



Irene Simms, with neighbour John Casella in Lidcombe, will celebrate the ninth annual Neighbour Day later this month.  
Photo by GEORGE VOULGARPOULOS.

## Neighbour Day on

AS AUSTRALIA prepares to celebrate the ninth annual Neighbour Day later this month, the day's founder and Australia Day Ambassador Andrew Heslop says communities are only as strong as the people who live in them.

Held on the last Sunday in March every year, the annual celebration of community gives neighbours the opportunity to pause, relax and say thanks.

The event was founded in Melbourne in 2003 - following the discovery of the death of an elderly woman who had passed away two years earlier.

"The growth of Neighbour Day has been organic and it's

success is due to its flexibility," Mr Heslop said.

"You can simply boil the kettle and have a cup of tea and a Tim Tam, or do something more elaborate. It's entirely up to you and the imagination of your neighbours."

Auburn City Councillor Irene Simms and her husband Brian have known their neighbours Giovanni and Alsia Casella since 1977 when they moved into their Lidcombe home as new-lyweds.

Mrs Simms said they shared important occasions with one another and looked after each other, including inviting their neighbours to all of their chil-

dren's weddings.

"We love when they have family occasions because we get the leftovers," she said with a laugh.

Mr Casella said it was wonderful to have good neighbours to confide in and to chat with.

He said it was also good to be able to do things for one another, like collecting mail when they each go on holidays or helping with bins.

"It's very, very, very good when you have somebody like Irene. She's one of the family," he said.

More details on suggestions on how to celebrate with neighbours are at [neighbourday.org](http://neighbourday.org).

auburn community news

