



It's a cool idea to check on your neighbours over summer

As the hot summer Australians have been waiting for over the holiday season begins to arrive, it's a good idea to check on elderly or vulnerable neighbours to make sure they are okay.

That's the message from 2012 NSW Volunteer of the Year and Neighbour Day founder Andrew Heslop who says hot weather and older residents can be a lethal combination.

"Many older Australians and those on low incomes don't have air conditioning, or if they do they worry about using it too much because of the cost," said Andrew.

"Hot days can be a serious health risk for the elderly and frail who find it difficult to cope with relentless heat. So if you have neighbours next door, across the street or on the next farm who might be at risk, go and check on them to see if they are okay.

"Senior citizens or people living on supported incomes in rented homes may not even have a fan to use. So if you have one in the shed that's not being used, offer it to them to help stay cool in the heat of the day.

"If your home is air-conditioned, why not invite your elderly or vulnerable neighbours over for a cold drink during the heat of the day. You might also consider giving them a spare key so they can remain cool while you're at work.

"Wherever we live we can all be vigilant over summer to help save lives," Andrew said.

Other handy tips for residents with elderly or vulnerable neighbours include –

- Remind them to drink enough fresh water to stay hydrated.
- Drop by in the morning and in the cool of the evening to see how they are.
- Leave your mobile or work phone number so they can contact you in an emergency.
- Alert police and emergency services immediately if elderly residents known to live alone fail to answer the door.

Neighbour Day, Australia's annual celebration of community, began in Melbourne in 2003. A national day to develop better relationships with the people who live around us it 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.

The next Neighbour Day is on Sunday 31st March 2013.

www.neighbourday.org



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Released 03.01.2013