



## Kalgoorlie BBQ puts Neighbour Day on the map

A barbecue on a front lawn in Kalgoorlie, WA ... community festivals and events in Melbourne's Docklands; Mackay, Qld and Mosman Park, WA ... street parties in Pymble, Turramurra, Canterbury and Woy Woy, NSW ... the launch of the Neighbourhood Smile Zone promotion in the City of Banyule, Victoria ... the search for South Australia's Best Neighbour and a Gold Coast party at Varsity Lakes with magicians, hip-hop, belly dancers and an opera singer.

These are just some of the ways Australians will be celebrating their communities on the 7<sup>th</sup> annual Neighbour Day this Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March, says Neighbour Day founder Andrew Heslop.

"In just seven years Neighbour Day really has become Australia's annual celebration of community," said Andrew.

"It's amazing how quickly and enthusiastically residents in towns and suburbs across Australia have embraced the concept. Whether it's a knock on the door to say g'day or a bbq for all the neighbours it's so easy to get together and involved.

"What is even more exciting is that local government has backed the day by organising major festivals and events to bring entire communities together," said Andrew.

Andrew Heslop started Neighbour Day in March 2003 after Victoria Police discovered the body of Mrs Elsie Brown wrapped in a blanket on her sofa. Mrs Brown had died in January 2001 but for two years had been forgotten by neighbours, friends and family until a neighbour realised she had not seen Mrs Brown for a considerable period of time.

Mrs Brown's gas, water, telephone and electricity were still connected despite accounts remaining unpaid for two years.

"The continued success of Neighbour Day is extraordinary when you consider it started out as an idea in a Letter to the Editor of The Age in 2003 after the circumstances of Mrs Brown's death became publicly known," Andrew said.

"Over the last seven years Neighbour Day has gently evolved from a day to check up on elderly or vulnerable neighbours into a celebration for the whole community.

"It has captured the imagination of Australians in a way I never expected or considered simply because everyone is a neighbour, no matter where you live or your personal circumstances.

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"When we know our neighbours we feel part of a community, we care about the people in it and the events which impact on it.

"The bushfires in Victoria and the floods in northern NSW and North Queensland were graphic examples of neighbours and whole communities coming together in adversity. They backed each other, despite the danger, to save lives and homes.

"The legacy of Mrs Brown's sad and lonely death in her Melbourne home is that it really has brought Australians closer together.

"Closer relationships between neighbours right across Australia is certainly worth celebrating and the 7<sup>th</sup> annual Neighbour Day on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March is the perfect day to do just that," said Andrew.

**For more information visit [www.neighbourday.org](http://www.neighbourday.org)**

**The 127 suburban titles within the News Community Media group and 60 stations within the ABC Local Radio network are proud National Support Partners of Neighbour Day.**

- **Download 2009 Neighbour Day poster here**

[http://www.neighbourday.org/image\\_library/2009\\_Neighbour\\_Day\\_poster.pdf](http://www.neighbourday.org/image_library/2009_Neighbour_Day_poster.pdf)



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