



MEDIA RELEASE

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The Café Conversations Project – Cafés Creating Connections

How often do you see patrons in a café sipping on their drinks alone, or with only the company of a mobile phone? It seems Australians are struggling to connect with one another socially and in 2020, Relationships Australia plans to change this by promoting social connection in the lead up to this year's Neighbour Day, Australia's annual celebration of community which takes place on the last Sunday in March.

Australia is in the midst of a loneliness crisis, with many in our population suffering from a lack of social connection and a range of negative health effects arising as a result.

"[Research](#) shows that one in ten people lack social support or connection, one in six experience emotional loneliness, and just under 1.5 million Australians report they have been lonely for a decade or more," said Nick Tebbey, National Executive Officer of Relationships Australia.

In 2020, Neighbour Day is looking to flip the loneliness discussion to get Australians to focus instead on the importance of belonging – to start people thinking about how they can put their energy into creating positive and meaningful [social connections](#) with people outside of their normal groups and relationships. These social connections might be one-off moments or regular and lasting interactions that create one to one relationships or become the starting point for an ongoing group.

"[Research](#) commissioned by Relationships Australia, reveals that the most immediate effect of participating in Neighbour Day is that it creates new relationships, renews past relationships, and deepens existing relationships.

"In 2020, Neighbour Day is celebrating the role of cafes in bringing people together. This year we're supporting cafes across the country to help foster strong personal bonds and boost lasting community connection." said Mr Tebbey.

As part of the 2020 Neighbour Day campaign, The Café Conversations Project, encourages cafes to plan a range of neighbourly actions or activities in the lead up to Neighbour Day. "We'd love to see cafes embracing The Café Conversations Project across the entire month of March, and hopefully on an ongoing basis for the rest of the year.

"As natural hubs for social interaction, cafes have all the elements needed to create connections and to share great conversations. With a little creativity, enthusiasm and preparation, cafes can tap into this opportunity to engage their customer base for a good cause" Mr Tebbey said.

Neighbour Day provides an information pack with ready to use resources, ideas and inspiration to help get cafes started. These are all [free when you register with The Café Conversations Project online](#) and there are prize packs to be won.

Why not join Neighbour Day in their quest to strengthen Australian communities?

Not a café? Why not do a 'pop up' café in your street? Or perhaps encourage your favourite local café to join in!



To learn more about [Neighbour Day](#) or The Café Conversations Project, [visit here](#).

You can also follow all the Neighbour Day action on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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

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