




Speech By
Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

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ADJOURNMENT

Companion Card

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (12.09 am): I am man enough to admit that after nearly 20 years of marriage to my wonderful wife, Taryn, I have learned that I do not know everything—just do not tell her I said that. It was on that basis that I was quite surprised several weeks ago when a constituent by the name of Ruth Drynan from Maleny came in to talk to me about companion cards. I must admit I had never actually heard of companion cards. I road-tested it with the member for Mansfield just before and neither had he.

It is rather fitting, as the member for Whitsunday said, that in Seniors Week and as we head into National Stroke Week in a couple of weeks and then into National Carers Week from 15 to 21 October, that I assist Ruth by sharing the word a bit more about what a Companion Card is. If you have a disability and a lifelong need—and I stress that it does need to be a lifelong need—for someone to attend you and provide care and support so that you can participate in community activities and attend venues, the Companion Card can help you with the costs of getting out and about with the support of that companion. If you hold a Companion Card, that companion receives a second ticket at no charge at participating venues and on public transport, and that ticket is also exempt from booking fees. I will stress that, whilst organisations can choose not to participate in this scheme, they do need to be careful as the Anti-Discrimination Commission would likely not look favourably upon an organisation that does this.

The card is issued in the name of the person with the disability and is valid for five years. A companion who accompanies the cardholder is therefore the one who receives the free tickets. Eligibility for one of these companion cards is not income tested or asset tested. You must simply be a lawful Australian resident living in Queensland; have a disability; be unable to participate at most community venues or activities without attendant care support because of the impact of the disability; and need, or be likely to need, lifelong attendant care support.

If you have one of these cards, you are encouraged to ask about the Companion Card program when booking a ticket or look for the logo when buying a ticket at a venue or activity. As I said, some businesses may not be Companion Card affiliates but may still accept the card when informed about the program. As Ruth has been doing around Maleny and as my electorate office and I are now encouraging across the Glass House electorate, we want more people to be aware of what the Companion Card offers. It also offers services on TransLink, qconnect and Queensland travel train holidays. It is recognised Australia-wide. People who are in the electorate of Glass House can pop along to my office where there will be more information available on the Companion Card.