



## Neighbour Day founder selected for The People's Parliament

As New South Wales voters prepare for the state election on Saturday 26th March 2011, Neighbour Day founder and Australia Day Ambassador, Andrew Heslop, will participate in The People's Parliament in Sydney on Tuesday.

"I am honoured to be part of this landmark event organised by The Daily Telegraph. There are many challenges which face this state over the next decade and beyond, but our neighbourhoods and communities are at the heart of each one of them," Andrew said.

"Strong discussion about how we work together to create more cohesive and inclusive communities should be on the agenda of every elected representative in local, state and federal government.

"We must continue to create suburbs and towns that are healthy, resilient and safe because that is critical for New South Wales to evolve to positively meet the big challenges of the future.

"When residents are engaged, active and involved the entire community benefits because there is a shared sense of purpose and unity. Neighbours who know each other develop local support networks which underpin government services through diverse activities ranging from locally run child care; the management of school canteens; coaching children's sport and providing volunteer transport services for the elderly.

"There's also the critical role trained Australian Red Cross, Rural Fire Service and SES volunteers play during an emergency or crisis.

"The recent floods in northern New South Wales, and disasters in other parts of the country, yet again proved our communities are only as strong as the people who live in them.

"Government is a gift of the majority of people. It's a precious gift and too often it is one that is taken for granted.

"That's why I'm looking forward to The People's Parliament as an enthusiastic and positive contest of ideas and opinion. It will be a truly historic event in the chamber where Australian democracy began," said Andrew.

Neighbour Day was founded in 2003 following the discovery of the death of an elderly woman who had passed away two years earlier. Over the past nine years Australians have willingly embraced the day with their only incentive being a shared belief in better relationships between the people next door, across the street or on the next farm.

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.

### **FOR MEDIA INFORMATION ONLY**

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