



Don't forget your neighbours this festive season

Over Christmas and the New Year Australians are being asked to consider their single, elderly or vulnerable neighbours who live alone to help break down the barriers of loneliness and isolation many people experience at this time of year.

2012 NSW Volunteer of the Year and Neighbour Day founder Andrew Heslop says the importance of community is never more relevant than over the festive season.

"While the weeks ahead promise celebration, relaxation and great food for many of us, there will be neighbours who will not receive any gifts, visitors or the simple enjoyment of a delicious meal," Andrew said.

"As we plan to cook the perfect turkey, serve the most succulent seafood and prepare the tastiest mince pies, consider whether there is a neighbour you could invite to join your celebration. Or someone who would welcome a special Christmas lunch or dinner delivered to their home instead?

"Such a simple gesture will bring the happiness and joy of this time of year into their lives, making a real difference to a person who otherwise would spend the day alone, cut off from their community," said Andrew.

Earlier this month Andrew was named the NSW Volunteer of the Year for founding Australia's annual celebration of community, Neighbour Day, in Melbourne in 2003 and funding, developing and managing its growth over the past ten years. Always held on the final Sunday in March it will celebrate its 10th anniversary on Sunday 31st March 2013.

"Inviting the neighbours around for a cold beer or a glass of sparkling wine is also a terrific way to say thanks for walking the kids to school, picking up the newspaper, clearing the mail or watering the garden over the past year," added Andrew.

"Often we often forget about our neighbours until something goes wrong but great relationships between residents are integral to safe, vibrant and inclusive communities all year round."

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



FOR MEDIA INFORMATION ONLY

Libby Fordham
The Fordham Agency
0411 473 938

Andrew Heslop
Founder, Neighbour Day
0431 863 343

Released 23.12.2012