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Older people need good neighbours

THE lonely death of Robert Kent in his Bribie Island caravan (*SM*, February 5) demonstrates why close relationships with older neighbours are integral, no matter where we live. Since 2003, Neighbour Day, on the final Sunday in March every year, has encouraged Australians living in the city and the bush to get to know the person next door, across the street or on the next farm.

As we're now seeing during the floods crisis, connected residents are integral to communities being able to respond when faced with an emergency or disaster.

But positive, inclusive relationships between neighbours of all ages are integral all year round. Sadly, it is almost impossible to prevent older people dying alone in their homes, as Mr Kent did, but we can give those who do dignity and respect by ensuring they are not undiscovered for significant periods of time.

Andrew Heslop, Sydney