

## MEDIA RELEASE

9 June 2014

### ‘The community you want starts at your front door’™

[Relationships Australia](#) is seeking expressions of interest from businesses, government and community organisations with an interest in becoming a national support partner of [Neighbour Day](#). Neighbour Day is on a quest for a number of strategic partners to be a part of its plan to become one of Australia’s great annual celebrations.

The idea behind the national day was first proposed in a letter by Neighbour Day founder Andrew Heslop to The Age in March 2003, after Victoria Police found the remains of Mrs Elsie Brown’s body in her Melbourne home – forgotten by her neighbours, friends and family. A coroner later established Mrs Brown had been dead for two years.

What started as an urgent call to check on elderly, vulnerable or single neighbours living alone, has grown to become a national celebration in local communities through street parties, barbecues, open days, festivals, fairs and other formal and informal community activities run by neighbours, resident or tenant groups and local government. The annual day – held on the last Sunday in March– was initiated to encourage people to connect and create a sense of belonging in their local communities.

Relationships Australia took on the stewardship and management of Neighbour Day in January 2014, after founder Andrew Heslop undertook an Australia wide search to find a good home for the event. He said, *“Our communities are only as strong as the people who live in them and helping individuals and families build stronger relationships has been the fundamental aim of Relationships Australia for 60 years.”*

Recent 2014 Neighbour Day celebrations with Relationships Australia at the helm, saw both the [Hon. Fred Chaney AO](#) and [Costa Georgiadis](#) come on board as high profile Neighbour Day Ambassadors. Australia Post also assisted with valuable in kind support to help Relationships Australia get the Neighbour Day message out. The day was marked by 350 event registrations with more than 30,000 people taking part in celebrations throughout cities, urban, and regional Australia. There was a significant increase in social media activity, as well as national and local media interest. The future is bright for Neighbour Day.

Relationships Australia National Executive Officer, Alison Brook, said she was very pleased the organisation was chosen to continue promoting the benefits of well-connected communities and great relationships between neighbours of all ages right across Australia. *“Neighbour Day has become a powerful reminder of how vital, and at times critical, it is to know your neighbours,”* Alison said. *“We firmly believe that a positive relationship with other residents can and does change communities, but it also assists our personal well-being and helps to prevent loneliness, isolation and depression.”*

Relationships Australia is seeking a number of like-minded organisations who share their vision, to work with them to make Neighbour Day a significant event in our calendars and to help them grow this ethos beyond more than just a single day.

*Expressions of Interest are called for outlining: 1) organisational capability, 2) a statement of commitment to community values and 3) an indication of what kind of support you may be able to offer e.g. financial sponsorship, pro bono expertise, capacity building support, in kind support, strategic networking opportunities, research (academic & market), program evaluation, other useful assistance, Closing date 31 July 2014.*

- a) By email to [information@neighbourday.org](mailto:information@neighbourday.org)
- b) By mail to Ms Sam Robinson, Neighbour Day c/o Relationships Australia, PO Box 5046, Kingston, ACT, 2604.