

# media release

Wednesday, 15 March 2017

## The community you want starts at your front door

Neighbour Day is just around the corner and Mosman Council is encouraging residents to start planning a get-together with neighbours to get to know each other better and celebrate.

Neighbour Day, on Sunday 26 March, is Australia's annual celebration of community that encourages us to connect with others who live near us through a picnic in the park, a cuppa, message of support or offer of assistance.

"Mosman has a strong sense of community and Council is working hard to support and facilitate local connections," Mayor of Mosman Peter Abelson said. "Council undertakes several local initiatives, some in conjunction with community groups, to promote neighbourliness, community connection and social wellbeing such as the Festival of Mosman, community care programs, and the vast array of activities at our community facilities."

Council will be holding a Neighbour Day lunch at Council's community restaurant at Mosman Square Seniors Centre on Friday 31 March for older residents.

Mosman residents, Annette Watson and Dian Smith regularly volunteer their time to assist their neighbours and fellow residents. Retired teacher Annette visits and provides much needed social support to older people through Council's Neighbour Aid Program and Community Visitors program.

"I really enjoy my visits with older residents and it is so personally rewarding to see the improvement it makes to their day-to-day lives," she said. "I feel more connected locally and can use my skills and experience to make a positive difference."

Dian, who previously taught English as a second language, assists residents from non-English speaking backgrounds, and helps older residents through Neighbour Aid, Saturday Social Club and the Care Café. Dian agreed that neighbourliness can be as simple as having a friendly chat, providing practical assistance, or can extend to active volunteering. Dian also highlighted the importance of intergenerational connection. "Having friendly social contact with older neighbours can enrich everyone, especially children and young people in developing caring and respect," Dian said.

Research collected by Relationships Australia, the national organisers of Neighbour Day, shows that people living in neighbourhoods that are highly connected enjoy overall higher levels of physical and mental health with the converse also true. About 55% of people who ring Lifeline's Help Line have been found to live alone and feel lonely and socially isolated, with frail older people who live alone being particularly vulnerable. The research also indicates that neighbours are important because good relationships between neighbours are the building blocks to a strong and supportive community, and can make a positive difference to quality of life.

For information visit [mosman.nsw.gov.au](http://mosman.nsw.gov.au) or contact Council on 9978 4128.



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