Discover the facts about organ and tissue donation

Register your decision on the Australian Organ Donor Register

www.donatelife.gov.au
Discover the facts

What is organ and tissue donation?
Organ and tissue donation is a life-saving and life-transforming medical process. Organs are removed from a donor and transplanted into someone who is very ill or dying from organ failure. Eye and tissue donation can save or improve the quality of life for others.

Australia has one of the best transplant success rates in the world and research shows that the majority of Australians support organ and tissue donation.

Why is organ and tissue donation important?
Organ and tissue donation saves and transforms lives. One organ and tissue donor can transform the lives of 10 or more people.

There are approximately 1500 Australians waiting for a transplant on the official waiting list at any one time. Some Australians die waiting for a transplant. Some spend weeks or months in hospital, with others making several trips to hospital every week for dialysis or other treatment.

Why do people need transplants?
People who need an organ transplant are usually very ill or dying because an organ is failing. They range from babies and children through to older people.

People who need a tissue transplant can also be of any age. In some cases, tissue can save lives. More often, it greatly improves the recipient’s life.

Who can become a donor?
Almost everyone can donate organs and tissues—there is no age limit on the donation of some organs and tissues. The determining factors are where and how a person dies, and the condition of their organs and tissues. While your age and medical history will be considered, you shouldn’t assume you’re too young, too old or not healthy enough to become a donor.
Which organs and tissue can be donated?
Donation can involve:
• organs  kidney, heart, lungs, liver and pancreas
• tissues heart valves, bone tissue, skin, eye and pancreas tissue.

You can specify the organs and tissues you agree to donate when you register your donation decision on the Australian Organ Donor Register.

How does the organ and tissue donation process work?
When a person dies in a situation where they can become an organ and/or tissue donor, the possibility of donation is raised with the family.

The Australian Organ Donor Register is checked to find out whether the deceased person had registered their decision regarding organ and tissue donation. A donation specialist will meet with the family to talk about donation.

The family of a potential donor is given time to discuss and reach a decision on whether donation will occur. If donation is agreed, documentation will confirm the donation and which organs and tissues are being donated.

All states and territories have legal processes following family consent, whereby a designated officer not involved in the clinical management of a potential donor must give authority for donation to proceed. This part of the process may also involve the state coroner if the circumstances of the potential donor’s death are to be investigated by the coroner.

During and after the process, the donor’s family are supported by DonateLife organ and tissue donation specialist staff.

All donations and transplants are performed by specialist medical teams in the Australian public health system.
How are organs and tissue removed?
The removal of organs and tissues is no different to any other surgical procedure.
The donor’s body is always treated with dignity and respect. The donation of organs and tissues doesn’t alter the physical appearance of the donor, nor does it affect funeral arrangements.

How are organs and tissue allocated?
Australia has strict guidelines about the allocation of organs and tissues. The Transplantation Society of Australia and New Zealand (TSANZ) has developed guidelines for organ transplantation, *Organ Transplantation from Deceased Donors: Consensus Statement on Eligibility Criteria and Allocation Protocols*. These guidelines are available at [donatelifegovau](http://donatelifegovau).

When can organ and tissue donation occur?
The way a person dies determines whether they are able to donate organs and tissues.

**Organ donation**
A person may be able to donate organs when they have been declared brain dead and are being artificially ventilated in hospital. Brain death is when blood circulation to the brain ceases, the brain stops functioning and dies with no possibility of recovery. A series of tests carried out by two independent and appropriately-qualified senior doctors establishes that brain death has occurred.

People can be confused about the difference between brain death and being in a coma.
A patient in a coma is unconscious because their brain is injured in some way, however their brain continues to function and may heal. With brain death, there is no possibility whatsoever that the brain will recover. Medical tests clearly distinguish between brain death and being in a coma.

Organ donation may also be possible after a person’s heart has stopped beating, referred to as ‘cardiac death’, however this is less common.

Only one to two per cent of people who die in hospital will be eligible to donate their organs. Therefore it is very important to identify all potential donors and support their families to make informed decisions about donation.

**Tissue donation**

A far greater number of people have the opportunity to donate tissues for transplantation.

For transplantation to be successful, tissue donation doesn’t require the donor’s death to have occurred under the same limited circumstances as organ donation.

Unlike organs, tissue may be stored for varying periods of time.
Decide and register your decision

What is the Donor Register?
The Australian Organ Donor Register (the Donor Register) is the only national register for people to record their decision about becoming an organ and tissue donor for transplantation after death.

The Donor Register ensures a person’s donation decision can be verified 24 hours a day, seven days a week by authorised personnel anywhere in Australia. In the event of a person’s death, information about their donation decision, accessed from the Donor Register by authorised personnel, can be provided to the family of the deceased.

Recording your decision on the Donor Register is voluntary and you have complete choice over which organs and tissues you wish to donate. If you don’t want to become an organ and tissue donor, you can register your decision not to donate on the Donor Register.

The Donor Register is not for registering decisions about donating organs and tissue for scientific research purposes.

Who can register on the Donor Register?
People 16 years of age or older can register their donation decision on the Donor Register.

What if I’m already registered somewhere else?
The Donor Register is the only national register for organ and tissue donation for transplantation. Even if you have recorded your donation wishes somewhere else (for example, by ticking a box on your driver’s licence renewal), it’s very important you register your decision on the Donor Register.
How do I register on the Donor Register?
You can register your donation decision by either:
• filling in the attached form
• going to humanservices.gov.au/organdonor and registering online
• calling 1800 777 203**
• visiting a Medicare Service Centre.

Why do I need my Medicare card number?
It is not compulsory to link your donor registration to your Medicare record but your permission will be sought to do this because it will help to keep your details up to date. It will also help to identify your donor record if you are ever considered as a potential organ donor.

How do I change my registration details?
You can change or withdraw your donation decision on the Donor Register by:
• filling in the attached form
• calling 1800 777 203**
• visiting a Medicare Service Centre.

Where can I find more information about the Donor Register?
Online humanservices.gov.au/organdonor
Email aodr@humanservices.gov.au
Write Department of Human Services
GPO Box 711 Hobart TAS 7001
Call 1800 777 203**
TTY 1800 552 152**
(hearing and speech impaired)
TIS 131 450* (Translating and Interpreting Service)
If you need help translating this information call the TIS on 131 450*.

Greg and Sam are DonateLife Network Hospital Specialist Staff.
ARABIC
إذا كنت بحاجة إلى مبرمج شفهى أو نظام لدرجات والآلة لإنهاء
إجراءات معينة، يمكنك ترتيب هذه الـ إجراءات
لغة العربية، فيصل
مركز الاتصال مع هذه اللغة، على الرقم 131 202
بخصوص خدمات
وخدمات شؤون اللغة العربية، على رقم
131 450، وخدمة
وخدمات الشؤون التقنية، على
humanservices.gov.au
ومعلومات شؤون اللغة العربية، ومثل بروابط
والترجمات اللغوية، نقوم بعمل

CHINESE TRADITIONAL
如果你因辦理與本部門有關的業務而需要翻譯員協助或需要翻譯
文件，我們能夠為你免費安排。
你可以使用中文與Department of Human Services聯絡。有關Centrelink
的各項服務可致電131 202，連接多語言電話中心。有關Medicare
以及兒童支助服務，請致電131 450，聯絡處理和傳達服務處(TIS)。
如果希望獲取中文資訊，請在登陸humanservices.gov.au網站後點
擊語言選擇鍵盤，需付電話費。

GREEK
Αν χρειάζεστε διερμηνεία ή μετάφραση γλωσσών για τις συναλλαγές σας με άλλες
μας, μπορούμε να το κανονίσουμε για εσάς δωρεάν.
Για να μην περάσετε τον χώρο του Department of Human Services στα Ελληνικά, καθάριστο το
πολυεθνικό τηλεφωνικό κέντρο στο 131 202 για υπηρεσίες και πληροφορίες του
Centrelink, ή την Υπηρεσία Μεταφράσεων και Διερμηνείων (TIS) στο
131 450 για το Medicare και τις υπηρεσίες υποστήριξης παιδιών. Για
πληροφορίες στα Ελληνικά, επικοινωνήστε το humanservices.gov.au
και επιλέξτε την κατηγορία της διάλεκτος, ιδιαίτερα τηλέφωνο.

ITALIAN
Se vi serve un interprete o la traduzione di documenti per lo svolgimento delle
vostra pratica con noi, possiamo organizzare tali servizi a titolo gratuito.
Per parlare con il Department of Human Services in italiano, chiamate il
centro multilingue al numero 131 202 per servizi e prestazioni peculiari del
Centrelink, oppure il Servizio traduzioni e interpreti (TIS) al numero
131 450 per servizi del Medicare e dei servizi di sostegno dei minori.
Per informazioni in italiano, visitate il sito humanservices.gov.au
e selezionate la vostra lingua nell’apposita finestra. Vengono tariffe a chiamata.

SPANISH
Si necesita un intérprete o la traducción de documentos para sus trámites en
nuestra institución, podemos organizar estos servicios gratuitos.
Para hablar con el Department of Human Services en español respecto a
servicios o pagos de Centrelink llame al centro de llamadas multilingüe al
131 202 o, para comunicarse con respecto a Medicare y a los servicios
de pension alimentaria para los hijos, llame al Servicio de Traducción e
Interpretación (TIS) al 131 450. Para obtener información en español,
visite humanservices.gov.au y seleccione el botón de idiomas.
Estas llamadas se cobran.

VIETNAMESE
Nếu cần thông ngôn viên hay cần phải dịch giả có thể giúp dịch vụ của chúng tôi,
chúng tôi có thể thực hiện dịch vụ này miễn phí cho quý vị.
Muốn tiếp xúc với Department of Human Services bằng tiếng Việt, quý
trường tìm điện thoại da số có 131 202 để nói với công nhân của Centrelink,
hoặc dịch vụ Thông Phán dịch (TIS) số 131 450 để nói với Medicare và dịch
vụ bảo dưỡng cùng ca. Muốn biết thông tin bằng tiếng Việt, vui lòng mạng
humanservices.gov.au và chọn ngôn ngữ của riêng bạn.

* Call charges apply.
** Call charges apply from pay and mobile phones only.
Discuss your decision with family and friends

Who needs to know my donation decision?
The people close to you—your next of kin—need to know your donation decision today. In the event of your death, they will be asked to confirm your donation decision. In Australia, family consent is always sought before donation can proceed—even if you are registered on the Donor Register.

The most important thing that helps a family’s decision is knowing the wishes of their loved one. Families that have discussed and know each other’s donation decisions are much more likely to uphold those decisions.

It is also important that you ask and know the donation decision of your family members so that, should the situation arise, you can uphold their wishes.
How can I start the discussion?

Try to use everyday situations to start a discussion about important life issues, including what to do with your organs and tissues in the event of your death.

A practical guide to assist families in having an informed and memorable family discussion about organ and tissue donation is available from [donatelife.gov.au](http://donatelife.gov.au) then click on Discuss.

Some suggested situations to discuss your donation decision with your family could include:

- the next time your family sits down together for a meal
- leaving home for the first time as a young adult
- obtaining or renewing your driver’s licence
- celebrating an anniversary with your partner
- having a significant birthday
- hearing about someone who has been a donor, needs a transplant or has had a transplant
- watching donation and transplant stories on TV or seeing an article in the media
- seeing or hearing an advertisement about organ and tissue donation
- after a friend or family member dies
- when children discuss the topic at school.

If you have already discussed your decision with your family, these events provide a good opportunity to repeat your decision to ensure they are remembered.

Marguerite’s and Laurie’s son Ben was a donor.
What should I discuss?
Everyone has their own reasons for becoming an organ and tissue donor. It’s important your family and friends understand your reasons, and you understand theirs.

Some discussion topics could include:
• your own reasons for wanting to donate
• whether there’s anything you don’t want to donate
• asking your family about their reasons for or against donating
• facts about donation
• myths and misconceptions people have about donation
• sharing some of the stories about donor families and transplant recipients.

The DonateLife website (donatelife.gov.au) has a wide range of resources, including a Family Discussion Kit, to help you start the conversation.

It’s important your family remembers the donation discussion so they can confirm your decision, should the situation arise. It’s also important you know the wishes of your family members.

What is DonateLife?
The Organ and Tissue Authority works with states and territories, clinicians and the community sector to deliver the Australian Government’s national reform programme to implement a world’s best practice approach to organ and tissue donation for transplantation, endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments on 3 July 2008.

The twin objectives of the national reform programme are to increase the capability and capacity within the health system to maximise donation rates, and to raise community awareness and stakeholder engagement across Australia to promote organ and tissue donation.

The national reform programme is managed by the Organ and Tissue Authority through the DonateLife Network, in partnership with state and territory governments, eye and tissue banks, community organisations and the broad donation and transplantation clinical sectors.
The DonateLife Network comprises the Authority, state and territory medical directors, organ and tissue donation agencies (DonateLife agencies) and hospital-based doctors and nurses specialising in organ and tissue donation.

Where can I find more information about organ and tissue donation?
More information about organ and tissue donation, including resources, fact sheets and donor family and transplant recipient stories, is available on the DonateLife website at donatelife.gov.au

Carolyn Burns is a transplant recipient.
DonateLife contacts

Organ and Tissue Authority
Level 6, 221 London Circuit
Canberra City ACT 2600
Phone: 02 6198 9800  Fax: 02 6198 9801
enquiries@donatelife.gov.au

DonateLife ACT
Canberra Hospital, Building 6, Level 1
Yamba Drive, Garran ACT 2605
Phone: 02 6174 5625  Fax: 02 6244 2405
organ.donation@act.gov.au

DonateLife NSW
Level 6, 4 Belgrave Street, Kogarah NSW 2217
Phone: 02 8566 1700  Fax: 02 8566 1755
nsworgandonation@sesiahs.health.nsw.gov.au

DonateLife NT
1st Floor, Royal Darwin Hospital
Rocklands Drive, Tiwi NT 0810
Phone: 08 8922 8349  Fax: 08 8944 8096
donatelifentai@nt.gov.au

DonateLife QLD
Building 1, Level 4, Princess Alexandra Hospital
199 Ipswich Road, Woolloongabba QLD 4102
Phone: 07 3176 2350  Fax: 07 3176 2999
donatelifewest.qld.gov.au

DonateLife SA
Level 6, 45 Grenfell Street, Adelaide SA 5000
Phone: 08 8207 7117  Fax: 08 8207 7102
donatelifesa@health.sa.gov.au

DonateLife TAS
Hobart Corporate Centre
Level 3, 85 Macquarie Street Hobart TAS 7000
Phone: 03 6270 2209  Fax: 03 6270 2223
donatelifetasm@dhhs.tas.gov.au

DonateLife VIC
Level 2, 19–21 Argyle Place South, Carlton VIC 3053
Phone: 03 8317 7400  Fax: 03 9349 2730
donatelifewest.canberra@redcrossblood.org.au

DonateLife WA
Suite 3, 31 Wellington Street, Perth WA 6000
Phone: 08 9222 0222  Fax: 08 9222 0220
donatelifewest.wa@health.wa.gov.au
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For more information
For more information about the Donor Register go to humanservices.gov.au/organandtissue or call 1800 777 203
Note: Calls from mobile phones may be charged at a higher rate.

Returning your form
This form can be returned:
• to a Medicare Service Centre
• by folding and posting, or
• by fax to: 1300 587 189

Your decision
1 I want to (tick box only):
   □ register myself on the Donor Register
   □ change my donation decision
   □ details on the Donor Register
   □ be removed from the Donor Register
   □ register my decision not to be a donor

Your details
2 I authorise my donor registration to be linked to my Medicare record

Your Medicare card number

Tick to authorise if Medicare card number not known/available

3 Donor registration number (if known)

R

4 Mr □ Mrs □ Miss □ Ms □ Other

Family name

Given name

5 Date of birth / / 

6 Your sex Male □ Female □

Australian Organ Donor Register
New registration, change or removal of donation decision details

7 Permanent postal address

Postcode

8 Daytime phone number

Email

Organ and tissue donation
9 I wish to register my consent to donate the following organs and/or tissues for transplantation, in the event of my death. (Tick “All” or as many as apply):

□ All □ Bone tissue □ Eye tissue □ Heart □
□ Heart valves □ Kidneys □ Liver □
□ Lungs □ Pancreas □ Skin tissue □

Declaration
10 Please register me, change or remove my details on the Australian Organ Donor Register.
   • I give permission for the details I have provided to be actioned on the Donor Register
   • I have discussed this decision with my family, partner or friend
   • I am aware that I can change my donation decision details at any time.

Signature

Date / /

Privacy notice
Your personal information is protected by law, including the Privacy Act 1988, and is collected for a Social Security, Family Assistance, Medicare, Child Support and CSR purpose, depending on the service or payment concerned. This information may be required by law or collected voluntarily when you apply for services or payments. Your information is used for the assessment and administration of payments and services and may also be used within Human Services, or disclosed to other parties or agencies, where you have provided consent or it is required or authorised by law. You can get more information about privacy by going to our website at humanservices.gov.au/privacy or requesting a copy of the full privacy policy at any of our Service Centres.