



**Bedford**<sup>TM</sup>

*Media Release*

**9 August 2011**

## **Bedford and Holden take partnership to top gear**

While obtaining a driver's license can be both liberating and a key element to independence, it is also a privilege that many people with disability or disadvantage may never have the opportunity to enjoy.

Now thanks to Bedford and long-time supporter Holden, that's about to change.

This Thursday, 11 August, Bedford will be officially handed the keys to two new automatic Holden Barina sedans at a ceremony to launch the expansion of the disability services provider's 'Let's Go' programme.

Since 2005, Bedford's 'Let's Go' programme has helped 179 South Australians with disability or disadvantage to complete their 'L' plate test. However, due to limitations on funding and resources, Bedford has been unable to oversee the training required for participants to obtain their 'P' plates.

Hosted by 5AA presenter and Bedford Ambassador Amanda Blair, next Thursday's ceremony will include an official handing over of the new Barinas and an announcement by Holden of its intent to fund 25 'Let's Go' participants each year for two years to complete the programme in full and obtain their 'P' plates.

Bedford Chief Executive Max Dyason said Holden's support would make an enormous difference to the lives of people with disability or disadvantage who face significant set-backs to independent living due to transport limitations

"Many members of the Bedford community rely on public transport, but lack of availability, timing and access in both metropolitan and regional areas mean that some members become socially isolated. Many get up really early and arrive home very late just to get to work each day," Mr Dyason said.

"There's also the issue that many of the students who undertake the 'Let's Go' programme are unable to financially support themselves to progress to a provisional license – let alone gain access to a vehicle or responsible driver to complete the necessary 100 hours of accompanied practice driving.

"The needs of the people we support are hugely varied and we are grateful to Holden for recognising that making a difference can be as simple as providing the instruction required to complete a driving test."

Bedford Packaging employee Jessica Dart Paul was selected to participate in the 'Let's Go' programme and thanks to the additional support from Holden will soon be able to qualify for a provisional license.

"I applied for the 'Let's Go' driving programme because I needed my independence and getting my licence would help me with that. I wanted to prove that I was just as good as anyone else," Jessica said.

"I was over the moon, stoked even, when I was told I was selected. Mum has been doing my log book hours with me and now I can finish off with the instructor thanks to this programme.

"I have seen the cars and they are awesome. I am looking forward to my lessons and then finally getting my hands on my P plates!"



# Bedford™

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Holden Executive Director of Manufacturing Martyn Cray said the 'Let's Go' programme emphasised the importance of driver education and practical experience on the road.

"A core element of our community engagement program at Holden is road safety and education," Mr Cray said.

"At Holden we recognise that not all learning can take place in a classroom or on a computer. The Barinas will provide participants the ability to gain important real world, practical experience and training."

Bedford's 'Let's Go' initiative forms part of its ICAN-FLO programme (Innovative Community Action Network - Flexible Learning Options), providing alternative learning options for 12-19-year olds who are disengaged or at risk of disengaging from the main stream education system.

Since its inception, 'Let's Go' has achieved an impressive 97 percent completion rate. Recent demand for the training has led to an increased number of programmes being offered per year – which are run through Bedford, its youth programmes and CareerSystems, with an increasing demand for the course in regional areas.

The new Holden-funded 'Let's Go' programme will take up to 12 months with an individualised plan written for each student.

Bedford is Holden's longest continuous community partner in South Australia, marking 43 years of support in 2011.

## **PHOTO OPPORTUNITY**

**Who:** Amanda Blair, Bedford CEO Max Dyason and Holden Executive Director of Manufacturing Martyn Cray take to the road in the new Holden Barinas for a test drive. Participant Jessica Dart Paul will undertake a lesson with Trainer Mark O'Connor.

**When:** Thursday, 11 August, 10.45am (directly following the ceremony)

**Where:** Bedford, 615 Goodwood Rd, Panorama

**Bedford background:** Visit [www.bedfordgroup.com.au/news\\_and\\_info](http://www.bedfordgroup.com.au/news_and_info)

**Media Information:** Samantha Firth, Michels Warren: (08) 8267 6888 or 0408 715 585

**Bedford Media Contact:** Sabine Kloss, Marketing Manager, Marketing & Fundraising: (08) 8275 0222 or 0403 465 950