



Australians prepare to celebrate their communities

Neighbours across the country are getting ready for Australia's annual celebration of community, Neighbour Day, which celebrates its tenth anniversary this year on Sunday 31st March.

2012 NSW Volunteer of the Year and Neighbour Day founder, Andrew Heslop, says the focus of the day is still about building stronger and better-connected communities through street parties, barbecues and local events.

"No matter where we choose to call home we're all part of the local community whether or not we actively participate in it," said Andrew.

"Yet knowing who our neighbours are is vital to feeling connected and supported - not just by the people next door, across the street or on the next farm but in the surrounding area.

"Over the past 12 months we have again witnessed brave neighbours of all ages standing side-by-side to confront floods, storms and bushfires - then regrouping after the event to recover and rebuild. As well, record high temperatures have encouraged residents to check up on elderly and vulnerable neighbours to make sure they are okay.

"Ten years on the message behind Neighbour Day is still the same.

"Use the day as a catalyst for great relationships all year round by meeting your neighbours for the first time, or simply reconnect. Exchange phone numbers for use in an emergency and reassure them that help is only a phone call away.

"Our communities are only as strong as the people who live in them, which is why Neighbour Day continues to be relevant wherever you live in Australia," Andrew said.

Always held on the last Sunday in March every year, 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.

The free Neighbour Day kit for 2013 - containing invitations, name tags, posters and a 'how to' guide - can now be downloaded from www.neighbourday.org



NeighbourDay



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