (24%).

Residents of the Mid North Coast of NSW stand out as the friendliest, with 43 per cent knowing all their neighbours' names, well above the national average of 26 per cent. Latrobe was ranked the most family and child-friendly city, with more than three-quarters (78.4%) rating it as 'excellent,' followed by Sydney's Outer Southwest (78%).

In contrast, Melbourne inner suburbs (33%) and Brisbane north (26%) had the lowest rates of neighbourly greetings, compared to the national average of 50 per cent. Sydney's City and Inner South residents were the most likely to send passive-aggressive messages to their neighbours (32%), followed by Parramatta (30%) and the Southern Highlands (30%). Noise disturbances also varied, with Brisbane north (23%) and Sydney inner city (21%) ranking the worst for noise caused by children and Central West (24%) ranking the worst for party-related noise issues.

Dr Tim Sharp, psychologist, writer, and Chief Happiness Officer at The Happiness Institute, believes that traditional neighbourly interactions are disappearing: "Traditional neighbourly chats over the fence have faded, replaced by digital pings, emojis, and fleeting hallway nods. For Gen Z and Gen Y, community isn't always next door – it's often online, interest-based, and built in comment threads and DMs rather than driveways and cul-de-sacs. While previous generations found connection through proximity and routine, younger generations are crafting belonging through shared values, niche hobbies, and virtual spaces that span continents. It's not that the sense of community has disappeared – it's just evolved, reshaped by technology and the search for deeper, more personalised forms of connection."

Hey, Stranger... The difference between Gen Z and Boomer neighbours

Four in five (80%) still believe it is at least somewhat important to know their neighbours, mainly to feel safer in the neighbourhood (72%), to look out for each other's property (64%) and for mutual support during emergencies (64%). However, the way people engage with their neighbours is shifting, with fewer proactive introductions and more reliance on chance encounters.

Generational differences are clear. Gen Z are the least likely to value knowing their neighbours, with fewer than one in five (18%) seeing it as very important, compared to more than one in three (36%) Baby Boomers. Similarly, just under one in five (18%) Gen Z know all of their neighbours' names, compared to more than one in three (36%) Baby Boomers. Greeting habits also differ, with only three in 10 (30%) Gen Z always acknowledging their neighbours when passing by, compared to nearly three-quarters (73%) of Baby Boomers.

When it comes to small acts of kindness, Gen Z are the least likely to let their neighbours borrow basic grocery items like sugar or milk if they ran out (47%), while Baby Boomers are most likely to hold onto these traditional notions of neighbourly interactions (59%). While younger generations may not prioritise casual neighbourly connections, they are more likely to form bonds through community events. Around one in 10 (11%) Gen Z and Gen Y Australians often meet neighbours this way, whereas nearly two-thirds (65%) of Baby Boomers build relationships through casual conversations over time.

Dr Tim Sharp comments: "Although it might appear as though Gen Z (and younger people) connect less than Boomers (or older people), it's probably more accurate to say that they just connect differently. Where older generations leaned into face-to-face conversations, phone calls, and neighbourhood gatherings, younger generations are forging relationships through texts, memes, video calls, and online communities. The methods may look unfamiliar – and sometimes even impersonal – but the emotional depth and sense of support can be just as real. Connection today isn't always about physical presence; it's about shared experience, authenticity, and being seen, even if through a screen."

The grass isn't greener on the other side of the fence

The research also unpacks how healthy our interactions with neighbours really are, revealing that maintaining good relationships with neighbours has become an increasingly complex undertaking. In fact, more than a quarter (26%) of Australians have recently received passive-aggressive messages from their neighbours.

Furthermore, over one in three Australians (37%) feel their privacy has been invaded by neighbours, with top concerns including unconsented observation (39%), unauthorised property entry (28%), and eavesdropping (25%).

According to the survey, almost one-third (32%) have taken concrete action to escape difficult neighbours, with one in five (20%) considering moving and more than one in 10 (12%) actually relocating. This figure is even higher among younger generations, with 36 per cent of Gen Z and 41 per cent of Gen Y having considered or made a move due to neighbourly issues.

Disconnected or adapting? The 'neighbourhood watch' moves online

While traditional notions of neighbourly interaction seem to be on the decline with younger generations, it's possible that Australians are adapting to new ways of building community. The rise of online community groups and shared-interest activities could be supplementing traditional neighbourly relationships.

Technology plays a complex and often contradictory role in shaping neighbourly relations in the digital age. While around two in five (40%) Australians participate in neighbourhood group chats or social media groups, a similar proportion (42%) have experienced being "called out" or have called someone out within these groups, highlighting the potential for online interactions to escalate into public shaming or negativity.

Additionally, while almost four (45%) Australians have security cameras installed on their property, comfort levels about neighbours having cameras that may capture their property are mixed, with only 24% feeling very comfortable and 20% not comfortable at all.

As Australians navigate these shifting dynamics, fostering stronger, more positive neighbourly connections becomes increasingly important.

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About the Real Neighbours Report 2025

The Real Neighbours Report 2025 was compiled based on research commissioned by Real Insurance and conducted by MYMAVINS between the 30th January and 14th February 2025. The research was carried out through a quantitative online survey, gathering 5,023 responses from Australians aged 18 and above. The sample is broadly representative of the Australian population in terms of age, gender, wealth, and region.

About Real Insurance

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