

Media Release

## **Hills Community Aid and Information Service to celebrate 1000 No Interest Loan Scheme Loans**

18 August 2014

Ben Jackson, Executive Officer of Hills Community Aid and Information Service (HCA), has invited the communities of the Hills, Blacktown and Hawkesbury to celebrate the significant achievement of 1000 No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS) Loans at Castle Hill RSL at 10.30am on Wednesday the 27<sup>th</sup> of August.

“Last financial year HCA loaned well over \$260,000 to 280 clients,” Executive Officer Ben Jackson says. “This was a 40 per cent increase from last financial year’s figures.”

“Clients come to Hills Community Aid in extreme stress,” Mr Jackson says. “They may have to choose between putting food on the table or paying the rent; a mortgage rise or a parking ticket may have thrown them into crisis mode; a broken-down car may have left them destitute.

HCA’s no-interest loans provide access to affordable credit, while also helping clients learn money management skills. Without HCA many would turn to high interest payday lenders, which can create cycles of debt leading to bankruptcy.”

The Minister for Fair Trading, Matthew Mason-Cox, will be attending the event to present cheques for HCA’s most recent loans and also make a presentation of HCA’s funding for this important program for the next 18 months. All of the people who have taken out a No Interest Loan have been invited to the event and at the moment we have at least 16 loan recipients coming. HCA would love to have more.

Based in Baulkham Hills, HCA services Blacktown and the Hawkesbury, through outreach sites in Toongabbie, Seven Hills, Blacktown and Riverstone. Last year its most common client was single parents, almost exclusively women. The most common item purchased with a no-interest loan was a fridge, closely followed by CTP green slip payments and car repairs.

One client, Mr Jackson says, is a perfect example of the scheme’s success.

Domestic abuse victim Christine (not her real name) used her first \$1,000.00 loan to buy furniture. Now on her third loan – used to buy laptops for her kids’ education – she is a responsible borrower who has also accessed other HCA services like financial counselling and help with tax returns.

“Jan, a speaker at the presentation took out a loan for a computer to help her through her studies and now she is a community worker with the Temple Society. Sarah, who will be the photographer on the day, took out a loan to buy her camera and start her own business. These are good news stories that just would not have happened without the NILS program”

“A \$1,000.00 donation to Hills Community Aid can be lent and re-lent many times and change many families’ lives forever,” says Mr Jackson.

“Please contribute to this life-changing program by calling HCA on 02 9639 8620

**ENDS**

For more information please contact:

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***About Hills Community Aid and Information Service***

Hills Community Aid and Information Service aims to create safe, healthy, connected and inclusive communities, by delivering a diversity of sustainable social, financial and educational programs that assist the vulnerable and strengthen and connect all communities in Greater Western Sydney.

<http://www.hca.org.au/about/>

***About the No Interest Loan Scheme***

<http://www.goodshepherdmicrofinance.org.au/services/no-interest-loan-scheme-nils>