



26<sup>th</sup> September 2010

**Letter to the Editor**

The Sun-Herald

Opposition Leader Barry O'Farrell's decision to provide seed funding to "reinvigorate" Neighbourhood Watch should be just one element of a wider plan to reconnect communities (Public will be eyes and ears of police under Coalition plan, September 26).

Rather than concentrating on crime, there needs to be wider government and corporate funding to develop strategies to engage communities all year round. When residents are engaged and active in their streets and suburbs the opportunity for crime is lessened.

Getting Australians off the sofa and outside has to be the first step. Encouraging neighbours to get together is critical. For the past nine years Neighbour Day has been encouraging Australians to celebrate their communities on the last Sunday in March as the catalyst for year-round interaction.

In 2008 I was invited to speak at the United Nations about the organic growth and development of Neighbour Day, which won a Westpac prize in May. While Kevin Rudd endorsed the day as prime minister, and state leaders, mayors and community advocates have got behind it, Neighbour Day has been funded entirely from my salary and personal savings since 2003.

**Andrew Heslop**  
**Founder & CEO, Neighbour Day**