



## DON'T BE A STRANGER ON NEIGHBOUR DAY

Getting to know the people next door or across the street is one of the best ways of avoiding neighbourhood conflict, according to the free NSW mediation service Community Justice Centres.

Community Justice Centres' director Natascha Rohr said Neighbour Day, on Sunday, March 29, 2015, is an opportunity to break the ice.

"Neighbours who know each other can often resolve issues as they arise through good communication," Ms Rohr said.

"When neighbours remain virtual strangers they're less likely to give each other the benefit of the doubt or talk about issues early, which means small problems become big ones," Ms Rohr says.

Community Justice Centres is partnering with Neighbour Day 2015 to support Australia's annual celebration of community. Events will range from street parties and backyard barbeques to neighbours meeting for a cuppa.

"The goals of Neighbour Day are similar to ours, we both want to promote harmonious relationships between neighbours and across the community," Ms Rohr said.

"Even if you aren't on good terms with your neighbour, this is a chance to repair relationships.

"Sometimes it's as simple as saying hello and opening the door to future communication. Taking the first step can be hard, but saying 'Happy Neighbour Day' is a good start."

Neighbours in dispute can also contact Community Justice Centres on **1800 990 777** to arrange a free mediation in their area. Impartial and trained mediators run sessions all over NSW, with around 80 per cent of cases resulting in an agreement.

"People are often surprised by how much mediation can help resolve issues and improve relationships," Ms Rohr said.

Community Justice Centres is part of the NSW Department of Justice and has been helping resolve conflict between neighbours, community members, families and work colleagues for over 30 years.

Neighbour Day is organised by Relationships Australia. For more information visit: [www.neighbourday.org](http://www.neighbourday.org)

To find out more about Community Justice Centres go to: [www.cjc.nsw.gov.au](http://www.cjc.nsw.gov.au)