

Neighbour Day Launches over Morning Tea

This morning Relationships Australia hosted a morning tea in Bidwill, New South Wales, to launch Neighbour Day 2017. The launch begins the countdown to Neighbour Day, an annual community campaign, which will be celebrated on Sunday 26 March 2017.

The launch was held at Bidwill Community Garden and Nursery, a joint Community Greening project run by the Department of Family and Community Services, Housing New South Wales and Botanic Gardens & Centennial Parklands.

“The volunteers at Bidwill Community Garden and Nursery are known for their commitment to community and volunteering projects,” Alison Brook, National Executive Officer for Relationships Australia said, “Given Neighbour Day’s strong focus on promoting social connection and reducing loneliness, the community garden is the ideal location for our national launch.”

The launch was attended by Neighbour Day Ambassadors Costa Georgiadis, host of Gardening Australia; Natalie Ahmat, presenter of National Indigenous Television News; and Andrew Heslop, Neighbour Day Founder. Guests were entertained with live music from Sing Australia, a community choir.

The event largely focused on Neighbour Day’s 2017 theme: *The importance of social connection for the elderly*. 2016 ‘Tell Us Your Story’ winner, Sandra Pereira, shared her story of the importance of knowing her neighbours at her New South Wales Seniors Housing complex, only a few suburbs away from the community gardens.

Neighbour Day’s theme this year is strongly connected to the day’s beginnings. In 2003, Andrew Heslop founded Neighbour Day after the remains of an elderly woman were found inside her suburban home more than two years after her death. Relationships Australia assumed responsibility for the Neighbour Day campaign in 2014.

In its online survey in January 2017, Relationships Australia found that more than one-third of respondents reported that they often felt isolated, while a further 40% reported that they felt isolated some of the time.

Neighbour Day provides people with the opportunity to break down social barriers and reduce loneliness, isolation and depression in each neighbourhood around the country.

People are encouraged to visit the [Neighbour Day website](#) to register their event and access a range of free resources to make celebrating Neighbour Day easier than ever.

Neighbour Day’s [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#) accounts can be used as a platform for sharing photos and stories from Neighbour Day events.

“The community you want starts at your front door.”™

Media Contact:

Alison Brook
National Executive Officer, Relationships Australia
PH: 02 6162 9300