Mario: Hi Danelle! I feel like I haven’t seen you for ages. Do you have time for a cuppa?

Danelle: Hi Mario! Nice to see you. Of course I’ve got time for a cuppa - come on in!

Mario: Thanks. I see you’ve got some Halloween decorations out.

Danelle: [Laughs] Oh yeah, the kids are really excited about dressing up this year and having trick or treaters come around.

Mario: Really? I’m kind of surprised that your kids are participating. I would have thought that you’d be against American-style holidays with lots of disposable decorations.

Danelle: I am. I don’t think Halloween IS an American-style holiday.

Mario: [Laughs]. Come on! That’s a bit naive! Around the middle of October every American sit-com on TV has a Halloween special. And the supermarkets are full of plastic rubbish that will just go into landfill at the beginning of November. It’s not even the right season for Halloween here. In Australia it’s spring. In the northern hemisphere it’s autumn and pumpkins make sense.

Danelle: Well, as you know, we had a bumper pumpkin crop in the backyard last year and I still have a couple of pumpkins in storage. I mean, we DO eat pumpkins all year ’round, and I’m pretty confident that my own kids know when to pick pumpkins. But in Australia we’re used to celebrating our holidays in the opposite way. When the rest of the world has a white Christmas, we’re sweltering in the backyard over Christmas dinner. I have faith in my children that they know how Australia is different to the rest of the world.

Mario: That’s a fair point. Your kids probably have a better understanding of the seasons than most Australian adults.

Danelle: [Laughs] Thanks - I like to think they are pretty switched on.

Mario: But what about the rest of it? You know how angry you get when people even use plastic bags and here you are defending the plastic rubbish generated by Halloween.

Danelle: Whoa! Hold on there. There’s a whole lot of plastic generated by Christmas and Easter and you’ve never suggested that I shouldn’t celebrate that. And anyway, just like I would at any other time, I try to avoid plastic that will only be used once. The kids have to make their own decorations out of left-over pumpkins and draw spooky faces on paper. Even the skeleton in the window is just a paper cut-out. I DO hate the amount of rubbish other people consume at Halloween, but that doesn’t mean I have to participate in the same behaviour.

Mario: But just because you’re making environmentally friendly decorations doesn’t mean that everyone else is.

Danelle: No, but I’m showing everyone in my street that Halloween CAN be more environmentally friendly.

Mario: OK, OK, OK. But don’t you think it’s a problem that your kids are roaming the street asking strangers for lollies?

A Ticking Mind Resource
Danelle: Wow, you're really against our family celebrating Halloween, aren't you?

Mario: Actually, you're making some really good points - I didn't think anyone could shift my opinion on how bad Halloween is, but I can feel my position shifting. But asking strangers for lollies? That's just bad parenting, isn't it?

Danelle: Yeah, asking strangers for lollies would be totally weird. But that's not what is actually happening here. Instead, my kids are going to their NEIGHBOURS' houses and interacting with the locals in the community. Remember when you used to know the names of your neighbours and say 'hi' to them? I don't want my kids not knowing who their neighbours are.

Mario: You make it sound like a fantastic community-building activity!

Danelle: Because that's how I see it.

Mario: But it would drive me totally bonkers if kids came to my door and asked for lollies. I'd probably throw a bucket of water at them!

Danelle: [Laughs] That might be going a bit too far! But you don't put any decorations up. My kids, and most of the kids that go trick or treating know that they shouldn't go into houses with no decorations. If you don't put up decorations, that's a pretty clear indication that you're not celebrating Halloween and kids shouldn't approach you. How many trick or treaters have you had in the past?

Mario: Well, not many...one year someone did knock on my door, but I didn't answer because I couldn't be bothered.

Danelle: So doesn't that prove my point? Kids are really only going to the people in the community who support Halloween.

Mario: Well...you've really made me think. But I'm not putting up Halloween decorations yet, so your kids don't need to visit me this year.

Danelle: Fair enough. They can probably wait until we next have a BBQ together to catch up!