

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

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



Ali's gift

Ali was 32. She was my wife and devoted mother to our two beautiful children, James (three) and Stella (one). When she collapsed at home in the early hours and called out to me I knew straight away that something bad was happening, but I wasn't prepared for just how bad. I didn't know it at the time but Ali was suffering a brain haemorrhage.

She made it to hospital and was still trying to move before being airlifted to hospital. By the time doctors were able to assess her she had suffered a second bleed and there was nothing they could do. I was devastated, mostly for our children who would now grow up without their mother, she loved them so very much.

Ali loved medical shows on television and made me watch them more than I liked. Because of this I knew what was coming

next—the question of organ donation. We were registered donors but registering is the easy part. It was the hardest decision of my life. Hard because it felt like I was giving up on Ali, giving up on us and giving up on our children. Miracles happen, right?

Miracles do happen, just not for our family that day. Ali delivered a miracle to four other families whose lives have been changed forever. It has provided our family with some comfort to know that our Ali has been able to give something so special to four very sick Australians. If she were a soldier they would be awarding her a VC. Now Remembrance Day for me will be about remembering Ali and her life of giving to others.

Mark



With Ali

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



He had decided to become an Organ Donor

Glenys can still remember the day she had a discussion with her eldest son about organ and tissue donation.

'I was travelling in the car with my three sons (Angus, Lachlan and Hayden) when we started to talk about my life and what would happen if I died. We talked about organ donation and my eldest son said that he would be happy to be a donor in the event anything happened to him.'

Angus was a vibrant teenage child, a lover of life who got into all sorts of mischief and pretty much put 110 per cent into everything he did, good and bad.

Angus had an accident and ended up not having enough oxygen for too long and as a result of that he was on mechanical ventilation for three days but his injury was so severe that active treatment was withdrawn.

The hospital staff and I discussed the possibility of him being an organ and tissue donor.

This discussion was very difficult for my family but we thankfully knew what Angus wanted and as a family we had already had the discussion so the decision to donate was straight forward in honouring his wishes.

The situation was explained to Lachlan and Hayden and we took photos, locks of his hair, ink prints from his hand and feet and then said our goodbyes.

I think the big part is that as tragic as the event was – the whole thing was that there were still some positives that came from it and the fact that other families have their loved ones with them now due to his donations. That has certainly helped me and my family these last few years.



Glenys with Angus, Lachlan and Hayden

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



Scott's story

My name is Philippa and one year ago my husband, Scott, died unexpectedly from complications associated with swine flu. Scott and I had discussed organ donation and we were both keen to be donors, if the time arose.

The only relief on the day that Scott passed away was that I knew Scott's wishes around organ donation. There was a peace in conveying Scott's wishes, along with a tremendous sense of pride that my husband was about to save lives. Scott's kidneys were successfully transplanted to two recipients, which freed them from dialysis; a life-changing and life-saving outcome.

Scott loved life and was so excited and optimistic about the future. He enjoyed going for walks, playing with our cats, playing on the computer, cooking, gardening and enjoying good food and great wine.

Scott was always passionate about medical research, having worked in the pharmaceutical industry for the whole of his career. I know he would be pleased that his death was not in vain and that, through his death, others had been given a second chance of life. Scott also loved science-fiction, so I think he'd be amused at the idea of his tissue living on, long after him and advancing medical research.

Scott always said that the happiest and proudest day of his life was our wedding day. This was definitely my happiest day, but my proudest day is now the day that Scott became a hero and saved lives.

I hope that in sharing Scott's story, others will have a conversation with their loved ones about organ donation and agree to become organ donors. Please give the gift of life.

Philippa



Philippa and Scott

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



Daniel

Daniel was born in Mildura. He raced through childhood with the usual broken bones and stitches. He played guitar from a young age and went on to share his love of music, laughter and stories while sharing a Bundy or a beer around a barbie with mates and family.

At about 20 he moved to South Australia, and worked as a sign writer and labourer. He had three beautiful daughters.

At 33, Daniel collapsed with a brain aneurysm. He was admitted to ICU where the amazing surgeons pulled him through with a repair operation. He seemed to be recovering and even surprised doctors by playing music with a food grater and whisk accompanied by his brother on a ukulele.

About a week later he suffered a massive stroke and was placed on life support for the second time. His condition deteriorated and after a 12 day struggle he passed from this life surrounded by loving family, friends and music.

We received a call from the Eye Bank asking if we would consider donation of Daniels' eyes as he had registered as an organ donor. As the family had previously discussed organ donation there was no hesitation.

Our son was always giving a helping hand to others in life. Doing odd jobs or painting and for a number of years helping cook the BBQ breakfast after the Anzac Day service in a small country town.

It just seemed right that he continue to help others in death, by giving sight to two others. We received a beautiful letter of thanks from one recipient and wish the recipients well.

The support from the Eye Bank of South Australia has been very comforting. They hold a Thanksgiving Service for families of donors and we received a voucher for a Memorial Rose and have just delighted in watching the first year of bloom.

We miss this special guy so very much and are so proud and comforted knowing he was still able to help others.

Daniel, you are forever in the hearts of your loving family.

Julie



Daniel

Ask and know your
loved one's donation wishes



Out of the blue

Everything happened so fast and out of the blue, it was like a whirlwind and at the centre of this whirlwind was Jim, my big, strong, wise brother.

We were off to the coast for a holiday and had visited Jim and his wife Lee before we left. Jim said 'have a great time, don't worry about anything and we'll see you in a few weeks'.

The next day Jim became jaundiced and his fight to live began. He was admitted to hospital and the following week flown by air ambulance to the transplant unit at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital.

Doctors did not know why this healthy 49 year old man became suddenly ill and why his liver was shrinking and dying before their eyes. Jim underwent a myriad of tests, however his condition continued to deteriorate and he was placed on the transplant waiting list.

Three days later his major organs began to shut down and we knew if a liver was not available he would die. At 10pm that evening we got the word that Jim had been scheduled for a liver transplant.

Jim pulled through the massive operation, thanks to the exceptional skill and care of the medical and nursing staff. It was a hard road to recovery both physically and mentally. To stop his body rejecting the new liver he required high levels of steroids, causing hallucinations—a terrifying experience.

It's hard to capture this whole experience in so few words. The love from family, friends and people we came in contact with was phenomenal. They all contributed to Jim 'hanging in there', being strong and positive.

But it was Jim's inner strength and the love and support of Lee and their three sons that had the most impact.

Jim truly appreciates and respects his new liver and the person who donated it along with the people who donated their blood and plasma which circulated in his body for days keeping him alive.

Years before, Jim had the conversation with his family about organ donation and registered as an organ donor, however receiving a donated organ was still a huge emotional experience that can not be underestimated.

We've known people who have died whilst waiting for a transplant and hope by telling our story it will encourage more people to choose to make their wishes known about organ donation.

Jen



Jim and Jen

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



Brett

At the age of 16 months Brett was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes, the youngest in Canberra at that time.

Throughout his school days, he led a full and eventful life with many school excursions, representing his school in athletics and playing soccer, tennis, golf, cricket and squash competitively, never for a minute letting his diabetes impede his enjoyment of life.

At age 26 he had his own home, had travelled overseas four times, travelled in a 4WD and camped through inland Australia. He was in charge of a large sports store and later joined our family business as Manager.

At the age of 29 his life changed forever when he had a stroke whilst by himself at home. He was not discovered until 12 hours later. As a consequence, he was left with permanent extensive left side DVT and his recovery to get back home took five months of rehabilitation. His eyesight was affected and he is still unable to read fine print. This is why I (his mother) am writing this on his behalf. His speech and memory were not affected. He is able to walk slowly with a stick, but uses a wheel chair for distances.

In the years that followed, he has worked with a radio station relaying events information and he was a police volunteer for nine years.

Five years after his stroke, he had a heart attack and a stent was inserted into his heart. Following this his kidneys started to fail and he was then under the care of the Renal Unit. Talk of a kidney/pancreas transplant was mentioned. Brett fought dialysis for seven years, but with rapidly failing health, commenced dialysis.

To our eternal amazement, the phone call came to say a suitable donor was available and to come to the hospital ASAP for a kidney/pancreas transplant.

All those families who have experienced this miracle would know the feelings of gratitude, sadness for the donor's family and anticipation of what these wonderful doctors were about to perform.

This dream has been fulfilled. It is now four months since the transplant. Brett is no longer on dialysis, nor after 41 years is he in need of insulin injections. His attitude has always been positive-never down-always with a joke and a laugh. Never resentful at what life has dealt him.

Having been given this wonderful gift, he hopes to go forward and experience as much as he is able. He is now 42 years old.

Thank you does not seem enough to say to the family of the donor who gave Brett the chance of a better life and as we go forward we will never forget to take time to reflect on this wonderful gift.

Judy



Brett

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Demi's story

Hello, My name is Demi and I am seven years old. When I was only 10 months old I got a nasty virus and it attacked my liver and sent it into acute failure.

Before my family knew it, I was on the highest priority list to receive a new liver. Apparently without one, sadly, I would not be here today to tell my story.

I was so blessed to receive a new liver after five days. This amazing gift saved my life and has allowed me to live a normal active life with my twin sister Lilli and big sister Hannah.

Thank God for organ donation.

Demi xx



Demi

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



137 steps...a donor's story

My sister Tanya was diagnosed with leukaemia. Within two hours she was heading to hospital for treatment.

The next time I saw her she had undergone aggressive chemotherapy and was extremely sick. She could barely move, had lost her hair, her skin was peeling off her body and she was losing finger and toe nails. However, her inner being continued to fight this demon within.

One cannot imagine the strength and courage it must have taken for her to pull through this ordeal. She did, however, as she was in remission for the next 16 months.

Her leukaemia returned and we learned that Tanya required a stem cell transplant. I am her sister and live in the same street—only 137 steps away. I was a perfect match.

The hospital staff extracted white blood cells from me and replaced those which chemotherapy had destroyed in Tanya.

David, Tanya's husband, and I stood and watched every single drop, as it dripped into my sister's body. I said a prayer from all her family and her close friends around the world were praying for her too.

Not once did I think she wouldn't pull through. She was a fighter and a wonderful and kind person. Most of all she was MY sister and I love her.

The transplant was successful. After recuperating, Tanya returned home. It was still 137 steps from her front door to mine. How miraculous that Tanya's donor was so close.

It has been an honour and a privilege to be a stem cell donor for my beautiful sister. Not once did I think this journey that we took together would not have a positive outcome.

Now, seven years since the transplant, Tanya is living a healthy life. Every year, on her anniversary, we celebrate by doing something special together.

We now share an exceptional relationship. She is my sister and my friend. We can't verbalise the experience. 'Thank you' and 'you're welcome' are not enough.

There is an unspoken link between us that will remain in our hearts forever.

Juana



Tanya and Juana

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



Anton

I will always remember Anton saying ‘Mum, please don’t tell people about my high distinctions, I don’t care about being better than everyone else. I just want to be normal’. That was Anton. Never a boaster, always positive. He was a well educated, friendly, fun loving 22 year old with a bright future. Everyone loved being around him.

He was a lucky boy, especially lucky when he was very young. We thought we would lose him before he was one year old. He had heart surgery at seven months and many months of medication following. That surgery allowed him (and us) another 21 years of a healthy and fun-filled life.

Anton was passionate about film—from animation to documentary. He completed a degree in Film and Screen and, on a shoestring budget, set off to produce a movie on Longboard Skating. He wasn’t an experienced skater but after a great day of filming he got into his skater safety clothing and helmet and tried the course. He had a freak collision at slow speed with another skater, hit his head on the concrete and never regained consciousness. He had a massive brain injury.

We were devastated. His father, brother and myself struggled to imagine life without him. As a critical care nurse I knew he would never recover from the huge brain trauma. I knew he was an ideal donor candidate. Anton had

declared on facebook his support for organ donation plus we knew what he would have wanted. We saw Anton’s organ donations as the only positive thing to result from his death.

Accepting death is extremely difficult for many families. When it happens to someone you love so much there is an early stage of disbelief and a wish to preserve the life that exists. Many people take a few days to accept the reality.

Every day we miss him. It is a monumental challenge to enjoy life without him. I am comforted by the thought that somebody has a chance they would never otherwise have had.

Kate



Anton

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



When I grow up... I'd like to be well

Hello! My name is Sophie, although everyone calls me Sissy. I am two and a half years old, and my favourite things are Spongebob Square Pants, going to the park, cuddles with my mummy and rides from my daddy. I am the boss of my two brothers Ryan (four and a half) and my twin brother Toby. I love playing with them, but I get tired very easily. My liver is broken and doesn't work very well because I was born with Biliary Atresia, a rare disease of the liver which usually leads to liver failure and the need for a liver transplant.

I have been waiting for about three months now for a shiny new liver. Mummy says that someone who doesn't need theirs anymore will donate it to me—I thought that was pretty special!

I would love nothing more than to be able to dance like a ballerina and play blocks and cars with my brothers without getting tired. I have only recently started walking as my bones are just not strong—and in the process I have broken three bones. That hurt. Mum says I am a good girl because I take all my 16 medications each day so well. I've been doing it since I was a baby so it's normal to me!

I have lots of friends at the hospital, as I spend lots of time there. Blood tests are not my favourite thing, but mummy or daddy are always there holding my hand. Did I tell you about tubey? I wear a tube that goes into my tummy and over night I am connected to a pump and get lots of good nutrients while I sleep! Everyone wants me nice and strong for when the time comes to get that shiny new liver. I wonder when that will be.



Sophie

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



Proud to be a DonateLife Ambassador

I am proud to be a DonateLife Ambassador. I have been a registered organ and tissue donor since the **1980s**, and have carried the card in my wallet. I've also made sure my family know what my donation decision is.

When my mother passed away four years ago, at age 84, I consented for all of her organs and tissue to be donated. They were able to use her corneas to give other people the gift of sight. The decision was easy because I believed so strongly in the good that could be achieved through donation and because I knew it was something she wanted.

I think people have the perception that only young, healthy people can be donors, but this is not the case. Even in cases where organs may not be viable, tissue can still be donated.

Talking about organ and tissue donation with your family can be hard, as people find it hard to talk about death, but it is so important. Your family need to know your wishes – because one day they could be asked to confirm your decision at a very sad and difficult time. Knowing their wishes makes your decision that much easier at such a difficult time.

In 2010, 309 Australians generously donated their organs and tissue for transplant – saving or improving the lives of 931 Australians.

Just knowing that when you die, you can help somebody to live is a truly amazing thing.

Denise



Denise

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



Our angel Lucas

Lucas was an amazing little boy who brought so much enjoyment into our lives. Every day was an adventure and he would not let anything get in his way. He enjoyed playing with his sister and his friends, fishing with his dad and mucking around with his dog Jessie.

Lucas had a very special imagination and believed that the Transformers were real. Late one afternoon his uncle brought a very broken jet ski over which had the Transformers logo on it. Lucas immediately thought that it was a real one and every day he would talk to it. We didn't have the heart to tell him that it was not real. The excitement in his eyes was just priceless, and the stories that we would hear were unforgettable.

Every day you would hear Lucas singing and laughing which brought a smile to everyone's

face. He had a big beautiful heart, he was kind, caring, giving and he was a typical five-year-old with his whole life ahead of him.

Suddenly he became very ill and was diagnosed with Bacterial Meningitis. The wonderful team at Westmead Children's Hospital did everything that they could to help him, but to our horror Lucas was pronounced brain dead. We were given the opportunity to allow Lucas to donate his healthy organs and we knew that Lucas would want to help. He gave some very special people that much needed chance at a healthy life, and for that we are so very proud of our special little boy.

The love that we hold in our hearts will live on forever and our beautiful son Lucas will never be forgotten.

Tennille



Lucas

**Organ and tissue donation
for transplantation is based
on the concept of altruism.**



My corneal transplant

A few years ago I was lucky to be a recipient of a corneal transplant. To my shock the optometrist informed me that I had keratoconus and I had to go to a specialist for more information. My cornea was in a cone shape so I was not able to see properly through my right eye. I decided to have an operation.

Five months later I got a call from the hospital to say the operation was to be the next day.

I had another operation to re-shape the cornea. The stitches needed to be replaced and I struggled at first with them.

My last operation was to remove a cataract in my right eye and this operation was fantastic. I had to be awake so I could see everything happening—even the disappearance of the cataract and the replacement of a lens.

I had many black eyes in this process but I have to say it was well worth it. I am able to live my life to the fullest now and have a fantastic boyfriend who is a great support and is the love of my life.

I love the countryside and am looking forward in the near future to being with my love on a farm.

My family have been there for me through thick and thin, they have helped me throughout the journey—when I have eye appointments, when I had the pain of operations and when the stitches were taken out. I now have no stitches in the eye. I am still taking eye drops but it is well worth it.

I am able to see again and want to thank the donor. It is sad to see someone pass but they bring life back to many others and I thank them for that.

Julie



Gav and Jules

Do you know the
donation decision
of your loved ones?



Justin's story

After his sister Megan was diagnosed with Cystic Fibrosis, Justin was also found to have the condition. From then on the life of the family revolved around clinic visits and hospital admissions.

This is part of the story Justin told as he took every opportunity to educate his fellow mountain bikers about organ and tissue donation.

"The mountain bike bug hit me in the late 80s. Riding fully rigid bikes up the bush for hours on end was like mountain biking Nirvana. I rode until the early 90s, as often as I could, even though by then Cystic Fibrosis had taken its toll on my body. My weight dropped to 49 kilos, not a good look when you are six feet tall. I was oxygen dependent 24 hours a day and even the simplest of tasks seemed like tackling the final summit of Everest. The daily grind; shower, shave and breakfast, took hours.

It was a long and hard 12 month wait for my new airbags (lungs). I'd often look out the window and dream about hitting the bush again on the bike. Then a miracle! My new airbags arrived just in time.

Since that time I have raced in Club, State and National cross country rounds. My favourite form of racing is the endurance events – anything above six hours is what I really thrive on. I experienced the ultimate – the Canberra 24hr race. As part of a four man team, I experienced a mix of emotions. I had finally achieved another goal: to be out on the course with the likes of world champ Trent Lowe. Nine years before I could not have hoped for this!

Organ donation is something most people think about doing but never let their loved ones know their wishes. So please, sign up and tell your family. Who knows, one day you or someone you love could need a life saving organ transplant too. The greatest gift one human can give to another is the gift of life! Be in it!"

Justin eventually needed another transplant [a new set of airbags as he put it]. During the first week after discharge severe complications arose and he was readmitted. Justin died a few days later, attended by the staff who had become his friends and with his mother beside him.

Penny



**Organ and tissue donation
for transplantation is based
on the concept of altruism.**



The ultimate gift

I write this on the 12th anniversary of my kidney transplant. A day of thanks, a day when my thoughts return to my donor and donor's family and a day when I reflect on how my life has changed since I first heard the words 'you have renal failure'.

I was 37, fit, well and happily married with two young children when I felt as if I was coming down with the flu. Within days I had renal failure. My immune system had mistaken my kidneys for the virus and shut them down.

With the help of my family, I managed haemodialysis at home for five and a half years. During those years, a transplant seemed like the 'light at the end of the tunnel'.

I expected to be excited when I first received the call that a transplant was available but, as my husband and I travelled to the hospital, I was filled with sadness for my donor's family.

Initially, I experienced my fair share of problems and at times struggled with the unexpected physical and emotional challenges I faced. Thankfully things settled and today I'm pleased to say my kidney and I are going well. I have a happy life and my family and I enjoy the freedom that my transplant offers. I am very grateful to my donor and donor's family for the opportunity they have given me.

I feel privileged to be the recipient of such a special gift and was able to express my gratitude in person to some local donor families at the opening of a special garden of remembrance created in my town to recognise the generosity of organ donors and their families. At the end of the ceremony I was given a rose, the Reflection Rose, developed and dedicated to organ and tissue donors and their families. I planted my rose where I could see it every day and today, on the anniversary of my transplant, it is once again covered in buds—a sign of new life and a reminder of the precious new life given to me.

Kate



Ask and know your
loved one's donation wishes



Annette

Annette suffered a cerebral haemorrhage three weeks before her 12th birthday. It was her wish that her kidneys be donated if anything ever happened to her.

Annette never knew that she was Canberra's first organ donor and that at the time there was no legislation in place to retrieve organs in the ACT. It was Annette's wish that started authorities writing and putting legislation in place for the ACT and NSW.

It is hard to capture the true character of Annette in writing, but it was obvious to all those who knew her that she was a very sincere, genuine, and a very affectionate person who had an unusual sensitivity towards the needs of others.

Annette loved her family and showed it in many ways; cooking, doing craft or looking after her two cats.

One of Annette's last offerings was: Holy Spirit, enlighten and protect me from evil and guide me to heaven where we will rest in peace, Amen.



Annette—ACT's first organ and tissue donor

**40% of Australians
do not know the donation
wishes of their loved ones.**



Two lives were saved

Our mum Ellen was taken from us after battling influenza in intensive care for nine weeks.

Mum was aged 45 at the time.

I remember the day well when I came home from work to find Mum wasn't there, she had been taken to emergency by my sister earlier that day and I was none the wiser.

Mum had been sick with the flu for over a week at home before her health dramatically declined. I received a call that night to say they had to put Mum on a ventilation system to help her breathe. I spoke with her on the phone to say I would be up to see her the following day. I never knew then that it would be the last time I would speak to my mum.

I was very fortunate that over the nine weeks Mum was ill, I was able to be close by—unlike many of our family who could not be. We met countless ICU doctors, however, sadly, Mum's health never improved and slowly declined as time passed by.

When we were told by the doctors that Mum would never recover, the impossible had to be done which meant turning off Mum's life support.

There was no doubt in our minds that Mum would have wanted to be an organ donor, so when the question came up we knew it was what Mum would have wanted. Mum was the type of person who would help a stranger and could never say no to anyone in need of a hand.

It gives us solace to know that two lives were saved from Mum's organs as we know it could have been us on the other end of the spectrum if circumstances were different.

I urge everyone to register for organ donation, don't wait until you have to experience a life changing event yourself, as it could be your loved one who is given a second chance at life.

Melissa



Jessica, Melissa and Ellen

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



My life is whole again

I am a farmer and we run sheep and grow vegetable crops.

My wife would often ask me what was wrong as I was getting tired easily and couldn't stand for very long. I started to get terrific headaches that would last for 24 hours, and at times I became confined to bed.

Following several visits to the doctor and hospital, I was told my kidneys were failing and I would have to commence dialysis before long. The hospital staff were great, providing support and lots of information not only to me but to my wife and family.

Several months passed and I was encouraged to start dialysis. To my surprise I felt much better. We explored the possibility of a family member being able to donate one of their kidneys to me. Despite all the wonderful people who offered, it just wasn't going to be.

I got to the point where I had to plan and manage the farm from the hospital and an armchair, as I was unable to do manual work. I had to let others do the work for me, which was very frustrating.

We spent a weekend away and had bought some trees for the farm. The following Monday we were planting these trees, or at least my wife planted and I did what I could.

We were coming back through the sheep yards to bring in some sheep, when I received a call from the renal doctor.

By 9.30pm that night I was in theatre for a kidney transplant. After five weeks recovery, we were able to return home, where I am now able to look after our farm again.

I sincerely thank the family of the person who donated their organs to me. It has made my life whole again.

lan



lan

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Our deepest gratitude

Hello, I just wanted to share with you that my husband Rich is celebrating 15 years since his heart transplant. We wake up every morning so thankful, and so much in love with each other.

No words can describe how I am feeling. I am just so happy, yet also mindful of the sadness the family who donated the heart must be feeling. If I could personally say thank you I would for sure. I wish I could.

Rachel and Richard



Ask and know your
loved one's donation wishes





Australian Government
Organ and Tissue Authority



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Alternative format

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