MEDIA RELEASE

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HUNTER & CENTRAL COAST TIMEBANKING PILOT ENDS: SUCCESS LEADS TO EXPANSION

Over 4,000 Hunter and Central Coast residents have contributed 8,000 hours of volunteering during Australia’s first Timebanking trial, which comes to an end on 31 December 2013.

The Timebanking program, which started in September 2012, enables local volunteers to exchange voluntary work by collecting time credits registered through a website. The NSW Government contributed $300,000 to support the trial.

Minister for Citizenship and Communities Victor Dominello today acknowledged the extraordinary effort and pioneering spirit the community showed in being the first in the State to take part in Timebanking.

“An interim report on the NSW program found that it was: among the largest in the world; is attracting new people to volunteering; extending social networks; creating a sense of community; and improving the quality of life for those involved.

“Someone always has to be the ‘first’ and when you ask people to find time in their busy lives to engage with a novel concept like Timebanking — it certainly requires a leap of faith.

“The communities of the Hunter, Maitland, Lake Macquarie and the Central Coast have not just ‘taken part’— they have well and truly embraced Timebanking.

“Thanks to their success, we are expanding the program and will have 30 new groups established throughout NSW in 2014.

The two organisations that run the NSW Government-funded program - Volunteering Central Coast and Hunter Volunteering Centre – will continue supporting Timebanking in the local area.

“Timebanking rewards volunteers and gives community members the opportunity to provide a tangible service to members and their families in return for their volunteering.

“Just one example of someone involved in the trial was Kate, who suffers from an illness and lives by herself. She joined Timebanking in January and has earned 10 hours of time credits, by offering travel plan advice and tour details to other Timebank members.

“In return she has received support from others volunteers who have assisted her with gardening, house cleaning and home maintenance,” Mr Dominello said.

The next 30 communities to participate in Timebanking will be announced in 2014. To find out more about Timebanking, please call (02) 8762 9825 or visit www.volunteering.nsw.gov.au/timebanking. To join visit: www.timebanking.com.au.

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