INTRODUCTION OF CARERS RECOGNITION ACT

The Territory Government has introduced new legislation to Parliament for the respect and appropriate recognition of carers in our community who do so much to help those most in need.

Family and Community Services Minister, Delia Lawrie, said Government made a commitment during the 2005 election to establish the Carers Recognition Act.

“Carers play a vital role in our community, supporting many of our disabled, frail aged, mentally ill or chronically ill people,” said Ms Lawrie.

“Without the support carers provide, these Territorians would not be able to remain in their own homes.”

The Minister said the new Carers Recognition Act introduced to Parliament today will –

- recognise those who care for a person with a disability, or for a family member or friend who is frail aged, chronically ill or has a mental illness by providing a legal definition of a Carer;
- acknowledge and recognise the role of Carers as a critical partner in the caring role in the community;
- improve services by facilitating Carers to input into care plans for the people in their care;
- have a Carers Charter which will complement the Act and which organisations can action in a practical way;
- require organisations to think about Carers when making decisions about service delivery.

“The Act will also outline organisations obligations to carers, their responsibility to comply with the Act and will provide a reporting mechanism for compliance to the Act,” said Ms Lawrie.

“Importantly, this initiative has been well received by carers, with many individuals and organisations contributing positively during the formation stage.”

The new legislation is expected to be passed in August.

Ms Lawrie said the new Carers Recognition Act will compliment the Carers Concession Card announced by the Territory Government earlier this year.

“We have committed $1.05 million to the new concession scheme which will start from 1 July 2006,” said the Minister.

“The new concession card will be available to carers currently receiving the Commonwealth Carers Allowance and will offer concessions on electricity, water, urban bus travel, home owner rates, motor vehicle registration, driver’s licences, spectacles, movies and tickets to the footy.”

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