2018

Eye and tissue donation and transplantation

Australian Government
Organ and Tissue Authority

donatelife

Each year the lives of thousands of Australians are transformed through eye and tissue donation and transplantation.

Unlike organ donation, which can only occur if the donor is in an intensive care unit or emergency department, tissue donors (including eye tissue) can originate from across the health system. Donated eye tissue can restore sight while skin tissue can be used to treat severe burns; and heart valves can be used to replace faulty ones, especially in children. Musculoskeletal tissue donations can become many different types of grafts that can be transplanted to restore functionality and mobility to those in need.

In 2018, 2,258 Australians received a corneal transplant through the generosity of 1,394 eye donors and their families.
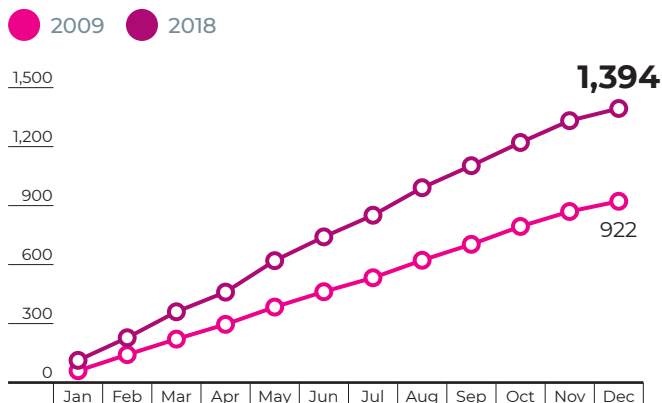
This is a 4% increase in the number of corneal transplant recipients compared with 2017 (2,175) and a 54% increase compared with 2009 (1,467), the year the national program started.

In 2018 eye donation rates and, subsequently corneal transplantation outcomes, continued to meet demand.
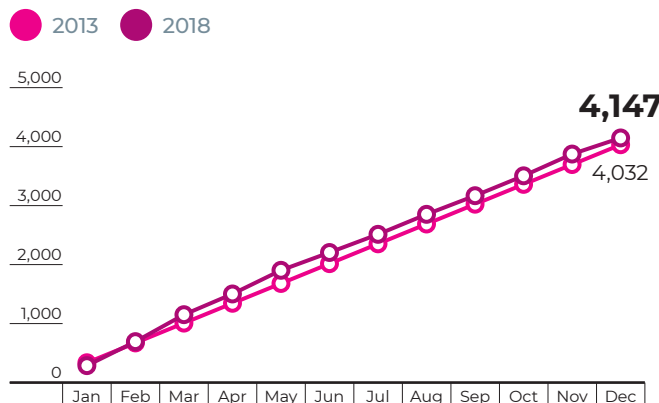
In 2018, there were 8,258 notified tissue transplant recipients and 4,147 tissue donors. The donors included 3,810 living and 337 deceased tissue donors. In addition there were 13 recipients of pancreatic islet cells.

While the number of tissue donors decreased compared with 2017 (4,521), tissue transplant outcomes improved. There was a 10% increase in the number of tissue graft recipients compared with 2017 (7,470) and a 123% increase over 2013 (3,691), the first year that national tissue data was reported.
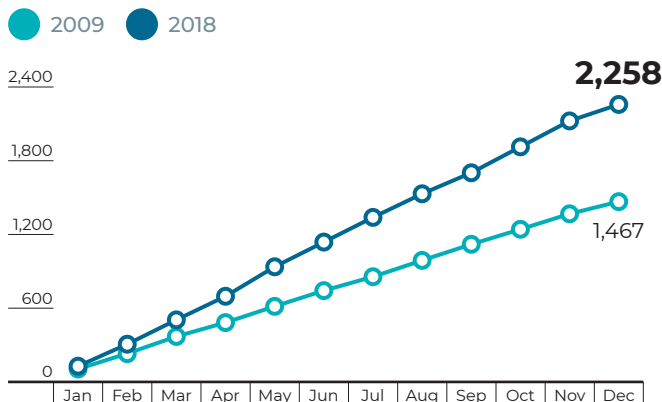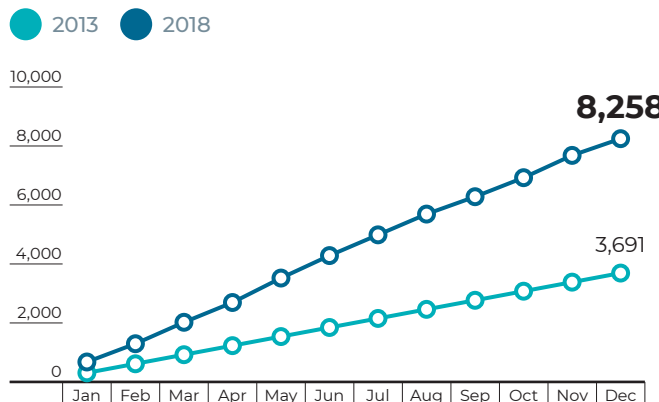
Eye donors

● 2009   ● 2018

1,394

922

Tissue donors

● 2013   ● 2018

4,147

4,032

Corneal transplants

● 2009   ● 2018

2,258

1,467

Tissue graft recipients

● 2013   ● 2018

8,258

3,691

Source: Australia and New Zealand Organ Donation Registry