



The Hills Community Aid & Information Service Inc

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## Media Release – for immediate publication

### Hills Seniors right to mobility heard

Hills Community Aid's (HCA) Executive Officer, Des Milligan today called for the community to support Seniors whose mobility is threatened by the loss of their driver's licences.

Mr Milligan says, "Loss of licence can lead to increasing social isolation for more and more people unless action is taken to address the problem."

In NSW the number of people aged over 85 years is set to nearly double over the next 20 years, from 1.6% of the population to 3%, which represents approximately 170,000 extra people aged 85 and over. There are currently 830,000 drivers over 60 years old who will also need to plan for their future mobility.

"People think that Community Transport is the answer but it can't be expected to meet every transport need," Mr Milligan said. "A new way needs to be found of filling the gaps including cross-Sydney, night-time and weekend trip services."

HCA says it might just have an answer to the problem for Hills Seniors and is planning to operate a Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) pilot program in the second half of 2012.

Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) schemes operate in around a dozen US cities and in parts of Europe involving volunteer private car drivers offering to detour from a trip they are planning in order to accommodate elderly passengers transportation needs near the route the volunteer will be driving.

Bill Dixon, The Hills Senior Citizen of the Year and President of The Community Foundation of North Western Sydney, agrees that something must be done after having recently participated in the NSW Government Ageing Strategy Consultation. Bill says, "The consultation heard that transport for the elderly was one of the greatest issues of concern to Seniors and that the problem was much more widespread than previously assumed."

The HCA pilot program, called HillsCarPal, is being supported by The Hills Shire Council, The Community Foundation of North Western Sydney and Rouse Hill Town Centre. It is now looking for 50 Spontaneous Volunteer Drivers to kick it off. For more details see [www.hca.org.au](http://www.hca.org.au), or Facebook "HillsCarPal".

The following contacts may be appropriate sources for additional comment on this story:

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NOTE:

**Bill Dixon, The Hills Senior Citizen of The Year, will be available for interview between 2.00 - 2.30pm today, Thursday 15MAR12 at The Hills Community Aid offices, 390 Windsor Road Baulkham Hills NSW (next to Bull'N'Bush Hotel)**

PIC (attached to email):

Baulkham Hills Senior **Stan Biega** supports the move to create HillsCarPal believing it will benefit many Seniors who no longer drive.