

Neighbour Day - Record Numbers Register to Celebrate!

Now in its twelfth year, this year's Neighbour Day on Sunday 29 March is shaping up to be the largest Neighbour Day celebration yet. There are hundreds of events registered for Neighbour Day so far with close to 40,000 likely participants.

"All over Australia neighbours, local councils, businesses, and community groups are organising barbecues, street parties, morning teas and community gatherings in an effort to get to know the people around them," Alison Brook, National Executive Officer for Relationships Australia said.

Relationships Australia is the home of Neighbour Day. Neighbour Day was founded in Melbourne in 2003 after the remains of an elderly woman, Elsie Brown were found inside her suburban home. Neighbour Day has grown to be a celebration of community and an acknowledgement of the need to connect with those around us.

"As well as the fun aspect of hanging out with your neighbours, Neighbour Day has a serious message," Ms Brook said. "It's well known that loneliness and social isolation can be countered by good social connections and a sense of belonging. We all feel better when we know the people around us and have someone to call on when in need."

Recent research has shown that people with friendly neighbours and strong community ties are less likely to suffer heart attacks. The study, published in the UK Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health showed that people who felt they had good social support and local community connections were more likely to have improved heart health and be at lower risk of stroke.¹ Those with the highest neighbourly scores could reduce their risk of a heart attack by up to 70 per cent, the authors said.

"As part of Neighbour Day we're encouraging people everywhere to get together, have a cuppa or a barby, organise a street party or simply start a conversation with those who live around you," Ms Brook said.

You'll find everything you need to help organise your Neighbour Day event at neighbourday.org. You can also follow us on Twitter (@NeighbourDay) or connect on Facebook (neighbourday). Everyone is encouraged to register their Neighbour Day event to access event invitations, selfie signs, posters, calling cards and other great resources.

If you are planning on organising a larger event or what to find out about other events in your local community the Neighbour Day team suggests getting in contact your local council for further information.

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The principal aims of Neighbour Day are to:

- Strengthen communities and build better relationships with the people who live around us.
- Create safer, healthier and more vibrant suburbs and towns.
- Promote tolerance, respect and understanding.
- Break down community barriers.
- Protect the elderly, the vulnerable and the disadvantaged.

The *Tell Us Your Story* competition encourages people to submit a 500 word story about a great neighbour or an extraordinary neighbourly act. To enter go to neighbourday.org and be in the running to win cash prizes.

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

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Reference

1. UK Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health. *Perceived neighbourhood social cohesion and myocardial infarction*. 18 August 2014

About Relationships Australia

Relationships Australia is a leading provider of relationship support services for children, adults, families and communities. We are a community-based, not-for-profit Australian organisation with no religious affiliations. Services and programs are provided from more than 110 centres nationally by our 2,000 staff.

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