

## A new approach to ticketing for people with a disability who require a companion



**Business affiliation to the Companion Card program across Australia**

### What is a Companion Card?

The Companion Card is a credit-card sized photo ID card issued to people with a disability who require lifelong attendant care support from a companion to participate at venues and activities.

Cardholders present their card when booking or purchasing a ticket from a participating business. These businesses will recognise the Companion Card and issue the cardholder with a second ticket for their companion at no charge.

The Companion Card improves social and recreational opportunities for people with a disability and provides businesses with a practical way to meet some of their obligations under anti-discrimination and human rights legislation



### What is a Business Affiliate?

Business affiliates are businesses, organisations, events or activities that officially register to participate in the Companion Card program. Affiliates agree to:

- Issue the Companion Cardholder with a ticket for their attendant carer at no charge
- Accept a Companion Card issued in any Australian State or Territory
- Display the Companion Card logo in a prominent position at premises or on promotional material (where possible)
- Abide by the Companion Card Affiliate Terms & Conditions

### Benefits of Business Affiliation

Affiliation will help you to

- Increase your customer base and encourage repeat customers
- Enhance a positive public image for your organisation
- Assist your organisation to meet some of its obligations under anti-discrimination laws
- Demonstrate your organisation's commitment to social inclusion

A survey of Victorian cardholders showed that since having a Companion Card, cardholders have more than doubled the number of times they go out from an average of 16 outings per year to 37 outings per year.\*



Registered business affiliates are listed on the Companion Card website. This provides an easy way for cardholders to locate venues and activities where the card is accepted.

Business affiliates are also provided with promotional materials (such as logos and point-of-sale materials).

\* 2006 Victorian Companion Cardholder survey.  
[www.vic.companioncard.org.au](http://www.vic.companioncard.org.au)

## What type of business should join?

Any business or organisation that charges an admission or participation fee for some or all products and services is encouraged to join.

Affiliation with the Companion Card program is free. Any costs associated with providing a companion ticket are the responsibility of the business affiliate.

Acceptance of the Companion Card does not indicate that the venue/activity is accessible. Cardholders are advised to check accessibility with the participating business before booking tickets.

## What if a business chooses not to become an Affiliate?

Affiliation with the Companion Card program is voluntary. Organisations do, however, need to be mindful of their obligations under existing anti-discrimination legislation and develop strategies to comply with the relevant legislation.

Disability anti-discrimination legislation applies to all organisations, regardless of their size or the type of service provided. The Companion Card is a tool that can be easily adopted by businesses to assist with compliance.

## Card Security

The card has been designed with a number of other security features. Affiliates will be able to use the features to verify cardholder information when taking telephone bookings and distributing tickets. Full details of these features will be provided to organisations when they affiliate.



## Who is eligible for the card?

An ACT Companion Card is only issued to applicants who demonstrate they:

1. Lawfully reside in the ACT; and
2. Have a disability; and
3. Are unable to participate at most community venues or activities without attendant care support; and
4. Need, or are likely to need, lifelong attendant care support.

Attendant care support includes significant assistance with mobility, communication, self-care or decision-making, where the use of aids, equipment or alternative strategies do not enable the person to carry out these tasks independently.

The Companion Card is not provided to people who only require reassurance, social company or encouragement.

The ACT Government undertakes a rigorous assessment of each application against the eligibility criteria.

## ACT Companion Card program

The ACT Companion Card program will be rolled out in mid-2009 and will form part of a National Companion Card scheme with consistent eligibility criteria and reciprocal recognition of the card across all States and Territories.

The Companion Card Program already operates in NSW, QLD, SA, TAS, VIC and WA.

## For more information

To find out more about the Companion Card, visit [www.companioncard.act.gov.au](http://www.companioncard.act.gov.au)

or to register your organisation to accept Companion Cards email the ACT Affiliate Manager at [manager@blits.org.au](mailto:manager@blits.org.au)

Alternatively, you may register your details to receive an application form by mail at [www.companioncard.act.gov.au/register](http://www.companioncard.act.gov.au/register)

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