



MEDIA RELEASE

Hon. John Hatzistergos MLC
Attorney General
Minister for Citizenship
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NSW GOVERNMENT TO SET UP RELATIONSHIPS REGISTER

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The NSW Government today announced it will introduce legislation to create a Relationships Register making it easier for committed unmarried couples to access legal entitlements and prove they are in committed or de facto relationships.

Attorney General, John Hatzistergos, said the NSW Register will be modelled on key aspects of registers already in place in the ACT, Victoria and Tasmania.

“The register, endorsed by State Cabinet earlier this week, will ensure NSW is aligned with Commonwealth Government moves to remove discrimination against unmarried people in heterosexual and same-sex relationships,” he said.

“Under current laws, it can be very difficult for couples who are in de-facto or committed relationships to prove their relationship for the purpose of accessing government services, entitlements or records.”

“Couples who choose to register their relationship will be provided with one document that helps prove their relationship and will be spared the frustration of constantly having to supply agencies with copious amounts of paperwork.”

Mr Hatzistergos said the Relationships Register will not provide for civil unions, but will reflect the serious commitment made by couples who choose to register their relationship.

“Couples will need to be able to prove they are eligible to be included on the Register and can have the registration terminated if the relationship dissolves,” he said.

To be eligible to register a relationship on the Relationships Register:

- Couples must be in a committed, exclusive relationship;
- Couples must not be married or in another relationship that is registered or registrable
- Couples must be 18 years of age or older; and
- One person must be a resident of NSW.

Mr Hatzistergos said that in establishing the Relationships Register the Government will also be amending legislation allowing registered relationships to be considered on par with de facto relationships under NSW law.

“The establishment of the Relationships Register will contribute to the goal of a unified system of registration across Australia and simplify processes for unmarried couples.”

“The NSW Government is also working to ensure there is reciprocal recognition of relationships registered in NSW with other jurisdictions that have registers in place.

The Register will be managed by the NSW Registry of Births Deaths & Marriages.

Background notes

- The register's features will be modelled on aspects of existing registers in Tasmania, Victoria and the ACT however, to reflect Commonwealth Government suggestions, the NSW register will not extend to 'caring' relationships unlike the registers in Victoria and Tasmania.
- The Government will draft legislation to amend the *Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1995*, the *Property (Relationships) Act 1984* and other legislation to implement the register. Regulations dealing with timeframes, fees, forms, certificates and other administrative issues will also be needed.
- The relationship register and expanded definition of de facto relationship will ensure NSW is aligned with the Rudd Government's removal of discrimination against people in same-sex relationships in Commonwealth laws relating to workers compensation, veterans' affairs, educational assistance and superannuation.