

## MEDIA RELEASE

**11 August 2019**

### **New VISA Debit Cards for NT Seniors**

The Northern Territory Government announced yesterday that a new VISA debit card for Territorians on the NT Seniors Recognition Scheme will be introduced. This VISA debit card will replace existing paper travel vouchers and gives members of the NT Seniors Recognition Scheme more choice on how to use their annual \$500 payment.

The debit card will be provided to all NT Seniors Recognition Scheme members from July 2020, but members with a valid and unused travel voucher can apply now to change their voucher to a card. The debit card will look and operate like a regular VISA card and it will be PIN protected. Members cannot withdraw cash.

COTA NT has been lobbying the government on behalf of Territory seniors for a simpler way of administering this \$500 payment and for greater flexibility in how to use the payment. All members of the scheme can now choose to spend their \$500 for the first time on fuel, as well as on travel, power or accommodation from approved vendors, with the expectation that more vendors will be added to the scheme over time.

COTA NT is delighted that the NT Government has listened to the voice of senior Territorians.

“COTA NT has lobbied hard on behalf of seniors for a simpler system for the NT Seniors Recognition Scheme. The current voucher system was extremely cumbersome and there was not enough flexibility, especially for those seniors who do not travel, or who had solar and required little if any help with power bills. All seniors will now be able to use the new debit card, protected with a PIN number and loaded with \$500, for use on travel, petrol and accommodation. We also believe that further selected vendors will be added in time,” said COTA NT CEO, Sue Shearer.

“This is also a boost for our economy and Territory businesses with seniors now being able to spend this money locally at a time when we know businesses are doing it tough. We urge seniors to keep their new debit cards and PIN numbers safe, as there are no replacements for lost cards until the following year.”

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#### **Further Information:**

- Phone NT Concessions/ NT Seniors Recognition Scheme 1800 777 704 (Select option #1)
- Visit <https://ntconcessions.nt.gov.au>