



# EVALUATION OF THE NSW VOLUNTEERING STRATEGY 2012-13: *TIMEBANKING* TRIAL

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# WHAT ARE THE HALLMARKS OF THE NSW VOLUNTEERING STRATEGY?

1. Making it easier to **volunteer**
2. Supporting **organisations** that utilise volunteers
3. Recognising and **celebrating volunteering**
4. Improved support for **corporate volunteering**
5. Volunteering creates **pathways** to participation, education/training and employment

# INTRODUCTION

## What is *Timebanking*?

- An exchange system based on goodwill.
- Community focused and based on reciprocity and co-production among members.
- Banks the time – in the form of care, skills and knowledge – volunteered by participants into an electronic system that they may trade for the time of others.

## What was the *Timebanking* trial?

- From August 2012 – December 2013, a flagship *Timebanking* trial was conducted by the NSW Office of Communities, supported by the Hunter Volunteer Centre and Volunteering Central Coast.
- The trial took place in the Newcastle, Hunter, Lake Macquarie and Central Coast regions.
- Involved a web based tool that facilitates the reciprocal exchange of volunteer services within the community.
- Aimed to make volunteering more accessible and encourage those who have never volunteered to do so.

# TIMEBANKING

## Characteristics of successful Timebanking

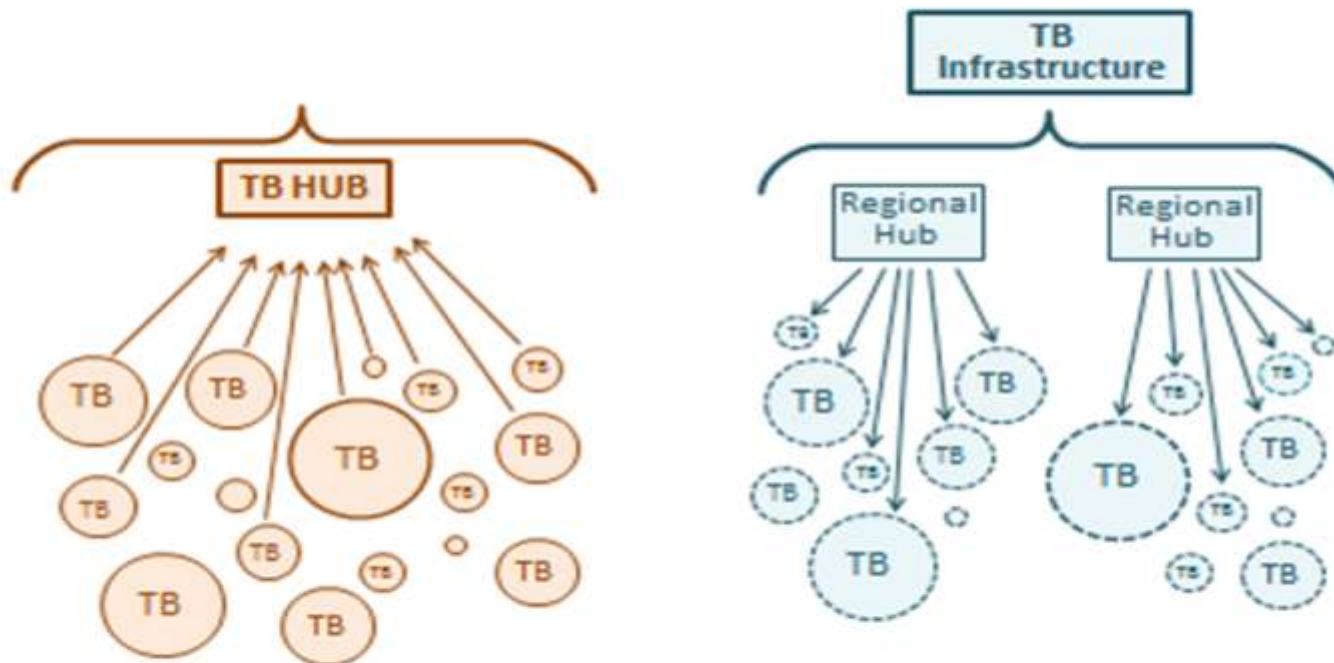
- Adaptability – Timebanking is shaped by its social-political context and can be adapted to suit many settings and circumstances, in turn positively influencing their settings.
- A dedicated membership willing to share time, care, skills and knowledge in order to build community, a sense of mutual support and trust – a dedication to reciprocity and co-production.
- Methods of outreach to build and sustain the relationships that make up Timebanking.

# TIMEBANKING

## Characteristics of successful Timebanking (continued)

- Effective management in the form of a 'timebroker' to lend security and credibility, while recruiting participants, monitoring trades and forging relationships among members.
- Operation on a micro, rather than macro level – suburban branches, rather than one all-encompassing urban branch.
- Adequate funding.
- The potential for valuable economic, social and health-related outcomes.

# TB: Structural Models



# TIMEBANKING

## Findings : Figures

- As of December 2013 the NSW *Timebanking* trial was as big as the most successful international timebanks with 4,004 members.
- 1,261 trades, 7,724 banked hours, 322 full days of volunteering.
- 277 users offering time, 136 requesting time, 52 offering and requesting – disparity indicates users must become accustomed to reciprocal nature of *Timebanking* .
- 15% of survey respondents found paid employment through participation in the *Timebanking* trial.



# TIMEBANKING

## Findings

- *Timebanking* has an immense capacity to broaden the scope of volunteering, as well as redefining what it means to volunteer.
- *Timebanking* draws on those least likely to participate in traditional volunteering activity and aims to reach the most vulnerable groups in the community.
- Timebanks work best at a local, grassroots level so as to more seamlessly embed themselves into a community and work in harmony with its needs.
- Engagement with registered users who have not yet traded is vital to growth of *Timebanking*.

# TIMEBANKING

## Findings (continued)

- Committed, well-skilled professional staff are key to the success of *Timebanking*, encouraging ongoing growth and sustainability.
- Mentoring of agencies in marketing, communication and promotion will optimise capacity and competency of services.
- Use of social media channels had a positive impact on registrations and engagement, and should play an integral role through 2014 and beyond.
- *Timebanking* provides pathways to marginalised sectors so that they may become valued and productive assets to society.
- *Timebanking* is a driver of employability and contributes positively to the quality of life and health for users.

# TIMEBANKING

## Key recommendations

- Keep bureaucracy to a minimum, and at a grassroots level.
- Encourage members through outreach to give time straight away and provide adequate support.
- Engagement with current members and gathering of information from current inactive registered members about why they have registered but have not performed a trade in the system should occur.
- A targeted social media strategy should be actioned, including overarching and individual *Timebanking* presence, to promote and encourage registration and engagement to younger generations. This is in line with the status of *Timebanking* as a 21<sup>st</sup> century vision of volunteering.

# TIMEBANKING

## Key recommendations (continued)

- Integrate *Timebanking* into mainstream health, education and regeneration agencies to reward people for participation and offer more opportunities for people to give as well as receive.
- Improved recruitment methods should continue and be evaluated in terms of their likely success. The major focus for the immediate future is on increasing trades between individuals.
- There should be a concerted effort to involve all facets and demographics from the community in *Timebanking*.
- Time and energy should be invested in marketing and promotion of the initiative, with incentives for active members.

# TIMEBANKING

## What's next?

- In 2014, 30 new pilot *Timebanking* sites to be rolled out.
- Opportunities to refine and explore what works in NSW *Timebanking*.
- Improving the existing *Timebanking* structure in light of the trial, as well as bolstering and building upon its successes.

# Conclusions

- *Timebanking* can be a powerful method for community engagement and increased volunteering.
- There exists an appetite for innovation in volunteering and this should be nurtured.
- The *Timebanking* trial has successfully addressed all of the NSW Volunteering Strategy's strategic directions by making volunteering more accessible and broadening the base of volunteers in communities.
- Continued investment in *Timebanking* will evolve perceptions of volunteering towards a reciprocal model.
- The trial has demonstrated that *Timebanking* can create healthier, happier and more productive individuals and communities.

# THANK YOU

## DISCUSSION

