



## Australia's political leaders endorse the 6<sup>th</sup> annual Neighbour Day

State and territory leaders from across the country have thrown their collective support behind Neighbour Day on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> March for the first time, endorsing an Australian concept that simply encourages us all to have better relationships with our neighbours.

Joining Premiers Morris Iemma, Anna Bligh, John Brumby, Alan Carpenter, Mike Rann and Chief Minister Jon Stanhope is Senator Natasha Stott Despoja and capital city Lord Mayors Clover Moore, John So, Campbell Newman, Michael Harbison and the Darwin City Council.

In addition local councils and shires are also behind the day, organising community festivals, activities and launches all the way from Mackay, Queensland to Leichhardt in Sydney, from Victoria's Surf Coast to Rockingham in Western Australia and places in between.

"Knowing our neighbours creates a sense of community. It brings us closer together with the people who live around us and provides reassurance that there is someone nearby who we can call upon in an emergency, disaster or crisis," said Neighbour Day founder Andrew Heslop.

"But Neighbour Day is more than that – it promotes tolerance, respect and understanding no matter where you live, your age or your personal circumstances. It's relevant whether you're in the city, the bush or the outback.

"By taking the time to get to know the people who live around us, by reaching out to the elderly and vulnerable who live nearby, we're creating friendly, happy places in which to live and raise a family.

"After all, the community you want really does start at your front door," he said.

Neighbour Day was founded in 2003 after the remains of an elderly woman were found in her suburban Melbourne home. Mrs Elsie Brown had been dead for two years, forgotten and alone, until Victoria Police broke in and discovered her remains still wrapped in a blanket on her sofa.

To help promote the 6<sup>th</sup> annual Neighbour Day, global advertising agency Saatchi & Saatchi created a national pro-bono television commercial aimed at encouraging more Australians to get to know their neighbours on the last Sunday in March. Everyone who worked on the production – actors, editors, producers and directors – willingly donated their time to turn the concept into reality.

The campaign has been supported at national and local levels through broadcast in bonus and community service announcement spots on the Nine, Ten, SBS, Prime, WIN, NBN, Macquarie Southern Cross, Imparja, Foxtel and Austar networks as well as inflight on the Qantas On-Q channel plus ABC One and ABC Two.

"Simone Bartley from Saatchi & Saatchi's agreement to make the campaign and the enthusiasm of the network CEO's to broadcast the commercial has been phenomenal because as an awareness day Neighbour Day is unique," said Andrew.

"There are no corporate sponsorships or funds, commercial agreements, government grants or public appeals for donations. Since 2003 the entire promotion of Neighbour Day has been through editorial media coverage across television, radio, print and on-line which proves the impact of Australian news media. That's simply a great story about the development of Neighbour Day in communities across Australia," he added.

### **FOR MEDIA INFORMATION ONLY**

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