



22<sup>nd</sup> December 2010

## **Letter to the Editor**

Now the festive season is in full swing, let's not forget our neighbours over the Christmas and New Year period especially those who are elderly, vulnerable and single.

This time of the year can be a lonely, depressing time for many Australians. While we're all focussed on the best gifts to buy our partners, children and relatives it is easy to overlook the people who live around us who may not have anyone to celebrate with. With the weeks ahead promising celebration, relaxation and great food there will be local residents who will not receive any visitors or gifts or special meals.

So in planning to cook the perfect turkey and preparing the tastiest mince pies, consider whether there is a neighbour you could invite to join your celebration. Or someone who would welcome a special Christmas lunch delivered to their home instead?

Asking the neighbours around for a cold beer or a glass of sparkling wine is also a terrific way to say thanks for minding the kids, picking up the newspaper, clearing the mail or watering the plants over the past year.

Sadly, we often forget about our neighbours until something goes wrong but great relationships between residents are integral to safe, vibrant and inclusive communities all year round.

**Andrew Heslop**

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