OVERVIEW OF THE NATIONAL DONATELIFE
COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND EDUCATION PROGRAM
(updated 22 March 2016)

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

There are around 1,600 Australians on official transplant waiting lists at any one time. Yet of the approximate 74,000 deaths in hospital each year, less than 1% - or around 970 deaths – are in the specific circumstances in an Intensive Care Unit or Emergency Department where organ donation is possible. Many more people can become eye and tissue donors as tissues can be donated up to 24 hours after death, regardless of where death occurred.

To optimise every potential organ and tissue donation, the national DonateLife Community Awareness and Education Program encourages all Australians to:

- Discover the facts about organ and tissue donation and the benefits of organ and tissue transplantation.
- Decide and register an informed decision about becoming an organ and tissue donor on the Australian Organ Donor Register (AODR).
- Discuss donation decisions with family members and close friends so that each other’s decisions on organ and tissue donation are known.

The intended outcomes of the national Community Awareness and Education Program are that more Australians:

- are aware of the facts about organ and tissue donation, including the life-saving and life-transforming outcomes made possible through donation.
- make and register an informed donation decision on the AODR.
- discuss and know the donation decisions of family members and are confident in supporting the decisions of their loved ones, should the situation arise.

Target Audiences
Organ and tissue donation is a topic that is relevant to all Australians. In addition to engaging with the general Australian community, there are certain segments of the population that are likely to benefit from targeted engagement. This is because they represent those Australians who are less likely to have made a decision about organ and tissue donation, registered on the AODR, or discussed their wishes with their loved ones.

The priority target audiences are:

- Young adults aged 18-29 years
- Males
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians
- Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
Key Activities under the Community Awareness and Education Program

1. DonateLife Week 2016

DonateLife Week is the national awareness week to promote organ and tissue donation in Australia. It is led by the Organ and Tissue Authority (OTA), in partnership with the DonateLife Network and key stakeholders, as a key component of the reform programme. In 2016, DonateLife Week will take place from Sunday 31 July – Sunday 7 August.

The Week serves as an annual media and community education campaign to engage the community and the media with a unified, national voice, supported by community-led events such as education sessions, outdoor events, information stalls and film competitions.

The theme and key focus of DonateLife Week 2016 will be to encourage Australians to register their donation decision on the AODR. Activities during DonateLife Week should promote awareness of the AODR as the only national register to record decisions regarding organ and tissue donation for transplantation after death, and provide information on the ways in which people can register on the AODR. Importantly, activities should motivate people to take action and register.

2. DonateLife Thank You Day

DonateLife Thank You Day is a national day to publicly acknowledge all organ and tissue donors and their families that agreed to donation. In 2016, DonateLife Thank You Day will be held on Sunday 20 November.

Supported by a national DonateLife media and social media campaign, the national day provides an opportunity for participation across the community by staging community events that invite the public to demonstrate their thanks and appreciation to all living and deceased organ and tissue donors, and their families.

Public acknowledgement of the generosity of deceased and living organ and tissue donors and their families is important. Such acknowledgment can contribute to normalising the subject and community acceptance of organ and tissue donation and, importantly, supporting donor families to feel positive about their decision.

The first DonateLife Thank You Day was held on Sunday 22 November 2015.

3. National Donor Online Registration Campaign

In 2016 the OTA will lead a national awareness campaign to increase the number of Australians who are registered on their AODR, through improving public awareness of the importance and process of registration, and the importance of family discussion and knowledge of donation decisions.

It is anticipated that national campaign activity will coincide with DonateLife Week 2016. As noted above, the theme and focus of DonateLife Week 2016 will be on promoting the importance and process of registering on the AODR.

Registration and family knowledge of donation decisions makes a clear and strong difference on donation consent rates. In 2015, 91% of families agreed to donation where the deceased had registered their decision to donate, compared to the national average of 60%. The consent rate drops to just 42% when the deceased was not a registered donor and the family had no prior knowledge of their wishes.
Funding for the OTA to lead a national campaign to increase overall registrations on the AODR is provided by the 2015 Federal Budget measure: *Accelerating growth in organ and tissue donation for transplantation*. Through this budget measure, funding was also provided to the Department of Human Services to introduce a new one-step online registration process on myGov, via Medicare Online Services. The new process will eliminate the current requirement for people who register online to complete a second-step of signing and returning a form to confirm their donation decision.

The enhanced online registration process available on myGov will be an additional method of registration. The existing methods available for registration on the AODR will continue, which are:

- **Online:** Fill in the details on the Register online form on the DHS website
- **By form:** Download and complete a New registration, change or removal of details form, or visit your local DHS service centre and pick up a brochure that includes a registration form. Completed forms can be submitted at your local service centre

As part of the campaign, the OTA will have a dedicated campaign website which will clearly point people to all available methods of registration, to enable people to self-select their preferred way to register.

### 4. Community Awareness Grants

The Community Awareness Grants program provides funding for projects or activities that are aligned with and contribute to the delivery of the national DonateLife Community Awareness and Education Program. The focus of each round of grants supports the overall direction of the Community Awareness and Education Program. Through grant activities, participating organisations are able to extend the impact and reach of the national Community Awareness and Education Program to new audiences at a local and national level.

### 5. Community Education and Awareness

Community education and engagement is central to the Community Awareness and Education Program. The OTA provides a range of communication materials and resources for use in community education activities. You can view many of these resources at [http://www.donatelife.gov.au/get-involved](http://www.donatelife.gov.au/get-involved)
Resources include:

- The *DonateLife Guide for Community Speakers* resource (including a PowerPoint presentation).
- Online DonateLife Tool Kit.
- Multimedia products including a 3 minute education animation on organ and tissue donation in Australia and video case studies.
- Printed and online public information materials.
- The DonateLife Book of Life in online and printed formats.
- Multicultural (faith, cultural and in-language) and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander resources including printed, online and multimedia resources.
- School Education Resources for Years 8 and 9
- The DonateLife website at www.donatelife.gov.au

### 6. Engaging with culturally and linguistically diverse audiences

The national DonateLife Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Communications and Engagement Program facilitates access to culturally appropriate information about organ and tissue donation. Priority faith communities include Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, Islamic, Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Antiochian, Maronite and Coptic faith communities. Priority language groups included Arabic, Turkish, Vietnamese, Chinese (traditional), Spanish, Greek and Italian, as well as the Indian cultural community.

The OTA’s research identified that people from CALD backgrounds are less likely to have made a decision about organ and tissue donation or to have discussed this decision with their families. Some people from CALD communities may be unsure if their religion or culture permits organ and tissue donation.

Following consultation with leaders from the priority groups and there are now religious rulings for the priority faith groups in support of organ donation. Further, 88 DonateLife statements of support have now been signed by faith and cultural leaders, organisations and ethnic media partners to express their support of organ and tissue donation.

These rulings and supporting statements, together with faith-based and in-language brochures, posters, videos and more are available at http://www.donatelife.gov.au/for-the-community/multicultural-resources

### 7. Media and public relations

Media and public relations activities are central to the Community Awareness and Education Program. The media remains a highly influential platform for educating Australians about organ and tissue donation. Through engaging with the media we aim to:

- Communicate nationally consistent and accurate messages about organ and tissue donation for transplantation and the importance of family discussion and knowledge of donation decisions;
- Increase public confidence and reduce public confusion regarding organ and tissue donation; and
- Drive behavioural change and motivate people to talk to their family, friends and loved ones about their decisions to be an organ and tissue donor, and register their donation decision on the AODR.

### 8. Social media and website

The aim of the national DonateLife social media (DonateLife Facebook, DonateLife Instagram and DonateLifeToday Twitter) and website activity is to engage target audiences on the topic of organ and tissue donation and to enable them to connect with others about issues relating to this
topic. The www.donatelifegov.au website provides a platform for all Australians to Discover, Decide and Discuss organ and tissue donation. The website provides information for the general public through to health professionals on organ and tissue donation for transplantation.