Minister signals green light for Timebanking proposal

The Hunter and the Central Coast are expected to see a significant surge in volunteering when two local groups join forces to run Australia’s first ever trial of Timebanking.

Minister for Citizenship and Communities Victor Dominello visited Newcastle today to announce the local Timebanking pilot will be run by the Hunter Volunteer Centre and Volunteering Central Coast. The NSW Government is providing $300,000 to support the pilot, which will start in September.

Mr Dominello was joined by Member for Newcastle Tim Owen, Member for Port Stephens Craig Baumann and Member for Swansea Garry Edwards at Newcastle Museum for the announcement.

“The Hunter Volunteer Centre and Volunteering Central Coast are well placed to lead this new project, which has the potential to increase the number of local volunteers by up to 50 per cent – that’s another 50,000 volunteers – by the end of 2013. They have great ties to the local communities and great past success in matching volunteers,” Mr Dominello said.

“Last year, they matched 2000 volunteers with volunteering roles and made an additional 14,000 referrals of would-be volunteers to organisations.

“They have extensive experience working with local businesses to support ‘corporate volunteering’, as well as a track record of working to promote the participation of people who experience disadvantage.

“The Timebanking project will build on the strong support for volunteering that is evident in this area of the NSW.

“Volunteers in NSW make our community a great place and I expect that the innovative Timebanking concept will encourage even more people to volunteer,” Mr Dominello said.

How the Timebanking pilot will work:

- Volunteers will earn ‘time credit’ by providing a service to another Timebank member, such as babysitting or computer lessons.
- They can ‘bank’ their time credit and later redeem it on a service they need.
- Local businesses will also be able to get involved by donating goods or providing a discount to volunteers.

Organisations and individuals who would like to take part can register their interest with the Hunter Volunteer Centre on (02) 4940 0077 or Central Coast Volunteering on (02) 4329 7122.

Media contact: Laura Hofman 0411 261 837