



Australia's diplomatic community invited to participate in Neighbour Day

Overseas missions represented in Australia have been invited to celebrate with their communities this Neighbour Day on Sunday 25th March 2012.

"One of the five principal aims of Neighbour Day is the promotion of tolerance, respect and understanding – which is as equally relevant between neighbours in residential areas as it is between neighbouring countries," said Neighbour Day founder and Australia Day Ambassador Andrew Heslop.

"This is the tenth anniversary of Neighbour Day being founded in Melbourne and so extending an invitation to Ambassadors, High Commissioners and Chargés d'affaires to take part in Australia's annual celebration of community is an appropriate extension for this national day.

"Heads of Mission have been asked to consider holding a local event with their staff, more widely within their cultural community or extending that to include neighbouring missions and local residents," Mr Heslop said.

In 2008 Mr Heslop spoke at the United Nations about the development of Australia's Neighbour Day which he founded after the remains of an elderly woman were discovered in her Melbourne home. Ms Elsie Brown had died two years earlier but had been forgotten by neighbours, friends and family.

Since 2003 Australians in urban and regional areas have embraced the day with no incentive other than a shared belief in safe, resilient and sustainable communities. They do so by organising street parties, barbecues and social activities or by attending events run by councils and shires, residents associations and community organisations.

There are 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.

"Already a number of Missions have shown great interest in celebrating Neighbour Day, which is great news. Over the coming weeks I look forward to calling on more representatives to talk about how easy it is for them to take part in Australia's annual celebration of community on Neighbour Day," added Mr Heslop.

There are no costs to participate in Neighbour Day and by visiting the website www.neighbourday.org you can download a free kit containing invitations, name tags, posters and a 'how to' guide.

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