



Don't forget your neighbours this festive season

Australians are being encouraged to extend their festive cheer to elderly, vulnerable and single neighbours living alone to help break down the barriers of loneliness and isolation felt by many people at this time of year.

"For many Australians Christmas and the New Year can be a very lonely, depressing time. While we're out searching for the perfect gift there may be someone next door, across the street or on the next farm who may not have anyone to celebrate with," said Andrew Heslop, Neighbour Day founder and Australia Day Ambassador.

"While the weeks ahead promise celebration, relaxation and great food there will be neighbours 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 said.

Neighbour Day, Australia's annual celebration of community, is held on the final Sunday in March every year. The tenth annual event will be held on Sunday 25th March 2012.

Founded in Melbourne in 2003 - following the discovery of the death of an elderly woman who had passed away two years earlier - Australians have embraced the day by organising street parties, morning teas, community bbqs and by attending council-run fairs, events and open days in parks and other public spaces.

Neighbour Day has five principal aims –

1. Strengthen communities and build better relationships with the people who live around us.
2. Create safer, healthier and more vibrant suburbs and towns.
3. Promote tolerance, respect and understanding.
4. Break down community barriers.
5. Protect the elderly, the vulnerable and the disadvantaged.

www.neighbourday.org

FOR MEDIA INFORMATION ONLY

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