

MEDIA RELEASE

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Neighbour Day 2017: It's Time to Reconnect with Those Around Us

On Sunday 26 March 2017 communities across the country will come together to celebrate Neighbour Day, a grass roots community development program encouraging people to connect with those who live in their neighbourhood. This year, [Neighbour Day's annual theme](#) is: *The importance of social connection for the elderly*. The theme aims to encourage everyone to reach out to older people in their neighbourhoods, especially those who live alone, or are otherwise vulnerable or frail.

As a lead up to Neighbour Day, the Riverland Farmers' Market and Relationships Australia SA have joined up to present ['Growing Together'](#) on Saturday 18 March.

We are pleased to announce that ABC TV Presenter, Gardening Australia and Neighbour Day Ambassador, Sophie Thomson will be at 'Growing Together'. Sophie will give a talk about 'Saving the World with Gardening' that not only shows the benefits of gardening, but also how it can improve our health, wellbeing and relationships. Watch Sophie's TEDx talk [here](#).

"The principal aim of Neighbour Day is to help people build better relationships with the people who live around them, particularly the elderly and vulnerable" Alison Brook, National Executive Officer of Relationships Australia said, "This year we are encouraging everyone to introduce themselves to an elderly person in their community who might be lonely and in need of a friend."

The 2017 theme is strongly connected to Neighbour 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 promoting and supporting Neighbour Day in 2014.

A range of studies have found that social exclusion and loneliness are detrimental to mental and physical health, while social participation is positively associated with improved wellbeing for individuals, families and communities.

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

Neighbour Day is formally celebrated on the last Sunday in March every year, and provides people with the opportunity to break down social barriers and reduce loneliness, isolation and depression. Whether through a

cuppa, a picnic in the park, or a message of support, Neighbour Day is the perfect opportunity to say thanks for being a great neighbour and for being there when I needed you most.

[‘Growing Together’](#) takes place on Saturday 18 March from 7.30 am to 11.30 am at Berri Citizens’ Hall, Crawford Tce, Berri. This special market event includes seasonal local produce, a breakfast bar, craft stalls, children’s activities and change to meet Sophie Thomson.

If you are interested in holding your own community event, visit the [Neighbour Day website](#) to register your event and access a number of [free resources](#) to make celebrating Neighbour Day easier than ever.

Check out Neighbour Day on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) to see what’s happening around the country!

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About Relationships Australia South Australia

Supporting you through change

As an independent, not-for-profit organisation, we support our work involves improving the health and wellbeing of people by providing a broad of range services including counselling, gambling help, post separation services, post adoption support, health and multicultural services and much more to individuals, couples, families, children, young people, schools and communities.

Our Registered Training Organisation, the **Australian Institute of Social Relations** offers courses and nationally recognised qualifications to the human services sector and the family law system.

For more information about how we can support you through change, call 1300 364 277 or visit our website

www.rasa.org.au