



## Neighbours connect in flooded communities

As Queenslanders move from emergency response to recovery mode following the devastating floods across Brisbane, Rockhampton, Toowoomba and the Lockyer Valley, neighbours in the flood affected suburbs and towns are connecting to clean up their communities and assess the damage.

"The level of community spirit and cooperation is enormously high as neighbours in the flood-ravaged areas stand shoulder-to-shoulder to clean up their muddy, water-logged homes," said Neighbour Day founder and 2011 Australia Day Ambassador Andrew Heslop.

"After helping each other move precious goods away from the rising water and evacuating to safe zones, now comes the difficult and heartbreaking task of returning to survey the aftermath.

"But what is already very clear is the strong sense of community that is quickly emerging from the disaster.

"People who have lost everything are standing firm and are vowing to rebuild. They may have seen all their possessions, and in some cases their livelihoods too, washed away but they want to restore what has been destroyed. They are refusing to be beaten.

"This attitude of mutual support and resilience in the face of adversity demonstrates that a community is more than just buildings. Fundamentally it is the people, neighbours in street after street after street, who collectively make their suburb or town a great place to live.

"It is why great relationships between neighbours all year round help to ensure our streets and communities are safe, tolerant and vibrant places. It's why the community you want starts at your front door," Andrew said.

Neighbour Day, Australia's annual celebration of community, is held on the last Sunday in March every year.

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](http://www.neighbourday.org)

### **FOR MEDIA INFORMATION ONLY**

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