

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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6 February
2011

**Most religions support
organ and tissue donation
for transplantation**



Natalie's story

After 25 years of having Type 1 diabetes, my kidneys started to fail at the age of 30. For two years my renal specialist kept a close eye on my kidneys with regular check ups and constant blood tests.

He arranged an appointment for me to be assessed for a possible kidney and pancreas transplant. I went through all the pre-transplant testing including fitness tests, stress tests and the usual bloods.

My kidney function became bad enough for the doctors to put me on the transplant waiting list. By this stage I was quite unwell and getting through everyday things was becoming a struggle.

Just two months later I received the greatest phone call of my life, asking if I would like to come down the next day for my new organs! How could I refuse this wonderful gift, the gift of life!

I received my new kidney and pancreas and I have never looked back. Due to being quite ill for a number of years, my life had been on hold, but now there was no stopping me! Just 12 months later I began my Education Degree at university and I will graduate in two years time.

Without my transplant I don't know where I would be today but I know for sure that I wouldn't be sitting here so happy, healthy with a great future ahead of me.

Every single day I walk around with someone else by my side—my donor. I will have this person with me for the rest of my life. Without my donor, my doctors and nurses, my friends and of course last but not least my wonderful loving, caring, amazing family (in particular my caring, supportive, loving parents and brothers) I would not be here today writing my story.

Natalie



Natalie and Cooper

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



With science and humanity

What we can achieve

Throughout my medical career I have been privileged to regularly come in direct contact with the organ and tissue donation and transplantation process.

It is an area filled with dedicated people doing fantastic work. Whether it is the families devastated by the loss of a loved one making the decision to help another family, the committed staff that make the donation process occur, the highly skilled surgeons that operate through the night to perform the transplants, the seriously ill patients that then come back to good health or the scientists who ensure that the whole process can proceed. Each of them contributes an important element in a highly complex process.

I have always been impressed and proud to be associated with this group of individuals who have shown a dedication to the life extending and life changing processes of organ and tissue donation and have done much to progress the science and ethics of this area of medicine at a state, national and international level.

Whilst it is a tragedy that transplantation often occurs because of the loss of another's life, the fact that so much good can come from this terrible event is a testament to the combination of science and humanity that work together to make this process occur.



Dr Jeannette Young, Chief Health Officer Queensland

**If you want to donate life,
discuss it today, OK?**



No greater gift

**I am a double lung transplant recipient.
Without this life saving transplant, I would not be here today to share my story with you.**

As a toddler, I was diagnosed with cystic fibrosis, a genetically inherited disease that affects the lungs and digestive system. From birth my lungs produced an abnormal amount of thick sticky mucus resulting in constant chest infections and causing irreversible damage.

The few years leading up to my transplant were the toughest. I was struggling to breathe relying on oxygen and intravenous antibiotics to keep me alive. At the start of 2010, I had a common cold and ended up very close to death. The doctors decided to put me on the transplant waiting list and were worried that I wouldn't last while waiting for my transplant.

I waited nearly a year on the list and was very fortunate to receive that life saving call when I did, because I only had one or two months left to live.

I was house bound and spent at least four hours a day doing chest physiotherapy while hooked up to an intravenous line twenty-four hours a day. I required a carer to look after me as I couldn't even make myself a cup of tea.

The hardest part was being pushed around in a wheelchair by my family.

The disease had taken its toll on my body. I was hardly eating and struggling to absorb any

food. I looked like a skeleton and got down to about 45 kilograms in weight.

Approaching my one-year anniversary I can reflect on how my life has changed. I am living life and making up for lost time.

I enjoy going swimming and to the gym about six times a week. I walk the dogs, shop, go out with friends and family and can drive again. The Australian Transplant Games are my next goal where I hope to compete in swimming. I also look forward to going back to teaching in the near future.

I am so grateful to my donor family for giving me this precious gift; I now have a future to look forward to and many hopes and dreams to achieve.

There is no greater gift, than the gift of life!

Kylie



**If you want to donate life,
discuss it today, OK?**



Our hero

Our mum was and still is our hero. You see our mum was a polio victim who was diagnosed when she was only 10 months old. As a result of her diagnosis she was sent away to various hospitals until the age of 10. Polio left our mum with one leg shorter than the other and a limp, but it gave her a strength and courage unparalleled.

She underwent many surgeries but never complained. One of her favourite sayings was 'there's always someone worse off than you'. At the age of 55, she was diagnosed with cardiomyopathy. This is a viral infection that made her heart muscle so large that it became very difficult for her to continue her work, or do anything strenuous.

Mum gave up her job after 25 years and travelled to the city hospital where she was assessed as needing a donor heart. She was put on the transplant waiting list and was told there were very few donors. Her chances of transplantation were very low.

Amazingly after returning to her home in the country, my mum got a call after only three days. We were all in shock. She was given the royal treatment and flown by air ambulance

to the hospital. There was still no guarantee that the transplant would go ahead, but all the family gathered at the hospital to support her.

I arrived after her surgery had begun. This was a terribly anxious wait and coincidentally our daughters 11th birthday. I remember waiting in a room with my family when the surgeon came to tell us that the surgery had gone as well as can be expected and that the recovery would be challenging.

The first time we saw mum in ICU she had tubes coming out of everywhere. She looked at me and said, 'happy birthday to Angie'. She was always thinking of others even in the toughest and most incredible circumstances. She made a good recovery and vowed to spread the word about organ donation. She spoke to various groups and newspapers and did all she could to promote awareness.

Our mum lived for another 11 years from the time of her transplant. She was and still is an inspiration to us all. Everyone deserves a second chance. We miss you Mum, our hero.

Sharon

**Donors and recipients
vary in age from
infants to the elderly.**



John's story

I was 55 years old and working full time with my wife Lorraine as a very active antique dealer when my life was changed forever.

Eight months prior, while fishing at Lake Jindabyne in the Snowy Mountains I suffered a massive heart attack, leaving me with only 13% pumping capacity in the heart. Needless to say that made breathing extremely difficult. I was placed on the transplant waiting list which subsequently saved my life.

At the time neither of us had any experience or knowledge of transplantation. A Pastoral Care Worker spent time talking with me, and two days before my transplant she came to me and said that she lived with a group of retired nuns and as they were 'awfully powerful prayers', would I mind if she asked them to pray for me. My words were 'Go ahead Sister. I need all the help I can get.' Two days later it happened. Was it a co-incidence?

All through the transplant work-up, operation and recovery, the importance of the patient's carer was heavily emphasised and I was fortunate in having a loving and caring wife and family to look after me. It takes an enormous toll on a person's loved ones as well.

The Heart Lung Clinic became our second home until with time in the gym, heart biopsies, a minor dose of RSV and general check-ups, I was able to return home.

After the transplant I was told that I was the 1,000th transplant at the hospital and that they would like to celebrate the occasion with a Press Conference and presentation. It was a momentous occasion for me and my family, meeting Fiona Coote, our most celebrated transplant recipient.

Back home and I returned to work with only a few minor health problems. With both my daughters working in the local hospital it was inevitable that I would meet with the Organ Donor Co-ordinator. She was a great inspiration to me with her tireless work and I did all I could to support her program and promote organ donation. She was responsible for my appointment to the Organ Donor Task Force in which I worked for three years on a voluntary basis giving me a greater insight into the medical and legal side of organ donation.

It was my pleasure to be involved in the conversion of a room in ICU at The Canberra Hospital for the use of relatives of prospective organ donors. A first in any hospital in Australia and since its opening it has been very well used.

What has a generous and grieving family and the transplant given me? To start with it gave me life. Ten years I would not have had. Three more grandchildren and I have seen my eldest granddaughter get engaged. So far three good years of retirement with many more to come.

John

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



The benefit of tissue donation

At 28 years old, Jenni was diagnosed with a malignant tumour in her right leg. She underwent three months of chemotherapy before she had major surgery to remove the bone tumour—during which she received a large bone graft. The surgery took 15 hours, saving her leg from amputation. Following surgery, Jenni underwent weeks of further chemotherapy treatment.

Jenni knows she would not have been able to save her leg without receiving the bone graft—something she says has made a huge difference in her life. She is especially grateful to the donor family who agreed to donation after losing a loved family member; but also to her surgeon, the Bone Bank and for the great support she received from family and friends.

After five years of annual check-ups, Jenni was given the all clear and has since led a very fulfilling life. Jenni returned to full time work, and has managed to maintain a good work/life balance—still doing all the things she was able to do before the surgery.

Jenni has been married now for 16 years and has two healthy children Rebecca (14) who is a very keen jazz pianist and classical guitarist and Thomas (11) who is a passionate soccer player. They are pictured here with Jenni's mother Jan who herself has some association with tissue donation.

Jenni's mother Jan has had two hip replacements, and each time she has donated her femoral head to the Bone Bank. Jan didn't hesitate when asked if she would like to donate, knowing that she could help someone else in need, just as Jenni had been helped by a generous stranger.

Both Jan and Jenni have been actively involved in promotion of donation.

Jenni said, 'I will be forever grateful to the donor family and everyone involved in my surgery, and feel that organ and tissue donation is something that the whole family should discuss and support'.

Anne



Jenni, Thomas, Rebecca and Janice

Do the people close
to you know your
donation decision?



My transplant journey

The story of my kidney problem began in 2002. I was working in my own community of Numbulwar on the Gulf of Carpentaria when the visiting doctor told me I was suffering from the beginning of kidney failure.

I have been a kidney dialysis patient since the beginning of 2003. I was still able to work in Darwin part-time for the Department of Education for two days per week and have dialysis three days a week. I continued on my treatment for about three years.

One day I decided to get some tests done so I could be listed as a possible kidney transplant recipient. I had completed all the possible tests that were required by the medical teams, so there I was patiently waiting for the big event to happen.

I was on dialysis at the Nightcliff Renal Unit, doing my usual routine. I had a phone call

from the Nephrologist Paul Lawton, and he told me that a kidney was available. I had to fly by myself immediately and my husband Mick would come the next day.

The transplant team were very caring and gradually I regained my strength, really learning how to walk again and care for myself. I spent five weeks in Adelaide, and learnt how to manage my tablets and daily medications. I have now retired from the workforce and with the kidney transplant I am able to visit my relations at Numbulwar and enjoy the freedom of no dialysis. I thank my renal nurses and doctors and my immediate family for their wonderful care and support during my time on dialysis and the follow up now I have the kidney transplant.

Didamain



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



My transplant story



In the mid 1980's I was diagnosed as a Type 1 diabetic.

I coped reasonably well until about 2000, living a busy and varied life.

I then suffered two diabetic comas and became aware of my failing kidneys.

I underwent dialysis for two and a half years and then I was gifted with a kidney and pancreas transplant.

After a slow recovery from surgery, I am now enjoying a full and productive life.

I am a professional squash coach, conduct my own wholesale business and act as a community advocate for organ donation and transplantation.

I assist my local hospital staff in public awareness and education programs for diabetes and renal health.

I wrote a letter through the hospital system to my anonymous donor family to thank them a year after my transplant and I will cherish their card of appreciation for ever!

Pat

Ask and know your
loved one's donation wishes



Tinni's story

Our beautiful 17 year old daughter Katrina or Tinni as we called her, was taken away from us in the prime of her life.

Tinni was diagnosed with epilepsy at the age of 11 and by the time she was 16 it was getting worse.

Tinni was a typical teenager who loved life, parties and going out with her boyfriend and friends. It was in her last month with us that we had a random conversation. We have no idea how it even came up but it was at this time when we found out her intentions to donate. Her reply was 'I won't need them anymore so someone else can use them.' That was the end of our conversation.

Thinking back now, how would anyone have been able to look into the future?

As a donor family we found so much comfort in receiving letters from the recipients; to know that all is well and that donation has made such a difference in another family's life. It is like a piece of her still lives on and it is of great comfort that our daughter was able to give the gift of life.

To our family, Tinni is a hero. She donated her kidneys and heart valves. Without this random conversation we wouldn't have known what to do. We believe that decision would have been too hard to make.

Talk to your friends and family, and spread the word. Everyone needs to know the importance of organ and tissue donation.

To all the recipients we have found such comfort in your letters and cards; it has made a world of difference.

Tinni has left her legacy behind her. She will never, ever be forgotten. We love you Tinni. You will be forever young and free.

Love Mum, Dad, Kearin, Kelly and Matthew



Tinni is a hero to her family

Do the people close
to you know your
donation decision?



My transplant journey

Several years ago I became ill and spent almost a year in and out of hospital. I was diagnosed as suffering from an auto-immune liver disease, which was causing lots of problems – encephalopathy, pleural effusions, odema in legs and feet and a very great feeling of being unwell.

In mid September of that year I was admitted to hospital for transplant assessment and after a few hiccups along the way with more encephalopathy incidents, and troublesome dental work requirements (my blood would not clot) and many more stays in hospital I was placed on the list for a transplant.

I went home from hospital (at my insistence) for Christmas as I had the feeling that could well have been my last Christmas and I wanted so desperately to spend it with my family, but I was very unwell and although I was at home on the morning of Boxing Day, I knew I had no choice. I needed to get back into hospital to have the pleural cavity drained again. All went well for a few days and then the drain became blocked—then I was given the news that they had a liver for me.

I went to Theatre at about 4am feeling an immense sense of calm and peace.

Surgery went well and I made good progress until I contracted Stevens Johnson Syndrome due to an allergy to antibiotics. I

was desperately ill for three long weeks and required five lots of surgery to have dressings changed, but my new liver was working well and saw me through all of that.

I finally came home and have made wonderful progress—I live because of the generosity of my donor and family and am grateful every day.

Linda
Member of Transplant Australia



Linda

**Register your donation
decision on the Australian
Organ Donor Register
and make sure your
loved ones know your decision.**



Hip to be donors

In little over a year, Bill and his family members were faced with the difficult decision of choosing to donate bone and soft tissue on not one, but three occasions. Each time, they rose above their own pain making the noble decision to donate so that some good may come from their otherwise unfortunate situation.

When Bill's healthy 17 year old grandson became the victim of a fatal motor vehicle accident, his family generously agreed to donate his long bones and soft tissue. Two years later, their gift has improved the quality of life of over 23 people requiring complex orthopaedic surgery.

Bill and his partner Joan, were made aware of the activities of the Perth Bone and Tissue Bank after attending an arthritis education session

where femoral head donation was discussed. When Joan was admitted to hospital following a fall, she was advised hip replacement surgery was necessary. Recalling the earlier education session, she enquired with nursing staff as to whether she would be suitable to participate in the femoral head donation program. After thorough health screening, she successfully donated her femoral head for future use in another patient's orthopaedic surgery.

Several months after Joan's surgery, Bill also found himself requiring hip replacement. He did not hesitate in agreeing to donate, making him the 10,000th West Australian to donate his femoral head.



Ask and know your
loved one's donation wishes



A friend's donation

At 69 years old, I was diagnosed with renal failure and subsequently finished up on dialysis.

This completely changed my lifestyle, as being on dialysis three times a week for three hourly sessions restricted my eating and drinking habits.

Coming off the dialysis machine I'd be terribly tired and not fit for anything, then the next day good as gold, then back on dialysis. Being too old to get on the transplant waiting list the future looked pretty dim. After two and a half years on dialysis, a good friend of mine said he was going to give me a kidney, my mouth just dropped open. What a gift.

After blood, tissue and physical tests, the team at the Princess Alexandra Hospital decided to proceed with the transplant. I was 72 and my donor 74 years old. I think we were the oldest non related [kidney transplant] to be done in Australia.

I celebrate 10 years of being back to a normal lifestyle this year. There is a downside—I am on rejection drugs for the rest of my life. A small price to pay!

I cannot forget the excellent treatment and care I received from the staff at Toowoomba Renal Unit.

Andrew



Ask and know your
loved one's donation wishes



It is pretty scary when you can't breathe...

At 44 I was diagnosed with emphysema. I realised that I would probably have about three years use left on my lungs—I was going to die.

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease meant I had to give up work. It is pretty scary when you can't breathe.

Within two years, my condition deteriorated so that lung transplantation was the only option.

On a waiting list I felt a constant fear that I may not last the 18 months for new lungs. The team at St Vincent's were wonderful and gave me hope.

After just one month I received a call. A set of lungs were available and I needed to be at St Vincent's within five hours. I said 'what, now?' and was told 'yes now, and I'm not joking.'

I was getting new lungs and a new life.

I remember waking up in ICU thinking it was the next day but it was three days later. The six hour surgery had gone well. I started life again.

Waking up to take a big deep breath is wonderful. I am living without constantly being sick. I take 20 tablets a day, but that is a small price to pay for the life I enjoy today. Just one year after my transplant I was back at work.

To show my gratitude to the medical profession and raise donation awareness, my wife Sue and I walked 140km from John Hunter in Newcastle to St Vincent's Hospital in Sydney and raised \$5,000 for these hospitals.

This wonderful gift of life has enabled me to see my three children married, experience the wonders of five grandchildren and enjoy 35 years of marriage.

John



John and Sue

**Do the people close
to you know your
donation decision?**



A child on a journey

A poem dedicated to our son's donor family for their selfless decision to donate their loved one's organs. Without their heartfelt decision to say 'yes' our beautiful little boy would not be here today.

**I am a child on a journey
How long it's going to be
I'm not really sure you see.**

I've had to take the long way
On this rough and bumpy road
But my engines not running properly
So it's going to be quite slow.

I've called the mobile mechanic
He say's I need a 'miracle'
my engines in bad repair
He simply cannot help me, much to his despair.

I must keep on my journey now
Because it's only just begun
I have far too much to see and do;
it should be lots of fun
I think I'll just chug along now, see how far I get.

The road ahead seems much too far now
I'm getting rather weary
I think I'll pull on over and rest a little while

I must have slept a little while
When on my window I heard a little tap.
It's a weary fellow traveller
Who asks if he can help me
As I awaken from my nap.

I reply, I have a major problem
My engines very sick
I think my journeys over
It's been very very quick.

This stranger leaned towards me
And whispered in my ear
Why don't you have my engine
It's no use to me now
You see my journey's end is near
And yours has just begun.

He leaned across my dashboard
and turned on my ignition key
Now my new engine
Sounded just perfect to me.

This humble fellow traveller
Wished me on my way
I thanked him very kindly and asked
how on earth can I repay?

He asked me
If you see a fellow traveller stranded on the side
Don't just drive on by them
See if you can help them he replied.

No matter how small your help may be
The kindness you have shown
Will be returned to you on 'Your journey home'.

Farewell he nodded to me
When I see you at the finish line
Come sit a while with me.

I will get to see the things I want now
If the road ahead is smooth
Or if it's bumpy too
That's just fine with me now
Because I've been given this new engine
I'm going to treat it well
I have had this 'second chance'
To have my journey too.

Hilary, Trevor and Liam



Liam today.

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



Andrew's new heart

After being at end stage heart failure the time had eventually come for me to be implanted with a Left Ventricular Assist Device (LVAD) to keep me alive until a donor heart became available.

Arriving at hospital to talk about the LVAD, we were informed a donor heart had become available. Suddenly it was all go, and within a short period I found myself spending a lot of time gazing at the contorted figures sculptured by steam rising from the hospital generators. As these strange and disturbing shapes vanished into the atmosphere, I realised I had a lot of healing to do.

I was aware that steroids could cause mood and sleep disturbances, however tears were to flow freely while my life was examined over and over with all the joy, regret and guilt such nostalgia brings. As time progressed our routine became an ongoing round of clinic visits, education and carer sessions, biopsies, gym sessions and other cardiac investigations.

My partner and I were to meet many other transplant recipients and their carers. Returning to my home state after three months recovery, I quickly joined the gym and now, three years on, I remain an active member two to three times per week.

Andrew



Each year around
1,700 corneal transplants
are performed to give
the gift of sight.



The best gift

As a baby I was diagnosed with a liver condition—Alpha 1 antitrypsin deficiency. I lived a fairly normal life but was in and out of hospital. Fluid around my belly made me look pregnant and led to bullying. By nine my health had deteriorated and my parents had two choices—let me go or a liver transplant.

We got ‘the call’ and 16 hours of surgery and two days later I was walking and eating again. I received the best gift—the gift of life! Receiving it gave me 22 years and three beautiful children (Nina-Maree, Charlie & Molly), as well as my most cherished moments.

Twelve months ago my blood results were ‘not right’. It was summer and with three busy children of course I was tired! I slept all the time, was scared and knew something was wrong. I didn’t want to admit it or ruin our festive season!

Thank God I have Phil (my fiancé) in my life and that he was with me when we were told I needed a new liver ‘today’. He has been a huge support through it all!

As the days went on I got weaker, couldn’t get out of bed and it was tough to stay mentally strong. I didn’t want another family to lose someone for me to receive a liver.

Two months later I received my second gift of life! This gift will give me more moments to cherish, the possibility of growing old with Phil and watching my three children live their lives.

To the families of the two donors—thank you! Your special someone is now my special someone. They gave me and others the gift of life—the best gifts anyone could give.

Renee



For Renee, the generosity of organ donors has saved her life—twice.

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



David

Our wonderful son David was taken from us.

He had led a full life, always full of mischief and activity —until nine years earlier, when an investigation into what David described as ‘funny turns’ revealed that he had a large brain tumour.

On his 16th birthday, instead of celebrating a milestone birthday with gusto, David spent over eight hours in the operating theatre. When a clearly exhausted doctor emerged, he told us he had removed all of the tumour, but he had to sever a major artery. David would be hemiplegic, paralysed on the right side, for the rest of his life.



David gave life to five people

Over the next nine years, despite undergoing brain surgery more than 25 times, he accepted his bad luck with astounding resilience —determined to enjoy life, whatever the handicap. Sheltered workshops were not for him. He wanted a real job.

Soon he had his own car and was learning AutoCad drafting on the computer. He landed a job in a drafting office and continued his studies. Periodic bouts of pressure of the brain, caused by a blocked shunt, sent him back to hospital many times. One day he simply didn't come home. He emerged brain dead from yet another operation.

That day we met a Donor Coordinator, who by coincidence had once met David at a family wedding. She gave us the options. We never had any doubt that David would have wanted to give that gift of life. His body, for which he had no further use, gave life to five other people in desperate need of healthy organs.

A week after David passed away, his Advanced Certificate in Civil Drafting arrived in the post.

Denice and John

The most important thing
that helps a family's decision
is their knowing the donation
decision of their loved ones.



The day that changed our lives forever!

I still can't believe six years has gone by so fast! It only feels like yesterday that Dad was fighting for his life in hospital, hooked onto a dialysis machine.

It isn't something you want to hear at age 16 that 'your father has kidney failure'. I didn't even know what that meant! All I could think of was 'would my father ever be alive to watch me grow up?'. But those who know my dad know what a strong, determined man he is.

He was my inspiration to become a nurse. Through the six years he never took life for granted. He continued a normal life with a

few exceptions for dialysis. Even as a nursing student I supported organ and tissue donation and have registered as a donor myself.

Our prayers were finally answered a week ago. My dad got the call and was speechless. His first thought was for the donor, of how grateful he was for receiving a second chance in life. My dad is progressing well and is already looking better. I am truly grateful for the generous donation of the family and urge people to sign on to save lives!

Karla



If it wasn't for my dad's inspiration and determination six years ago, I would never have graduated to become a nurse

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



Any better and I would be a super hero

I had a healthy childhood, married my wonderful wife and had three beautiful girls. Then, at age 41, my life changed. I was diagnosed with cirrhosis of the liver, caused by a genetic disease, Alpha 1 Antitrypsin Deficiency Syndrome.

I spent the next four years in and out of hospital and everyday things became hard. Feeling sick, discomfort, fluid build up, breathing difficulties and low energy levels made the simplest jobs difficult. Sleep became a thing of the past. I was pacing the house or hospital floors, watching TV and dealing with constant cramps due to fluid inbalance.

My family was under pressure, visiting me in hospital and wondering how long this could go on. Trips from the country to the transplant team fitted in between hospital admissions.

I was put on the transplant waiting list, and during a draining visit in hospital, I received 'THE CALL'. I was flown by air ambulance to hospital and, due to the wonderful gift of one individual, I received my new liver.

I spent one week in intensive care, due to kidney failure. My kidneys recovered and I spent two more weeks on the ward before flying home.

Eight months on, I visit the transplant team every three months. I don't know how long I was sick before I was diagnosed, but if I was any better now I would be a super hero.

I am very passionate about organ donation and help any chance I can get with the cause in our area. The transplant team is fantastic and deserve credit, as well as my specialists and GP.

Finally to MY donor family and to all the other donor families, thank you for changing our lives. Your loved ones will never be forgotten. They live on in all of us.

Adam



Adam before and after his liver transplant

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





Australian Government
Organ and Tissue Authority



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Website: www.donatelifelife.gov.au

Alternative format

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