

21 April 2008

Carers NSW welcomes the introduction of the Companion Card for NSW

Carers NSW welcomes yesterday's announcement by the Minister for Ageing and Disability, Kristina Keneally, that the NSW Government will introduce the Companion Card scheme for people with disabilities in the state.

The Companion Card will be a free wallet-sized card issued to people with a severe or profound disability who require attendant care support from a companion to access the community, everyday services and events.

Organisations who sign up to participate in the Companion Card scheme will issue the cardholder with a second ticket for their companion at no charge.

An estimated 25,000 people are expected to benefit from the card, which can also be used on public transport.

The scheme is expected to commence later this year, with further details to be provided over the coming months.

Chief Executive Officer of Carers NSW, Elena Katrakis, congratulated the NSW Government on its investment in and support for people with disabilities and their carers through the launch of the scheme.

"The introduction of a Companion Card scheme in NSW is a very positive step to promote the existing right of people with a disability to fair ticketing, and this is welcomed as an anti-disability discrimination initiative by Carers NSW," said Ms Katrakis.

"The scheme's success will not only be measured by the uptake by people with disabilities, but also by the number of businesses who sign up as participating organisations.

"The recent public debate over proposed cuts to the annual Carer Bonus payments indicated the strong community support for carers and people with disabilities.

"The challenge is now on for businesses in NSW to show their support for people with disabilities and their carers by signing up to the Companion Card scheme.

"The scheme is already operating successfully in Victoria, Tasmania and Western Australia with a great deal of support from businesses," said Ms Katrakis.

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Editors' notes

About carers and Carers NSW

Carers NSW is the peak organisation for carers in New South Wales. Carers are family members or friends who provide unpaid care for people with a disability, mental health problem, chronic condition or who are frail aged.

About the Companion Card Scheme

Visit www.companioncard.org.au for more details.

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