



Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Advisory Council

Communiqué 20 April 2010

The seventh meeting of the Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Advisory Council was chaired by Mr Sam Chisholm in Sydney on 20 April 2010.

The Advisory Council was established under the *Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority Act 2008* to advise the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Organ and Tissue Authority (the "Authority") about organ or tissue donation and transplantation matters.

The Advisory Council comprises members with substantial experience or knowledge of public administration, an organ or tissue donation and/or transplantation matter, business, management, finance, health consumer issues or other appropriate fields of expertise. Members are appointed by the Minister for Health and Ageing and all were present at the 20 April 2010 meeting (in person or via teleconference):

Mr Sam Chisholm (Chairman)
Dr David Boadle
Ms Anne Cahill Lambert AM
Professor Don Chalmers
Professor Jeremy Chapman OAM
Professor Geoff Dobb
Dr Anthony Cross
Dr Marisa Herson
Professor John Horvath AO
Mr David Koch
Ms Rachael Martin
Dr Amanda Rischbieth
Dr Dianne Stephens OAM
Professor Russell Strong AC

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Ageing, the Hon Mark Butler, MP attended the first part of the meeting at the invitation of the Chair. The Parliamentary Secretary reiterated the Australian Government's commitment to establishing a World's Best Practice Approach to Organ and Tissue Donation for Transplantation to address the shortage of organ and tissue donations in Australia. The Parliamentary Secretary highlighted that achieving this will entail:

- significant system reform within public hospitals around Australia so that there is strong direction, support and education offered to hospital staff involved in organ and tissue donation to lift identification and conversion rates; and
- raising community awareness about the need for increased organ and tissue donation to improve the rate of family consent.



The Parliamentary Secretary acknowledged that over the past 12 months a strong foundation has been laid in terms of system reform in public hospitals through the establishment of the DonateLife Network. The DonateLife Network, established and funded by the Authority, is a professional team of staff dedicated to organ and tissue donation, based in hospitals and organ and tissue donation agencies across the country.

The Parliamentary Secretary also noted that a National Community Awareness Campaign, overseen by the Authority, would commence in May 2010.

In referencing these milestones, the Parliamentary Secretary acknowledged the work of the Advisory Council to date, but noted that the Council needs to continue to proactively drive the agenda to achieve the goal of the Worlds Best Practice Reform Package. The Parliamentary Secretary thanked Council members for their valued contributions and emphasised the ongoing need for a sustained, collegiate approach to practical solutions and improvements.

The Chair introduced the acting CEO of the Authority to Council members, noting the appointment was pending permanent filling of this position. The acting CEO has taken leave from her usual position of QLD State Manager for the Department of Health and Ageing to fill the CEO position on a temporary basis, bringing key skills and experience to the Authority at this time.

The a/g CEO briefed the Advisory Council on her priorities for the Authority during the period of her tenure:

1. Continuing to ensure that the nine measures outlined in the Australian Government's Reform Agenda are implemented as efficiently and quickly as possible, and that each action taken by the Authority directly contributes to meeting the goal of significantly increasing organ donation rates in Australia and establishing a World's Best Practice Approach to Organ and Tissue Donation for Transplantation;
2. Continue to improve the organisational capability and capacity of the Authority including ensuring the skills base and structure of the Authority clearly aligns to the nine measures of the Reform Agenda; and
3. Continuous improvement in line with business processes within the Authority in public sector best practice.

The a/g CEO highlighted that the second and third of her priorities are fundamental to achieving the first. Progress is being made to align the skills base and internal work program and systems of the Authority to ensure effective and timely implementation of the nine measures. The a/g CEO also sought the advice of the Council to actively assist with this.

The Council provided advice on a number of key elements, agreeing that:

1. A renewed and sustained effort to further reform the major public hospitals is a fundamental requirement to achieving a World's Best Practice Approach to Organ and Tissue Donation for Transplantation. The Council agreed that a small group headed by the Council's Chair, Sam Chisholm, would engage in discussions to achieve further reforms, including with State Medical Directors of the DonateLife Network, key CEOs of hospitals, and Chief Medical Officers in State Health

Departments. This group will report back at the next meeting of the Advisory Council;

2. The non-government sector should be re-engaged in the effort to achieve a World's Best Practice Approach to Organ and Tissue Donation for Transplantation. The a/g CEO will therefore work with a sub-group of the Council to agree on and commence work to engage NGOs to a greater degree in the reform agenda. The a/g CEO will report on progress and achievements at the next meeting of the Council;
3. Clear lines of accountability and communication need to be reinforced between the Authority and the DonateLife Network, encompassing a single strategic direction which is underpinned by common actions. To that end, the National Medical Director will work with State Medical Directors to ensure a single strategic plan and work plan is implemented across all DonateLife partners. The National Medical Director will report on progress and achievements at the next Council meeting;
4. The current structure of the Authority's committees should be reviewed to determine whether it is the most efficient and effective way of providing practical solutions and technical advice to the CEO to support implementation of a World's Best Practice Approach to Organ and Tissue Donation for Transplantation. The Council advised that the a/g CEO should progress this review of the role and structure of the committees and working groups and report progress at the next meeting of the Council;
5. Progress needs to be made to articulate a work program in the Eye and Tissue sector. The Council advised that the a/g CEO and the National Medical Director should meet with Dr Marisa Herson, Professor John Horvath and senior representatives of the Department of Health and Ageing to identify the respective roles of the Authority and the Department in this area and to establish a clear work plan, with milestones for the Authority. The a/g CEO will report progress at the next meeting of the Council;
6. The National Community Awareness Campaign should be framed with maximum involvement with key partners and stakeholders to ensure maximum effectiveness of the campaign. The a/g CEO will progress this with the small group of Council members working on re-engaging the NGO sector and report on progress at the next meeting of the Council.

The Council acknowledged the a/g CEO's work in relation to her immediate priorities and her advice that clinical and data analysis skills would need to be further built within the Authority to achieve the work priorities over the next two years.

This is the first communiqué issued in relation to meetings of the Advisory Council. Its purpose is to provide transparency about matters considered by Council. The merit of such communiqués will be reconsidered by the permanent CEO once appointed.

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