



## Andrew Heslop Founder - Neighbour Day

**Andrew Heslop's commitment to community, and his acknowledgment of its collective ability to create and cause change, is fast gaining him a reputation as a leading commentator both in Australia and internationally.**

He is the sole founder of Neighbour Day, Australia's annual celebration of community, which he instigated in 2003 and is held on the last Sunday in March. The national event is supported by the Australian Government, through the **Prime Minister Kevin Rudd**, as well through a wealth of media partnerships which run the length and breadth of the country.

In May 2008 Andrew spoke at the **United Nations** headquarters in New York about the global development of Neighbour Day, which has grown from a simple idea expressed in a letter to the editor to become a national community event. He has also presented a paper to the **Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation** in the UK on the establishment of Neighbour Day as a concept through the UK.

At a global level Neighbour Day has been endorsed by **HRH Prince Charles**, **President Bill Clinton** and former **UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan**.

In 2009, he delivered the keynote address at the launch of the **Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras** to an audience of 70,000 people at Fair Day in Victoria Park.

He was listed by **the[sydney]magazine** as one of Sydney's **TOP 100 Most Influential People** in the January 2010 edition.

Professionally Andrew started his career with Fairfax at **5DN 972** in Adelaide aged 15. He later gained wider experience at the **ABC**, **Austereo**, **Nine Network Australia**, **Seven Network Limited** and **3AW** prior to establishing his career as an accomplished media spokesman and marketing communications executive.

He has represented government, corporate and not-for-profit organisations in key communications roles including the **Rail Corporation of New South Wales**, **TransdevTSL** [as operator of the Yarra Trams franchise in Melbourne], **The University of Melbourne**, **British Red Cross** and **Australian Red Cross**. Until September 2008 Andrew was Senior Media Adviser to **NSW Deputy Premier John Watkins** until Mr Watkins retired from the NSW Parliament.

During his time in London in 1999 Andrew was the Project Manager of the **Valentino Autumn Collection Fashion Show** for domestic and international aid projects of British Red Cross. Over lunch attended by **Valentino**, **Elle Macpherson**, **Joan Collins**, **Sophie Anderton** and other celebrity guests around £60,000 (\$AUD150,000) was raised. At **10 Downing Street** then Chancellor of the Exchequer, **The Hon. Gordon Brown**, hosted the launch of the International Fundraising Committee in November.

As the first National Communications Manager for Australian Red Cross Andrew developed and launched the **Asia Pacific HIV/AIDS Appeal** in 2001 to highlight a massive regional health issue. When planes crashed into the World Trade Centre, The Pentagon and a field in Pittsburgh on **11th September 2001**, Andrew became the international public face of Australian Red Cross.

He has also been recognised for his work within the community through:

- Selection by **Samsung** to run with the Olympic Flame through Canberra during the **2008 Beijing Olympic Torch Relay**.
- Nominations for **Australian of the Year** – 2005-2010.
- Named by Marrickville Council on Australia Day 2010 as a **Citizen of the Year**.
- Nominee for **Commonwealth Bank Local Hero Award 2008**.
- Semi-finalist for **2006 Regional Achievement and Community Awards** sponsored by The Weekly Times and Prime Television.
- Nominated for a prestigious **Melbourne Award** within the Individual Contribution to Community category for raising the international profile of Melbourne through the development of Neighbour Day. Neighbour Day was a finalist in the 2008 awards.

A portrait of Andrew, by Sydney artist Bruce Remmer, was submitted as an entry in the **2010 Archibald Prize**.

## **Background**

His background is anchored in working with his fellow man. From his Nanna's war-time volunteer work with Australian Red Cross to his Mum helping out in the tuckshop and at school fundraising activities Andrew Heslop has followed a family heritage of being an active part of the community.

At eight he joined the renowned primary school based program Junior Red Cross which taught him the values of volunteerism and participation, in line with the global organisation's seven fundamental principles – humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, unity, voluntary service and universality.

At 17 he started volunteering as a collector for the annual Red Cross Calling doorknock appeal while attending **Northfield High School** in Adelaide.

Andrew was his school's representative on the local youth council, coordinated federal **International Youth Year** funding to set up a radio station on campus, was elected secretary of the fundraising committee and then managed the school's participation in the 1988 Bicentennial celebrations.

Today Andrew is still a volunteer for Australian Red Cross. He served as a Board Member of the former **Victorian Relief Committee** until it was disbanded and was Chairman of the annual **Winter Blanket Appeal** over three years. In the appeal's 71st year in 2005 Andrew encouraged Victorians to donate 10,000 new blankets to warm the state's homeless and underprivileged.

It was a record-breaking achievement for what was once known as **The Herald Blanket Appeal**.