



Australia's annual celebration of community

The importance of strong communities and closer relationships between residents will be celebrated again on the 8th annual Neighbour Day on Sunday 28th March 2010.

"Since Neighbour Day began in Melbourne in 2003, it has been the catalyst for bringing neighbours closer together every year on the last Sunday in March," says founder Andrew Heslop

"Whether that's been through council-run and sponsored festivals in local parks, or resident-organised street parties, or simply over a cold beer or a cup of tea, people of all ages have come together to say g'day.

"Neighbour Day has quickly captured the imagination of Australians because it promotes tolerance, respect and understanding. It's easy to participate and how you celebrate is only limited by the imaginations of you and your neighbours. Best of all it is free.

"Knowing your neighbours creates a strong sense of community because you feel engaged with the people and places around you. But communities are really only as strong as the people who live in them which is why Neighbour Day is firmly established as Australia's annual celebration of community," Andrew said.

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.

How Australians have previously celebrated Neighbour Day –

The Shire of Yarra Ranges, an area devastated by the February 2009 bushfires, developed a Neighbour Day Resource Kit for residents containing flyers, invitations, posters and introduction cards. In Ballarat a major Neighbour Day concert was held featuring the Victoria Police band Code One.

In the WA goldfields town of Kalgoorlie neighbours fired up their bbqs on the front lawns so everyone could celebrate together ... just like the residents of Woy Woy on the NSW Central Coast and in the Sydney suburbs of Turramurra, Narrabeen, Meadowbank and Sadleir.

In Petersham [NSW] 30 children and adults in The Avenue got together for a full cooked breakfast of sparkling wine, pancakes, scrambled eggs, bacon, coffee and pastries.

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In Pymble [NSW] residents of Pymble Avenue launched an updated history of their street and recalled how the collapse of a large tree 20 years ago, that crushed cars and blocked the street, became the catalyst for monthly coffee mornings and parties celebrating milestones in residents lives.

As well there have been major council-sponsored festivals in Woollahra [NSW], Unley [SA] and Mosman Park [WA]; community events in Mackay [Qld] and celebrations for public housing residents in NSW and Qld.

On Queensland's Gold Coast a residents association organised a major festival with opera singers, hip-hop, belly dancers and magicians with food and refreshments donated by local retailers and suppliers.

The City of Banyule in Victoria launched a Neighbourhood Smile Zone and a Neighbourhood Street Party Kit. Burwood Council [NSW] offered free street closures to allow street parties; Leichhardt Municipal Council launched the 'Good Ideas Coffee Cart' for residents to borrow and The City of Melbourne provided free bbqs, street cricket sets and other items so neighbours could get together and meet.

Within Docklands a series of community 'open house' events were organised by Lend Lease and the City of Melbourne so residents in the precinct's apartment towers could meet and discover the local facilities and attractions. Frankston City Council and Peninsula Health mailed all residents with a Neighbour Day information card with details of local services and community programs.

FOR MEDIA INFORMATION ONLY

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