

# Local heroes

As a young cadet journalist I lived in a share household in Sydney's inner-west, in a semi-detached house on a fairly busy road. Towards the end of my stint there I was disturbed to read a newspaper story about 'The woman Sydney forgot', an elderly woman who was discovered in her home more than two years after she had died. She lived just across the street.

The story made for uncomfortable reading, not least because it was so close to home. How could this happen? Why did no-one notice?

It was a similar case in Melbourne a couple of years later that spurred Andrew Heslop to act on his discomfort and launch Neighbour Day, a national initiative celebrating its 10th anniversary in March. Andrew has self-funded this campaign for a decade, earmarking the last Sunday in March as a day for Australians to make contact with people who live nearby. "It doesn't matter if you have a quick chat over the fence or invite the whole street to a barbecue, it's a catalyst for Australians to get to know their neighbours," he says.

In my street, Marvellous Martin is the neighbour who keeps everyone connected. He brings in our bins, keeps an eye on our homes and runs errands or holds the fort for local businesses when called upon. He has lived in his home since he was born, and is the thread drawing the rest of us latecomers together.

Sadly, 'forgotten people' stories continue to crop up. And not everyone has a Marty in their lives. So give some thought to your locale as Neighbour Day approaches, and see whether there's room for improvement. Our calling cards (page 83) will help break the ice. And if you're already on great terms with your neighbours, send us a photo and enter our competition (details, page 83). *H&G* is putting \$5000 towards a Neighbour Day gathering. And that will buy a lot of snags.

*Lisa*

**EDITOR IN CHIEF**

Still on community, the fundraiser for St Joseph's Primary School, Hawthorn on March 17 is an Open House tour of five amazing Melbourne homes. One, Huntingtower, featured in *H&G* last October. Details; [www.openhouses.org.au](http://www.openhouses.org.au).



**SHARE A PHOTO OF A WONDERFUL BABY OR TODDLER MOMENT AND YOU COULD WIN A \$10,000 EDUCATION-SAVINGS PLAN COURTESY OF HARVEY NORMAN. SEE PAGE 84 FOR DETAILS.**



## Sarah & Elizabeth

**H&G FEATURES EDITORS**

Sarah Pickette (left) and Elizabeth Wilson have compiled this month's Kitchen & Bathroom Design Special (page 167). "It's exciting to see fittings and appliances evolving into beautiful objects in their own right," says Elizabeth.



## Armelle Habib

**PHOTOGRAPHER**

For this issue, regular *H&G* contributor Armelle photographed Villa Rosalys in Provence (page 96). "Working at a magnificent home in the South of France was a dream job," she says. "The light, the landscape, the food... superb."