



Now is the time to plan your Neighbour Day street party or community event

Thinking a street party or community event could be the best way to celebrate the 10th annual Neighbour Day on Sunday 25th March 2012? Well you'd better talk to your council or shire now.

That's the message from Australia Day Ambassador and NBN Champion Andrew Heslop, who founded Australia's annual celebration of community, Neighbour Day, in 2003.

"Every year more Australians are getting together with their neighbours and deciding to do something big," said Andrew.

"Bringing everyone in the street together strengthens the community and directly connects every resident, while at the same time helping to break down the barriers of loneliness and isolation.

"Applying to close off the street to create a mini-festival and to safely allow a game of street cricket is a very good idea.

"What varies is the application process and timeframes required by each council and shire. So neighbours who want to hold a street party or major community event in a public space should talk to their local government authority now to find out what the requirements are," Andrew said.

Neighbour Day has grown from a simple idea in a Letter to the Editor of The Age following the lonely death of an elderly woman. Mrs Elsie Brown had died alone in her home in 2001 but was not found for two years.

"No matter where you live – in the city or the bush, in a house, an apartment or on a farm – knowing who your neighbours are creates a community. When you are connected with the people who live nearby you care about what happens locally and are directly helping to ensure your suburb or town is safe, friendly, resilient and sustainable," added Andrew.

Since 2003 Australians have embraced Neighbour Day by organising street parties, morning teas, community bbqs and by attending council-run festivals, fairs, major 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

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