

## Companion Card—Frequently Asked Questions

### How was the Companion Card Developed?

The Victorian Network on Recreation and Disability (VICNORD) initiated the Companion Card concept as a way to address the current ticketing practices in the sport, entertainment and recreation industry.



### What is the Companion Card?

The Companion Card is a wallet-sized card issued to some people with a disability. The card has a photograph of the cardholder and identifies that person as someone who requires the assistance of a companion to access events and venues. The cardholder will be entitled to a free Companion Ticket when it is necessary for the person to be assisted by a companion.

The Companion Card is not a concession or discount scheme, nor does it give you a benefit that others do not receive. It simply promotes an existing right for some people to have a companion admitted without charge, when that companion is required to access community facilities.

Participating organisations will recognise the Companion Card and will issue a Companion Ticket (second ticket) at no charge, when it is necessary for the cardholder to be assisted by a companion in order to access initially sport, leisure and recreational opportunities.

### How is the Companion Card funded?

The Companion Card is funded by the Community Support Fund, Strategic Initiative Fund. ([www.dpc.vic.gov.au/csf](http://www.dpc.vic.gov.au/csf))

### Who is a Companion?

Someone may be considered a Companion if the person they are supporting/assisting could not access a venue or event in the community without them being present. A Companion may be a paid or unpaid carer or assistant. The cardholder may choose whom they wish to have as their Companion; this may vary depending on the event and the occasion.

### What if I need more than one companion?

The Companion Card will indicate a person's need to have a companion to participate in sport, recreation and leisure opportunities. The minimum expectations of industry will be that one companion will be admitted free of charge to cardholders. Where a cardholder has a requirement for more than one companion, this will need to be negotiated with the venue or event by the cardholder at the time of booking.

### Who receives the Companion Card?

In keeping with the vision and philosophy of the Victorian State Disability Plan 2002-2012, the Card is designed to remind industry of the Human Rights of the individual with a disability to participate to the same extent as the rest of the community. The practical implications to note are:

- Cards will only be issued in the name of the applicant, to ensure that they have a choice of whom they take as a companion. The Card will not be issued in the name of facilities (ie residential) or carers.
- Cards cannot be applied for by someone else on the applicant's behalf, without the consent of the applicant unless there is a legal guardian appointed.

### **Who can apply?**

Cardholder applicants must complete an application form when it becomes available in late 2003, and must meet criteria developed by the Victorian Department of Human Services, based on the Disability Services Act 1991 (Vic).

In summary, you will be able to apply for a card if:

1. You have a disability, including those related to ageing and psychiatric illness; and
2. Your disability is permanent—or likely to be permanent; and
3. You require a Companion to assist you to access community venues and events; and
4. You live in Australia, or you reside in Australia under a valid Visa; and
5. You have had your application signed by a professional witness.

There are no income or assets tests, and people may apply irrespective of their employment status, age or nationality.

Facilities, organisations or companions are not eligible to apply for a Companion Card. Cards will only be issued to, and will remain the property of, the person who has a disability. This enables the cardholder to choose whom they take as a companion to each event.

### **How do I apply for a Companion Card?**

By registering your interest in the card, an application form will be sent to you in late 2003. Eligibility to receive a Companion Card will be determined once a completed application form is returned.

### **How do I register my interest?**

People who wish to register their interest in the Companion Card need to provide their name and mailing address details (or request a registration of interest form) by either:

- Telephone: Ring Free Call 1800 650 611 during business hours
- TTY: Ring Free Call 1800 898 888 during business hours, (for people who are Deaf or have a hearing, speech or communication impairment);
- Completing the Online Registration of Interest Form, found at the Companion Card website: [www.companioncard.org.au](http://www.companioncard.org.au)
- By Email: [info@companioncard.org.au](mailto:info@companioncard.org.au)

- By Fax: Free Call 1800 00 4413

### **Why should I register my interest?**

Registering your interest in the Companion Card will ensure that an application form will be sent directly to you in late 2003.

### **How much does the card cost?**

The Companion Card will be issued free of any charges.

### **Who is managing the Companion Card?**

The Department of Human Services is responsible for the establishment of the Companion Card.

### **Where can I use a Companion Card?**

To date there has been enthusiastic support from the sport, recreation and leisure industries. Several organisations have previously allowed companions free entry and are prepared to adopt the Companion Card from its initial implementation.

The Companion Card staff are working on informing industry of the expectations on them to recognise & accept the card when it is presented, and on signing up key industry as official affiliates.

### **How long is the Companion Card valid for?**

Companion Cards will be valid for five years from the date of issue. The expiry period considers the physical life expectancy (wear and tear) on the card. This also ensures that photographs are updated to remain representative of the cardholder, and account for potential changes in the requirement for a companion.

### **When will I get a Companion Card?**

The Companion Card will be available in late 2003. If you have registered your interest in the Companion Card an application form will be sent directly to you.

### **How do I register a sporting leisure/entertainment or recreation venue/event to participate in the Companion Card?**

If you own, run or manage a sport, entertainment and recreation venue/event, and you wish to participate in the Companion Card please email [info@companioncard.org.au](mailto:info@companioncard.org.au) or phone the Companion Card Team on: 9616 9710.



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