



MEDIA RELEASE

Sunday 26 March 2017

## It's Time to Connect with Those Around Us!

This Sunday 26 March 2017, communities across the country will come together to celebrate and connect with those who live in their neighbourhood through Neighbour Day.

Neighbour Day's theme this year is: [The importance of social connection for the elderly](#). The theme aims to encourage everyone to reach out to older people in their communities, particularly those who live alone.

"This year we are placing an emphasis on social connection for the elderly," Alison Brook, National Executive Officer for Relationships Australia said, "Loneliness is a growing epidemic not only in Australia but all over the world, and we know that it impacts many older people. Neighbour Day is an opportunity to break down social barriers and create important connections with others."

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. Andrew gifted Neighbour Day to Relationships Australia in January 2014.

Neighbour Day, now in its fifteenth year, encourages people to build better relationships with those who live nearby, especially the elderly and vulnerable. It provides an opportunity to break down social barriers and reduce loneliness, isolation and depression in each neighbourhood around the country.

With close to 500 registered events, and more than 2000 free resource kits downloaded, there will be plenty of opportunities to celebrate Neighbour Day this weekend. All over Australia neighbours, local councils, businesses, and community groups are organising backyard barbecues, morning teas, street parties and community gatherings to meet and get to know the people who live around them.

Those celebrating the day are encouraged to visit the [Neighbour Day website](#) to register their event, as well as download free, easy-to-use resources including posters, selfie signs, calling cards and more.

Celebrations on the day can be shared by posting photos and stories to Neighbour Day's [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) profiles.

Beginning next Monday 27 March, the Neighbour Day team will also be giving away a prize pool of more than \$1000 through the [Tell Us Your Story](#) competition. The annual competition invites people to share a 250-word story of an extraordinary neighbour or an extraordinary neighbourly act.

"The community you want starts at your front door."™

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