

Background Check

Who started Cheers?

Cheers simply evolved around food as local **friends and neighbours** dreamed together about the kind of community we want to live in. Local Geoff Westlake* added some know-how, but it's formed by the dreams of everyone.

Is Cheers Incorporated?

No, because then you must have office-bearers and memberships, which means you must screen members in or out... *Cheers* avoids this by being participants: a *participant* is anyone who wants to be a *part* of it. No incorporation, no members, no formal stuff. It's just people.

What about Insurances, and finances etc?

For such activities as require it, *Cheers* operate[d]* under the auspices of *Scripture Union WA* (insurance, accounting, banking, and best-practice safety & care guidelines). For such activities, there may be screening issues, police checks etc, as you'd expect. For such purposes, *Cheers* [was] an activity of SUWA's Neighbourhood Outreach department.

* *This arrangement is suspended in 2022 until covid mandates are settled.*

Do any other trustworthy organisations recognise Cheers?

We have the expressed support of the following reputable institutions: *OAC Ministries, Baptist Churches of WA; Woodvale Baptist Church; City of Wanneroo.*

What about privacy issues?

As a matter of common decency, if special needs do come up, they are not for general broadcast. Only such info as is required to explain the situation is used, and wherever possible *Cheers* prefers to enable the people who raised it to act on it. If it gets any more complex than that, our auspice [would] ensure best-practice. (Likewise if *Cheers* celebrates your kindness, we won't advertise it.)

Is Cheers a church?

No. It's a network of friends in the neighbourhood. *Cheers* has no institution, no hierarchy, no staff, no buildings. It's not trying to 'get people in' to something separate, but rather to 'get people out' towards each other, to encourage one another. However, this may be a legitimate substitute for church. The community development ethos of *Cheers* does come from a Christian basis, which is inclusive: anyone can be involved. Technically, *Cheers* is an 'ecclesia' – an Old Greek socio-political term, for when locals gathered to consider how to make their whole community a better place.

Is Cheers really meant for Christians?

No. The *Neighbours' Network (CNN)* involves lots of people who wouldn't call themselves Christians – but they like *Cheers'* ethos, action, and spirit. You don't have to come to *Cheers get togethers* to be involved in other ways, but anyone can come to those for inspiration too.

So, why a "Christian basis"?

We're upfront about *Cheers'* basis, and in truth every community group has some basis or another. As an inspiration and a foundation for wholistic community development, it's hard to beat the life of Jesus – his way with people, his Spirit, his concerns, his notion of community life... is pretty much everyone's dream. So why not a Christian basis: you don't have to be a "Christian" to want to emulate Christ. Plus, if God is real then we need to pay attention to that!

How "big" is Cheers?

Depends how you look at it. At the collaboration level, it's a network of over 150 people across Banksia Grove, many of whom don't each other. At another level, over 70 people would identify themselves as part of Cheers in some way. At Cheers 247 (Family Time) there'd be over 20 regulars. At Cheers 13 (prayer & action-plans) just a handful. Special interest, & Steer meetings are attended by whoever is most affected by the decisions at hand.

Contact

If *Cheers* interests you, you can do any of the following:

- **email** cheers@banksiagrove.com & **join the email list**
- **attend** any of the activities you hear about
- **phone** Geoff on 0411 324 245
- **ask** at the Banksia Grove Centre, Residents Association, or at the deli.
- **participate** at the level you choose
- www.banksiagrove.com

* *Geoff Westlake is WA Director of OAC Ministries Australia, and an accredited Minister with the Baptist Churches of WA.*

