

DonateLife BOOK OF LIFE

A collection of life-saving and life-changing stories from people touched by **organ and tissue donation.**





Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC
Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia

Foreword to the DonateLife Book of Life

by Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce, AC
Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia

As the inaugural DonateLife Ambassador, I have been privileged to observe the impressive leadership of the DonateLife team and agency network in managing organ and tissue donations throughout the country, and in educating Australians about the issues that are central to our decisions to give life.

Inspired by the work of these outstanding professionals, the *DonateLife Book of Life* is a heartfelt appeal to all Australians urging us to find out the facts about organ and tissue donation, to make well informed decisions, and to discuss those decisions with the people close to us.

Here is a collection of stories from brave and thoughtful Australians whose lives have been touched and transformed by a donor's life-affirming decision. These honest and grateful accounts pay tribute to the generosity of lives tragically and abruptly ended: the ultimate act of giving life to another as one's own life passes.

The *DonateLife Book of Life* starts its journey around Australia in DonateLife Week, Sunday 20 to Sunday 27 February 2011, a campaign led by the Australian Government's Organ and Tissue Authority to raise donation awareness among Australians and to increase our donation rates.

It is my hope in 2011 that, as these stories are shared across the nation, many more of us will be moved to think, talk and act on a decision that can help bring life and healing to thousands of Australian lives.

This is a decision for all of us and each of us. We share life and we share a capacity to give life. Our personal experiences of living and giving are most powerfully told through our stories. This book is our carriage and our conduit for ensuring that our decisions bring the greatest good to the greatest number in the Australian community.

We are forever indebted to those Australians who have chosen to give life. They have made their mark in the most profound ways and the *DonateLife Book of Life* bears their courageous stamp.

May these pages travel far and deep across our generous land.

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2011

**Any day is a good day
to talk about organ
and tissue donation.**



Thank you for the greatest gift

Six years ago I was diagnosed with a lung disease called pulmonary fibrosis. There was evidence that medication could not help this condition as scarring is permanent once it has developed. For a non-smoker this news was very hard to understand because the scarring of my lungs was going to end my life. A lung transplant for me was the only option available. Before my double lung transplant I was reliant on oxygen 24 hours a day and fearful I may not see another Christmas.

My life has been saved by the very generous gift that one person and their family made—the special gift of new lungs. I haven't felt this good in seven years. After three months recovery I could go back to work with two of my three sons in the building industry and very much enjoying my second chance at life.

Since my transplant, I have met a lot of special doctors and nurses as well as a number of young people training to be a part of an amazing team involved in transplant. It is thanks to people donating the greatest gift possible—LIFE that people like me have been given a second chance. I can plan for a future with family and friends.

At this stage I am taking a lot of medication and every day I think of the person and their family that have had so much pain in their life. I hope that time and the strength of family and friends will make things easier for them. I have never met my donor family but I promise to value the gift they have given me.

I would like to encourage people to talk to their family and friends about their decision to ensure organs can be given to those in need if the time comes.

Patrick



Patrick

**Any day is a good day
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and tissue donation.**



For the love of 'Adi'

A life lived to the fullest

Our beautiful son, brother and uncle was pronounced brain dead from a Colloid cyst which had grown in the centre of his brain since he was born.

We had always talked about organ donation since Adrian's uncle Simon had passed away—he was an organ donor. We followed Adrian's courageous, unselfish wishes, he had a healthy body which was used to save many lives.

We were all thankful to have had the time with Adrian in the hospital before the organ retrieval for us to love and hold him.

His sisters Natalie, Jill and Nat's partner Gary, had fun reminiscing and being able to take hand prints.

It was sad for Adi's youngest sister Alyse and her fiancé Pate as they were in Norfolk Island and unable to get there in time to be with him at the hospital.

His niece Lara, nephews Zac and Jake talk about uncle Adi every day, they make us laugh with their stories.

Adi had just started an apprenticeship as a builders' carpenter. He loved his new job!

He travelled to Germany where he learnt to snowboard in Switzerland, rode a scooter in France and searched for ancestors in Scotland.

Adrian had many friends; three were like brothers to him, Kettle, Sheedy and Morrie, whether fishing, shooting or playing the Playstation Adrian always made time for his mates.

Being best man in Morrie's wedding was one of the highlights in Adi's life.

We had his funeral service at home where he loved to be, we gave him a great send off. His faithful hound Zharn is ours to look after now for Adi.

Forever in our hearts and memories.
Forever loved.

Mum, Dad, sisters and family xx



'Adi'

**Start the organ
and tissue donation
discussion today**



Oscar's choice

When my 71 year old dad, Oscar, died suddenly and the family was approached about donation it was an easy decision.

Dad died so suddenly, so quickly. No one was expecting it. Dad was a professional parachutist in the Italian army. He had cheated death a hundred million times.

It was 3.30 in the morning. We knew he was dead. We weren't thinking of organ donation, but when the decision had to be made, we didn't need to individually go around and ask each family member. We always knew dad's wishes and what he wanted—with no reservations.

I remember dad as the first person to give a hand and someone who lived life to the fullest.

He never went backwards, always two steps forward. He was strong, extroverted and confident. If I needed anything I only had to ask.

Dad's presence is extremely missed. A game of poker isn't the same, he was the king of poker.

I still find it so surreal. We still think he is going to cheat death again. But I'm very proud of my dad's gift to another human being.

Our family know each other's wishes. Some members want to donate, others don't. It is not us who donated, it was my dad who gave the gifts freely and willingly, we only conveyed his wishes.

It's a decision each one of us makes individually, the next of kin have the responsibility to carry it through, untainted by their own wishes.

Dad's choice saved the lives of two people and gave sight to two others.

Catia



Oscar

**On average, people on
transplant lists wait between
6 months and 4 years.**



A rainbow poem

Who'd want my heart it's cold and black
But God told me not to bring it back.

He said to leave it from where I came
Others could use it just the same.

My eyes and all other parts as well
Don't take them to Heaven or to hell.

So everybody when you go
Check all your organs at the front door.

Help save a life with what is yours
Sign up to donate it's a worthy cause.

Doug



**Australia is a world
leader for successful
transplant outcomes.**



An unknown angel

Hi my name is Aleisha and I am 33 years old.

I was diagnosed at a young age with Alports Nephritis a genetic kidney disease. This type of disease also effects my hearing and eye sight and consequently I started wearing hearing aids by the time I was at pre-school.

I have always had a positive attitude with my Alports and did my best to look after my health. So after 22 years of relative good health I started dialysis and 'obeyed, by the book' my dialysis treatment (CAPD) for three and a half years.

I never really thought about transplantation while I was on dialysis, apart from having a mobile glued to my side 24 hours a day, I always focused on dialysis and the here and now. It's what I needed to do to stay alive and that was keeping me centred!

Nothing can prepare you for when the phone rings at 10.30 at night and you're alone in bed on dialysis and after answering you hear 'Aleisha, would you like a kidney?'.

Your chest tightens. Its like time suspends and after a short time, you remember to breathe. Aleisha breathe, your about to receive a gift of life.

I am 33 now and have been so thankful and happy for the years of being dialysis free!

I know it is hard for most people to understand what it feels like to be given life, and the easiest way I describe it is like this—I wouldn't be here today if the family of my donor said no to donation. I will be forever grateful and humbled to my unknown angel.

Aleisha



Aleisha

Discover the facts
Decide about becoming
an organ and tissue donor and
Discuss your decision with
the people close to you.



Gone too early, but not in vain

Ethan (or Jimmy as he was affectionately known) was a three year old boy who lived his life to the full. He was up before dawn, doing whatever he could before he fell asleep again (wherever that might have been).

He lived and he loved. Always affectionate, with a kiss and a cuddle for anybody anytime. Sharing his love with whom ever he could. He was good at sharing.

One morning, he decided to climb the gate to wave to the train that ran behind our property. He was clipped by the train and airlifted to the hospital. It was there that we received the gut wrenching news that the doctors could do no more to help our little boy. We made the heart breaking decision to turn off the life support and donate his organs.

We didn't need to think about it or even be asked, our Jimmy would have shared.

The indescribable feeling of hopelessness and despair we felt, knowing that we could not take our little boy home, is something that was so painful we would do anything to help other families not go through it as well. If Ethan could help a family to be able to go home with

their loved one, to live, to love and to laugh with... it was the least we could do.

This gave us some comfort in a time where there was none. He might have died far too early, but it wouldn't be in vain.

Michelle and Jon



Ethan

**Less than 1 in 5 Australians
have discussed in detail their
donation wishes with
their loved ones.**



My donor family heroes

My name is Christine. I was a blue baby and my parents were told I needed heart surgery to survive. I was operated on the very next day. Five days later Mum and Dad came to collect me. My parents were told to take me home and love me as I probably wouldn't live to see school age. Well—I did, although I was so small Mum had to make my first uniform!

I underwent a cardiac catheter at 18 and it was then I was told there was nothing further the doctors could do for me apart from a heart/lung transplant. They also told me I would never have children.

I met and married a wonderful man and in 1999 we made a beautiful baby boy who was carried to term by his generous Aunt.

My journey towards transplant started when my oxygenation levels were dropping significantly. It took me over three months to become 'listed' for a transplant and then I waited almost 16 months for that miracle call.

I remember being very scared as I was wheeled away from my family that night, hoping that I would make it through. For me the recovery was a long road. Mum and I spent three months in and around hospital. Finally the wonderful doctors and nurses won the war and I was heading home—a new woman.

Since my transplant I have been able to take my first overseas holiday, stand on the top of a live

volcano, attend the car races at Bathurst and so much more. The absolute best is I've been able to watch my baby grow into a beautiful young man, see him score his first goal on the soccer field and put a band-aid on his grazed knee. It's those small things like spending time with your family that I just love.

There are no words in the English language to convey my gratitude to my donor and their family. Thank you just doesn't seem to get anywhere near it. I think of them every day of my new life and hope that they can have some peace in knowing that the wonderful gift they gave me is being cared for and enjoyed to the fullest. They are my heroes, although I shall never meet them.

Christine



Christine, Rod and Jarrod

Do you know the
donation decision
of your loved ones?



A new kidney and new life

Donald is a very grateful person who is pleased to tell his story in DonateLife Week. He hopes that people will see how a transplant can give a new life and that they will sign up to donate organs.

After recovering from nephritis in his later school years he was left with only forty per cent kidney function. He went on to an apprenticeship in building and later went to Darwin to work after cyclone Tracey. After a few months there, he suffered complete kidney failure and was flown to St Luke's Hospital and started dialysis.

He decided to have his treatment at home at night so that he could return to work each day. His mum, dad, Heather and I supported him by learning to help with the operation of the dialysis machine which was installed in their home.

Both Heather and I offered to donate a kidney and both were a suitable match. I chose to be first with Heather as a back up if things didn't work out. The transplant was carried out after about six months with unbelievable results. The donation of my kidney was the most rewarding experience of my life.

Donald and I are the longest living kidney donor and recipient at the Royal North Shore Hospital Transplant Centre. Both of us were

invited to celebrate this at a presentation by the NSW Governor Marie Bashir and Dr John Mahony. The latter organised the transplant and made the procedure a lot easier with the friendly and ever available help. He has looked after the pair of us for the thirty-two years since the transplant and has become a very valued family friend.

There is now an excellent renal specialist, Dr Razak, in Coffs Harbour, as well as a wonderful Renal Centre at the Coffs Harbour Base Hospital with very experienced and exceptionally caring nurses and support staff.

Donald went back to building and obtained a full building trade licence. He has built numerous houses in Urunga and Coffs Harbour. Donald was also able to return to his love of surfing and surf lifesaving—including beach patrols. He has been recognised with Life Membership of the Urunga Surf Club. He has been well supported by his loving wife, Debbie.

It would be wonderful if more people would sign on to donate life and give other families the opportunity to enjoy the experience our family has had.

Kevin

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Decide about becoming
an organ and tissue donor and
Discuss your decision with
the people close to you.



The eyes have it (say yes to becoming an organ donor)

I was diagnosed with Fuchs' endothelial dystrophy. This means that over time I would gradually lose my vision, and the only solution is a corneal transplant.

That's not something you want to hear when you're 22.

I was fine for 12 years, until vision in my right eye deteriorated to the point where I couldn't drive safely or see what was on my right side. Also, because I could barely tolerate light, I felt a bit like a vampire, having to stay indoors and in the dark on a beautiful, sunny day. We rely so much on vision to live a normal life and when that is compromised, it's not easy.

I had a cornea transplant and, four and a half years later, everything's fine. One day in the (distant) future I'll need another cornea for my left eye, but right now my theme song is still 'I can see clearly now...'

Every morning I look in the mirror and promise my donor that I will take care of this wonderful gift I was given. That decision to become a donor has changed my life and words cannot express my gratitude. I also thank your family for being strong and ensuring that your wishes to be a donor were carried out in the midst of their grief.

All donors and their families are amazing—you not only give the gift of life to so many, you also make a difference to their quality of life. I know I speak for all recipients when I say this.

I have signed up to be an organ donor—even tissue recipients like me can do this! I encourage you to sign up today, and let your family know your wishes. We can all make a difference.

Mari



Do you know the
donation decision
of your loved ones?



The little black duck

When she was around 46, my mother was told that she was very ill and required a lung transplant. Over the next three years, she deteriorated substantially.

Very early one morning, the hospital called advising us that a transplant was possible and she had to get to the hospital. We were elated at the opportunity for Mum, yet saddened that this opportunity only came because someone else had died and another family was grieving.

As I watched her roll away on a gurney, I wondered if this was the last time we were going to see her alive. The transplant was a success, it was text book and she rested comfortably in ICU.

Within the next 12 hours, things went terribly wrong and all of her organs started to shut down. There was talk that she was rejecting the lung and it would only be a matter of time. A couple of months went by and we were asked to make the decision about her future. We had already discussed this with Mum and we knew her wishes.

The machines were switched off and we were told, again, it wouldn't take long for her to be resting peacefully. Within 12 hours, she had started to respond and she, very slowly, started to regain consciousness.

Within a few days she was able to communicate with us. Then with a couple of months in rehab she was back home again.

Sadly, we lost Mum after a few years due to complications. She was not yet 54.

There is another family who lost their loved one and in doing so, ensured that ours could live. It was an unselfish gift from someone whom we didn't even know and whose family we are forever grateful to. We got to spend five more years with Mum that we otherwise would not have had. Whoever you are, you will never know what you did for us but you will always remain in our hearts and thoughts—thank you is not enough but it's all I have to give.

Felicity



Our Little Black Duck

Do the people close
to you know your
donation decision?



Best present in years

Hey there world. My name is Tamika and I am 15 years old. When I was 32 days old, I was diagnosed with cystic fibrosis. I was doing pretty well until I was diagnosed with diabetes at the age of 10.

Ever since then my hospital stays were becoming more and more frequent. I would spend two weeks in hospital and then three to four weeks at home. It was like this for a few years until I became very unwell and I was placed on the transplant waiting list.

One day my lungs just gave up. I was placed on life support and rushed to hospital to be put on the high priority transplant list. The staff there called out to all states and then New Zealand.

Two days later I received my double lung transplant. At 5pm I went into the operating room and came out at 11pm. It was the best present my family could have asked for.

I am so grateful for the angel that donated me their lungs. They are in my prayers everyday.

Tamika



The day before my operation

**One organ and tissue donor
can save or enhance the
lives of 10 or more people.**



Samantha

In order to achieve in life, work or in sport, we all need to set goals. As we try harder we can reach those goals and taste success.

Samantha's first goal was life itself. Born with a congenital liver disease, she struggled with many health issues which necessitated her having to spend much of her early years in hospital. At age six she had a liver transplant. She had a strong will and defied all odds in overcoming a post-operative viral infection resulting in life threatening pneumonia.

For about two years Samantha slowly recovered and endured the effects of anti-rejection drugs. It was during this time she developed a love of dancing and through this, strengthened her body and developed her will to succeed and excel.

She represented the Children's Hospital Camperdown in the 1990 'Channel 7 Telethon', raising much needed funds for the hospital. She also volunteered in the 'Say Yes' campaign in schools raising awareness for students to advise their family of their desire regarding organ donation.

Samantha participated in the National Transplant Games at Toowoomba in 1990—both in running and swimming. Whilst not a strong swimmer she proved her determination to everyone present. At times barely floating, she won the hearts of all when she completed her swim, definitely last, barely able to stand, but at least she finished.

At the next Transplant Games in Bathurst she picked up a few medals in swimming and running. Her love of swimming and running continued and when invited to participate at the World Transplant Games at Homebush, she readily accepted, resulting in four gold medals.

Whilst there have been a few health problems over the ensuing years, life has been good for Sam. She has travelled extensively overseas and lived in the UK for three years as a social worker. On her return to Australia she has continued with her profession working in inner Sydney.

Sam is turning 30 and leads an active, normal life. She is still dancing and loves the beach and surfing.

As parents we celebrate her life and give thanks for the gift of a liver. We remember and thank the donor and their parents.

Tony and Carol



Sam and friend

**The majority of
Australians support
organ and tissue donation.**



That magic moment

Blissfully in love with my husband, we were planning to start a family 12 months after we were married. I was born with several disabilities and so we decided to have genetic counselling to find out if the baby would inherit my disabilities. After several appointments with the doctors I was given the all clear. Fantastic! I then had a check up with my gynaecologist who found an irregularity with my kidney function reading.

She referred me back to the hospital where I was told I was not healthy enough to have a family and my kidney function was bad. You could have knocked me over with a feather. My world was shattered. I had always wanted children.

My health slowly deteriorated, and as I assumed, my husband left me.

The doctors were fantastic and they wanted to try and find a donor as soon as possible.

My oldest brother offered to be my donor and he was a perfect match. I thought it was all too good to be true. Three weeks before surgery my world was shattered again. The doctors decided the transplant was too complicated because my brother's kidney, although extremely healthy, had too many blood vessels which could have caused more health issues for me.

From day one of dialysis, life became a living hell. I had my regular dialysis sessions at the hospital where the nurses went above and beyond the call of duty—being so patient with the troublesome access I had. It was seven months of a nightmare.

I began to come to terms with the fact that I may not make it much longer.

Then the magical phone call came. I still get goose bumps recalling that moment — 'We have a kidney for you!'

My operation began and three hours later I was out of recovery and back in my room recovering from major surgery. Everyone at the hospital has my eternal gratitude for their care and support.

Each day I could see myself improving. I was amazed by my own recovery and how quickly I was beginning to see changes in my health.

Twelve months on and the kidney is still functioning really well. The pain from the transplant is a distant memory but what isn't a distant memory is the fact that an angel gave me the gift of life. I would not have survived if it wasn't for the generosity of the donor and their family.

I would like to say a massive thank you to all the medical and support staff, other transplant patients who would support you at clinic appointments and most of all my family for never giving up that this magic gift would come to me. I love them all dearly and am so thankful to have everyone in my life.

Louise



Louise

**Australia is a world
leader for successful
transplant outcomes.**



Forever grateful

Hi, my name is James and I am 20 years old. Just being able to say that is an achievement in itself. When I was 11 years old, I was diagnosed with pulmonary hypertension after collapsing during a game of football with my mates at school.

After months of trials with medication, the doctors told my mum to take me home and explain to me that I had three months to live. My mum, being the strong persistent woman she is, didn't accept the fact that I was going to die. Through her research she found a transplant team and things began to change.

The heart-lung transplant teams worked hard to keep me alive. They controlled my disease with a variety of medications, but unfortunately when I was 15, I took a tragic turn and the medications started to fail. The only option left for me, was to go on the transplant waiting list for a heart and double lung transplant.

I was told that if I didn't get a transplant within the next nine months, there was a high chance I wouldn't live much longer. Fortunately for me, I received a phone call three weeks later offering me the second chance at life.

After hours of surgery and multiple blood transfusions the transplant was successful.

Five years later, I am nothing but grateful to my doctors, surgeons, family, friends and, most of all, the beautiful donor and their family. They turned their tragic loss into an amazing gift and gave me, an absolute stranger, a new life. I now live my life to the fullest, stay healthy and talk to others about saving lives through organ donation.

James



James—forever grateful

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transplant outcomes.**



Elisabeth— wife, mother, nana

My mother was diagnosed with kidney disease when I was born. One kidney stopped functioning and for the next 35 years she suffered severe migraines, blood pressure issues and deteriorating health. She was an incredibly strong woman, continuing to go to work every day. Most people had no idea how ill she was.

She retired to look after her first grandchild and at this time her second kidney failed. Mum was on dialysis every two days with my two year old sitting by her side as she drew her own blood and connected herself to dialysis. Her blood pressure was so low it was frightening and often crashed in the middle of a session.

After being on dialysis for two years, the call came. As a family we were excited and scared of the big operation she was to have. We were so sad for the family who had lost a loved one, but terrified we would lose her.

She came through the operation and was healthier than I had ever seen her. She remained so for the next 10 years.

Mum was able to see the birth of her second grandchild and celebrate her 48th wedding anniversary with my dad—who adored her. She was taken from us six years ago with lung cancer, but to the end her kidney worked well.

We are forever eternally grateful to the donor family for giving us more time with this wonderful woman.

Lisa



**Any day is a good day
to talk about organ
and tissue donation.**



Turn a negative into a positive

When my husband Michael was diagnosed with lung cancer (he was a non smoker) we were devastated to find out it had spread to his bones. Here was a very fit man who had never been sick in his life.

He enjoyed telling jokes, was always busy, loved collecting motor bikes and was into formula one car racing. He grew native flowers for export, ran a successful consultancy business and was always helping other people—in addition to renovating a 100 year old house. Most of all he was a loving father.

The prognosis was not good for the type of cancer he had and we were told that most people that had this cancer are dead in four months. The best we could hope for was a year. We fought the cancer for three years and four months until he passed away last year. A week after he turned 69.

I was told we couldn't donate his organs, as the risk to someone else getting cancer was too great. Initially we had not considered the possibility of tissue donation, however I was talking it through with one of the nursing sisters and she said we may be able to donate his eyes. This was a great relief as I was desperately seeking to turn this dreadful negative into a positive.

Arrangements were made soon after he passed away and as a result he was able to donate his eye tissue.

We later received a letter telling us that Mike's generous and special gift had been used to help two people with corneal difficulties. That helped us so much in our recovery process, as we know a small part of him is still out there viewing life through different eyes.

Pay it forward please and consider becoming an organ and tissue donor. If just one person helps another in considering donation, the ripple effect can be enormous.

This is such an important discussion to have and an even greater decision to make.

Susan



Michael

**Around 1600 people
are on official transplant
waiting lists at any one time**



Bruce's gift

Almost 11 months ago my life changed in a way you never think would happen to you.

My husband had spent a week installing a kitchen for a mate, then had a glass of home brewed spirits and was poisoned by methanol.

Five days later at the age of 49 Bruce was declared brain dead. Fortunately we had discussed organ donation so out of that horrific week I was able to make one decision easily—yes to organ donation.

Five people were given a second chance of life when Bruce donated two kidneys, two corneas and his heart.

For all of us left behind we are so proud of his decision to donate. It is of great comfort for me and is the only thing that makes me believe his death was not a waste.

Kerri



Bruce

**The majority of
Australians support
organ and tissue donation.**



Bek's story

... you can't just wait

I can't tell you that Bek is an ordinary 13 year old, because she's not. In fact, she's extraordinary!

By her first birthday, after suffering many months with an unknown illness, she was diagnosed with a rare liver disease that would see her one day needing a transplant.

A shy and quiet girl, she does not stand out in a crowd, nor does she even like a lot of attention—but when she sings, she sings like an angel. She sings songs of hope, healing and courage.

In her lifetime of chronic illness, the last four years have been particularly rough going. Bek battles chronic nausea and is unable to eat. She requires tube feeding and multiple medications and treatments daily.

Bek continues to raise money and awareness of PSC (liver disease). She participates in events like the MS Read-athon and is now trying to raise awareness for organ donation.

We've stuck with the principle that we can't just wait for a donation—we need to live life, but 15 months of being on the transplant waiting list and multiple hospital admissions including the Christmas holidays are making that tougher.

It's hard to know just how much time Bek has, but she won't just sit around waiting for this personal and deeply precious gift. A gift that we know she will receive in someone else's great loss. When she receives it, not a minute will be wasted getting out there and embracing her new life of fun with friends and giving to others.

Kerrie



Bek, her pup and 'Superliver'

In 2011
337 organ donors gave
1001 Australians
a new chance in life



Becky's story

My name is Becky and I am 19 years of age. I was born with polycystic kidney disease and ever since I have needed a kidney transplant.

I had a brother who I never got to meet. He died at six and half months after needing a kidney transplant and not receiving one.

My kidneys lasted 11 years and then I was put onto dialysis. For my 12th birthday I was given a kidney transplant from my dad. Unfortunately the kidney only lasted three years and 11 months. I was in Year 9, really sick, missing school and hanging out with my friends.

By the time I was in year 10, I was back on dialysis. This meant going to bed early, being connected to a machine and missing out on all my friends sleepovers—which was important for me back then.

I was on the transplant waiting list for 18 months and it felt like I was just on my machine 24 hours a day!

In 2010 my mum was able to donate her kidney to me and two years later everything is still going really well.

It's really important to become an organ donor. If my mum's kidney fails on me I will again spend my life on the dialysis machine waiting for that magic phone call.

I feel so worthless spending time on the dialysis machine. Becoming an organ donor can save lives. I am not just thinking of my life, but those of younger kids like my brother, who have a whole big life ahead of them.

I don't think people really understand what a gift organ donation really is until they actually see the difference of a life saved.

Becky



**Ask and know your
loved one's donation wishes**





Australian Government
Organ and Tissue Authority



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Alternative format

The *DonateLife Book of Life* is available electronically on the Authority's website at www.donatelife.gov.au