

# **LIFETIME CARE AND SUPPORT PLAN**

**for Catastrophically Injured Motor Vehicle Accident Victims**

**Release of White Paper by Motor Accidents Authority of NSW to NSW Parliament**

**Tuesday 21 June 2005 10:00am to 12:00pm**

**Venue: Premier's Conference Room, Level 8, Parliament House, Sydney**

**Attendees: NSW Premier Bob Carr, Minister John Della Bosca, David Bowen General Manager of Motor Accidents Authority, Doogie Herd from Disability Council of NSW, Deborah Curnow from Brain Injuries Association. Jackson, Gail Hughes, Judie Stephens and about fifty other people.**

## **CAN YOU IMAGINE?**

**Judie Stephens OAM of Dare to Do Australia .... Presentation to those attending including Sydney Press**

Can you Imagine? Ten years elapsed after Jackson's motor vehicle accident and his third party court settlement was finalised.

Our problems are now only beginning. Jackson's settlement money is managed by the Office of the Protective Commissioner NSW (OPC). The nightmare of this association for us is that the OPC ban communication with me by phone, email and fax. They demand written communications, which are on occasions returned to me. Accounts are erratically paid and have remained unpaid for up to six months or ignored. The Attendant Carer wages were unpaid and \$90,000 was owing before a payment was finally made.

Thanks to our NSW Government for this urgent Life Time Care and Support Plan for our catastrophically injured motor vehicle accident victims and their families will not continue to endure the OPC oppressive treatment. This new legislation paid by the Green Slip will provide security for all those catastrophically injured on NSW roads regardless of who caused the accident. The victims and their families are given comfort knowing that care and support will be provided for the rest of the accident victim's life.

Can you imagine our joy and relief that motor vehicle accident victims will be protected in the future? As Premier Carr said today, "*All taken care of*". Minister John Della Bosca said, "*A giant step*". Doogie Herd said, "*This scheme makes it possible, life now has a different story*". And then Deborah Curnow said, "*We must never forget the families of the injured people*". Jackson's story could be anyone's. We travel a road less travelled. We owe a lot to Jackson he helped us see this through. On this planet it's not what we own but what we do that matters.

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Visit MAA [www.maa.nsw.gov.au](http://www.maa.nsw.gov.au) to read the Proposal. There were many questions asked and one of the questions directed to me was what does Jackson understand and how does he feel? I spoke about his lifestyle and importance of good quality care. I revealed that Jackson swims, attends scouts, surfs, sit skis and is an actor in his local scout theatre production. Then I said "We think Jackson is pretty happy, as happy as he can be. One day he may get to tell us". More details available [www.daretodo.asn.au](http://www.daretodo.asn.au) website.

***This meeting was televised on evening news in NSW 21 June 2005 on Channels 2, 7, 9 and 10.  
St George and Sutherland Leader Newspaper 23 June 2005 page 3***

## NSW MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENT VICTIMS : LIFETIME CARE AND SUPPORT PLAN

**The Hon. KAYEE GRIFFIN:** My question is addressed to the Minister for Disability Services. Will the Minister inform the House about the Government's plan to assist people who have suffered catastrophic injuries following a motor vehicle accident?

**The Hon. JOHN DELLA BOSCA:** I am happy to do so. Today the Premier released details of the Government's plan for a major overhaul in the care of people catastrophically injured in motor vehicle accidents. The Premier and I were joined by Doogie Herd from the Disability Council of New South Wales; Deborah Curnow from the Brain Injuries Association; and Judie Stephens who cares for her grandson, Jackson. Jackson has brain and spinal cord injuries following a car accident in which both his parents died. The \$280 million plan outlined today rewrites the book on how people who have suffered the most serious of injuries are to be supported. The plan gives each person a care co-ordinator, to bring together all available services and support including home care, medical, rehabilitation, education, community activities and pharmaceutical expenses.

The plan is about easing the pressure on families and making sure that the catastrophically injured receive the care and support they need throughout their life. The lifetime care and support plan covers injuries including paraplegia, quadriplegia and traumatic brain injury. The Government will consult with disability groups, medical and legal professionals, motoring groups and the public on the final structure of the plan. Lump sum payments for pain and suffering and economic loss will remain unchanged. Patients will receive lifetime care and support instead of medical and care components of damages actions. The Government will also approach the Commonwealth to propose an agreement on medical costs and to apply for a GST exemption on the \$20 lifetime care and support levy on green slip insurance.

The lifetime care and support plan will guarantee medical treatment and rehabilitation, daily personal and nursing care, aids such as wheelchairs, respite care and domestic services, home and transport modifications, assistance with community access, educational and vocational services to help people enter or remain in school or the work force, and the appointment of a life care co-ordinator to help people regain functioning and independence. Currently compensation under the New South Wales motor accidents scheme is available only when another motor vehicle owner or driver caused the accident. The new scheme will cover all people catastrophically injured in a car accident in New South Wales from 1 January 2007, regardless of who caused the accident. Of the 125 people catastrophically injured in motor vehicle accidents every year, approximately 60 people are considered at fault and, therefore, not entitled to any compensation.

As Doogie Herd said today, a husband should not have to sue his wife—and wait for years—to learn whether he will have the required medical and rehabilitation support to last a lifetime. Research commissioned by the New South Wales Motor Accidents Authority shows that 40 per cent of claimants who currently receive lump sums compensation payouts are eligible for social security payments within 17 years. Even those who are entitled to compensation eventually fall back on the Commonwealth welfare system in a relatively short time; many people receive their injuries when they are very young. These major enhancements of benefits have been made possible through the stability of the motor accidents scheme and the real reduction in premiums since 1999.

The green slip premium for a sedan based in Sydney has fallen by \$205 in real terms. That is a real advantage for New South Wales families. As this plan was launched today it was observed that the plan would provide vital assistance to people who do not know yet that they need it. I look forward to informing the House about the progress of the scheme and introducing this important legislation later this year.

*Hansard Extract*

*Parliament House, Sydney NSW 21 June 2005*