



Westpac Prize for Neighbour Day founder

Andrew Heslop, the founder of Australia's annual celebration of community, Neighbour Day, has been honoured as the inaugural winner in the individual division of the Westpac Prize during the national Communities in Control conference.

Announced in Melbourne this evening the \$10,000 prize from Our Community includes a \$3000 cash component from Westpac. It is the first ever award for Neighbour Day which was founded in Melbourne in 2003.

"I dedicate this award to the memory of Elsie Brown, whose lonely death in Melbourne in 2001 became the catalyst for founding Neighbour Day in 2003; and to the late Clive Tayler, my neighbour in Albert Park [Melbourne]," Andrew said.

"Clive and his partner Joan Nicholas ably demonstrated that to be great neighbours you don't have to live each other's lives or be in each other's pockets, because the foundations of positive relationships are tolerance, respect and understanding.

"Until his death last year at 93, Clive would bring in the wheelie and recycling bins each Monday morning. He'd nail back the pickets, which had fallen off the fence or mow the nature strip. Even though the front door was always open, he would always knock and wait.

"No matter if you live in the city or the bush, in a house or an apartment, being a great neighbour starts with one person – and that person is you.

"Great neighbours are not always best friends but they can be, and the essence is positive communication," he said.

Accepting the award, Andrew pledged to reinvest the cash from Westpac back in to Neighbour Day.

"My plan is to use the \$3000 to provide small grants to community organisations and residents groups so they can hold afternoon teas or barbecues to celebrate Neighbour Day next year," he said.

Founded in Melbourne in 2003 and held on the last Sunday in March, 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.

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