



## The DonateLife State Medical Directors' Committee

**Communiqué**  
**25 November 2010**

The seventh meeting of the DonateLife State Medical Directors' Committee was held on Thursday 25 November 2010.

DonateLife is an Australia wide network of organ and tissue donation agencies and hospital-based staff dedicated to organ and tissue donation. Under the leadership of the Organ and Tissue Authority, State Medical Directors (SMDs) in every state and territory are responsible for delivery of the national reform program in their respective jurisdictions.

The DonateLife State Medical Directors' Committee has been established by the acting Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Organ and Tissue Authority as a governance committee to consider and make recommendations to the Authority in respect of the strategic priorities, clinical and data governance, planning and leadership of the DonateLife Network, and the implementation at a state-based level of the World's Best Practice Approach National Reform Package on Organ and Tissue Donation for Transplantation.

The DonateLife State Medical Directors' Committee comprises the a/g CEO (Chair), the National Medical Director (NMD) and the SMDs of each State and Territory, including:

Ms Liz Cain (A/g CEO)  
Dr Gerry O'Callaghan (NMD)  
Dr Jonathan Gillis (NSW)  
Dr Imogen Mitchell (ACT)  
Dr Helen Opdam (Vic)  
Dr Phillip Sargent (Qld)  
Dr Dianne Stephens (NT)  
Dr Sally Tideman (SA)  
Dr Andrew Turner (TAS)  
Dr Kevin Yuen (WA)

The seventh meeting was attended by six SMDs and by senior officials from the State and Territory Health Departments as well as the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing. The addition of officials from all health departments ensures that the efforts of the DonateLife staff reflect state and Australian government policies and processes, that legislative and funding implications are well understood by relevant departments and promotes a nationally consistent and coordinated approach to increasing organ donor rates in Australia.

Prior to the meeting, attendees met with the Parliamentary Secretary for Health and Ageing, the Hon Catherine King MP. The Parliamentary Secretary noted that implementation of the Australian Government's reform package for increasing organ and tissue donation is on track and commended and thanked SMDs for their contribution to getting the DonateLife Network established and the DonateLife Network brand accepted.



## **Progress with the National Reform Agenda**

The DonateLife SMD Committee reviewed progress against the nine Measures which comprise the Australian Government's reform agenda.

### **Measure 1: A new national approach and system – a national Authority and network of organ and tissue donation agencies**

The intent of Measure 1 is to increase organ and tissue donation rates in Australia by establishing for the first time in Australia, a nationally coordinated approach to organ retrieval based on world's best practice models.

The Organ and Tissue Authority has been established as a new, independent authority to provide national leadership to the organ and tissue sector and to drive, implement and monitor national reform initiatives and programs. In addition, Organ and Tissue Agencies have been established in each State and Territory, headed by a State or Territory Medical Director and funded by the Authority to coordinate, oversee, lead and report to the Authority on actions taken in each state and territory under the reform program.

#### ***Electronic Donor Record***

The Committee considered and provided feedback on the DONORtrak Project Charter presented in response to the Advisory Council's decision to use DONORtrak as the Electronic Donor Record (EDR) option. The Committee supported conduct of a pilot with three jurisdictions (NSW, SA and ACT) and nominated the NMD as project sponsor.

#### ***Report Card***

The Committee considered and provided comments on the September 2010 'Organ and Tissue Donation Report Card' which will be published on the Authority website when finalised.

#### ***Annual Forum***

The Committee discussed the 2011 DonateLife Network Annual Forum to be held in Sydney during the last week in March 2011. The purpose of the Forum is to educate and train members of the DonateLife Network. The Committee agreed that each jurisdiction would provide advice on achievements and suggestions for content for consideration by the Organising Committee.

### **Measure 2: Specialist hospital staff and systems dedicated to organ donation**

The intent of Measure 2 is to increase organ and tissue donation rates in Australia by providing funding for selected public and private hospitals to employ trained, medical specialists dedicated to organ donation. Since 1 January 2009 the Authority has made available funding to each State and Territory Government, with the effect that 160 doctors and nurses in 76 key hospitals throughout Australia now work as specialist organ and tissue donation clinicians, leading improved clinical staff education and awareness to increase organ and tissue donation rates in hospitals. The State Medical Directors and their DonateLife staff in each jurisdiction work closely with these hospital based staff to implement the hospital based reforms, monitoring and guiding the performance of each hospital.

No activities under Measure 2 were considered by the Committee.

### **Measure 3: New funding for hospitals**

The intent of Measure 3 is to increase organ and tissue donation rates in Australia by providing new funding to public and private hospitals to address the additional staffing, bed and other infrastructure costs associated with organ and tissue donation. The Australian Government, through the Authority has been providing States and Territories with this additional funding, based on the activities within hospitals, since July 2009.

Discussion of this measure was held over to a meeting in 2011.

### **Measure 4: Coordinated, Ongoing Professional Awareness and Education**

The intent of Measure 4 is to increase organ and tissue donation rates in Australia through an ongoing, nationally consistent and targeted program of recognised professional development and training, coordinated by the Authority.

The Committee noted the progress of the tender to Develop and Deliver Family Conversation Training Modules and the Authority's request for input on strategies for increasing consent rates.

The Committee agreed Senior Executive Service (SES) training be undertaken by all SMDs and supported further exploration of training options.

The Committee noted progress with education departments in including organ and tissue donation in schools' curricula and considered advice provided by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority.

The Committee supported the Director of Clinical Programs leading the establishment of a working group of appropriate experts to progress the development of donation education resources for high schools. Education Coordinators and Communications Officers will be engaged in this process.

The Committee noted the national suite of PowerPoint presentations on key organ and tissue donation topics has been finalised and will be provided to education co-ordinators.

### **Measure 5: National Community Awareness and Education Program**

The intent of Measure 5 is to increase organ and tissue donation rates in Australia through an ongoing, coordinated and evidence based national community awareness and education program which will increase knowledge about organ and tissue donation and transplantation and build public confidence in Australia's new donation system. The program includes phased advertising campaign activity together with other community awareness and education initiatives.

The key aim of the National Community Awareness and Education Program is to increase Australia's low family consent rate from 58% to 75% by 30 June 2012.

The Committee agreed to prioritise planning for DonateLife Week for the period November 2010 to February 2011 to ensure optimum community reach and impact and promote the 'My DonateLife Message'.

## **Measure 6: Support for Donor Families**

The intent of Measure 6 is that through a nationally coordinated approach deceased donor families will be provided with respectful support which is responsive to the needs of each family.

Members noted the update on the National Donor Family Support Service Framework implementation and agreed a general community representative be part of the implementation group rather than a Donor Family representative.

## **Measure 7: Safe, equitable and transparent national transplantation process**

Under this measure, the Authority, in collaboration with the relevant professional societies, is responsible for maintaining and auditing the implementation of approved national transplantation protocols and standards. This will ensure that the management of transplant waiting lists and the allocation of organs and tissues is effective, equitable and transparent, regardless of where the donor and recipient reside.

Prior to the Authority's establishment, the Transplant Society of Australia and New Zealand (TSANZ) were engaged to develop nationally consistent, safe, equitable and transparent process for the management of transplantation waiting lists and the allocation of donated organs across Australia.

### **TSANZ**

The Committee noted the AHMAC out-of-session paper on the proposed implementation process for the TSANZ Consensus Statement on Eligibility Criteria and Allocation Protocols (the protocols) and agreed to provide comments to the Authority.

## **Measure 8: National Eye and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Network**

The intent of Measure 8 is to increase organ and tissue donation rates in Australia by introducing systems that will deliver a coordinated, accountable, national tissue transplantation service for patients across Australia.

The Committee noted Clinical, Technical and Ethical Principal Committee's (CTEPC's) request for jurisdictions to report on eye and tissue activity to inform advice to Health Ministers for improvement in this area.

The Committee noted the Australian Tissue and Biotherapeutics Forum (ATBF) is keen to be involved in the development of the Network and their views on the potential impact of the Therapeutic Goods Administration's Biologicals Framework.

The Committee agreed to establish a working group to drive through integration of the eye and tissue banks into the broader DonateLife Network and to develop options in response to CTEPC's request.

## **Measure 9: Additional national initiatives, including living donation programs**

The intent of Measure 9 is to increase organ and tissue donation rates in Australia by establishing national protocols to guide initiatives including the practice of 'paired kidney exchange' between living donors and recipients, and living donor liver transplantation.

The two major items in Measure 9 are the Australian Paired Kidney Exchange (AKX) Program and the Donation after Cardiac Death protocol (DCD).

The AKX Program aims to maximise the number of live donor kidney transplants that can be performed in Australia by identifying biologically compatible donor/recipient pairs.

***AKX Program***

The Committee noted the operational and logistical issues identified following the first match run and the potential launch of the AKX Program

***DCD Protocol***

The Committee noted the aggregated draft DCD implementation plan and agreed to provide outstanding DCD implementation advice for inclusion in the national implementation plan.

The Committee noted the Authority's intention to submit the national DCD protocol and implementation plan to AHMAC.

The Committee agreed to provide updates on DCD implementation as part of the quarterly progress report.

***Next meeting***

The Committee agreed the next meeting will be held in Canberra on 10 February 2011.