



South Australians urged to check on elderly neighbours

With much of the state gripped by a massive heat wave and temperatures forecast to remain above 35 degrees Celsius until at least Friday South Australians are being urged to check on their elderly neighbours.

"The record temperatures are clearly a health risk for the elderly and frail who simply cannot cope with the relentless heat. Latest news reports attribute at least 33 sudden deaths in two days to the scorching conditions which is tragic," said Neighbour Day founder Andrew Heslop.

"So I urge anyone who has older people living next door or across the street to go and check up on them to make sure they are okay. If you live in the Hills or the country go to the next farm.

"Many senior citizens, particularly residents in Housing Trust homes, may not have air conditioning or even a fan to use. Those who do may still be reluctant to run them because of the cost.

"If your house has air-conditioning, why not invite your elderly neighbours over for a cold drink during the heat of the day? Consider giving them a spare key to your home so they can remain cool while you are at work.

"Or if you have a spare fan or portable air-conditioner at home that isn't being used why not offer it to them?

"These are clearly extreme weather conditions and it doesn't take much effort to check up on older residents. It may also help save a life now those hot summer days have arrived," Andrew said.

Other handy tips for residents with elderly neighbours include –

- Drop by in the morning and in the cool of the evening to see how they are.
- Leave your mobile or work phone number so they can contact you in an emergency.
- Remind them to drink enough fresh water to stay hydrated.
- Alert police and emergency services immediately if elderly residents known to live alone fail to answer the door.

Neighbour Day, Australia's national day to develop better relationships with the people who live around us, is always held on the last Sunday in March every year (Sunday 29th March 2009).

For more information visit www.neighbourday.org

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Andrew Heslop
Founder - Neighbour Day
0404 038 106

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