

BOOK OF LIFE





Australian Government
Organ and Tissue Authority

Foreword

The DonateLife Book of Life is an important resource for all Australians.

The Organ and Tissue Authority thanks all who generously share their story and in doing so, inspire more Australians to decide about organ and tissue donation.

As you read these inspiring stories, I hope that you are motivated to decide and register your donation decision on the Australian Organ Donor Register, and most importantly, to discuss your donation decision with your loved ones. It is a conversation that can one day save lives.

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



“Organ donation is a very good thing”

Adam’s story

I am a Warlpiri man from Yuendumu (NT) and my wife is a Pitjantjara woman from Mimili (SA). I was born in Alice Springs and grew up with my family in Yuendumu. I went to school there and it was a good place, with good teachers and lots of friends. It is very sad that many of my friends from that time have passed away now.

When I got sick from liver disease I had no taste for food, I couldn’t sleep, and my mind was not right. I ended up spending a few months in Alice Springs Hospital with liver problems. A doctor there asked if I wanted to go to Adelaide to wait for a liver transplant. My family were very worried about me going to Adelaide but I made up my mind that I wanted to go – my spirit was telling me to go. I am lucky that I have strong willpower.

I had only been in Adelaide once before that time, on a school excursion. I stayed in Adelaide for ten months on a waiting list. Then one Sunday afternoon I got a phone call and I had my liver transplant on Monday morning.

After the transplant I got my health back and felt really well.

When I got out of hospital I got my driving licence back and I could drive all around the city in the busy traffic. I’ve had over eight

years of being well and travelling around to be with family.

When I was in Adelaide I gave some education talks about my life and experiences to doctors from all around the world. I would talk in Warlpiri language and then explain the words in English language.

The transplant has changed my life. I feel good, I enjoy my life. Now I have a bonus too – a little boy, my son!

Adam



Adam

Do you know the
donation decision
of your loved ones?



New Liver New Life!!

At the age of 17 I was diagnosed with a liver disease called Primary Sclerosing Cholangitis (PSC). The news came as quite a shock to me as I was quite healthy and active as a kid and loved my sports, especially soccer.

Whilst the PSC was slow progressing, I had other health issues (namely Crohns disease) that I had to deal with more urgently. As a young adult, it became increasing difficult to excel at sport (though I was passionate about training and doing my best). I tried not to let my illnesses define or limit my life. For the next 15 years I continued to play soccer, complete my university education, run a business and travel the world.

By the age 31 as a result of my Crohns disease, I had undergone three major bowel surgeries in 18 months. Afterwards at the age of 33 I was feeling fit, healthy and energetic which I hadn't felt for a long time.

Much to my surprise, only a year after I was feeling great my PSC had progressed to a point where I was experiencing more symptoms from the liver disease such as jaundice, ascites (abdominal swelling) and severe fatigue, making it very difficult to live a normal life. As a result of my liver disease, I was put on the transplant waiting list,

though at times I wondered if I was actually sick enough to warrant a transplant. Seven months later I was given the amazing gift of a healthy, strong liver from my donor.

Only three months post-transplant I feel so incredibly different. I have the energy to take life head on once again, no longer surviving day by day. Thanks to the transplant and generosity of my donor and their family, I will hold my first baby in my arms in less than two months.

Each day I'm grateful for my family, friends, my medical team but most of all my donor. I pray for my donor and their family, understanding the grief they have experienced due to the loss of their loved one. I pray for all those waiting on the transplant waiting lists, knowing how hard and taxing it can be on the recipients physically and mentally and how difficult it is for their carers who have to watch their loved ones in pain.

I look forward to many years ahead enjoying life and making the most of each day. One day I hope that I can repay this invaluable gift I have been given!

Ante



Ante before and after his liver transplant

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



A Precious Gift of Life and Love Story

1995 will forever remain as the most important year of my life.

Whilst it was also the last time my beloved Carlton held the AFL Premiership Cup, it was that year, I was able to afford my wife the greatest gift of all – a new kidney.

From an unfairly tender age, my wife Sue suffered from a condition that irreparably damaged both kidneys and sent her on the road to complete renal failure and a reliance on haemodialysis by the age of 24.

We were married a year later and, whilst being connected to a blood cleansing machine for four hours, four times a week was keeping her alive, the quality of life - and her health – had taken a downward turn.

In late 1991, hope sprang. However, the donated organ proved to be too traumatised to be effective and was removed within 24 hours. Embarrassingly, it wasn't until a long time afterward we thought of the grieving family of the donor going through the similar heartbreak of loss.

It then became increasingly apparent that haemodialysis treatment was an unsustainable solution and that a transplant was Sue's only hope of not only life itself but a better and healthier life.

Perhaps in the belief that I may never have to concern myself with birthday and Christmas presents, I asked to test the suitability of my kidneys for transplant.

It was a roller coaster of emotion. Initial testing was positive but Sue developed anti-bodies following a transfusion with my blood, all bets were off.

After an anguishing “wait and see” period, Sue developed anti-bodies to the anti-bodies (for want of a correct medical term). We were on again.

The remaining testing then primarily revolved around my body's ability to lose a kidney and cope. Thankfully, that proved to be the case.

In November 1995 a surgical team prepared Sue to receive a new kidney. In an adjoining theatre, my left kidney was carefully removed.

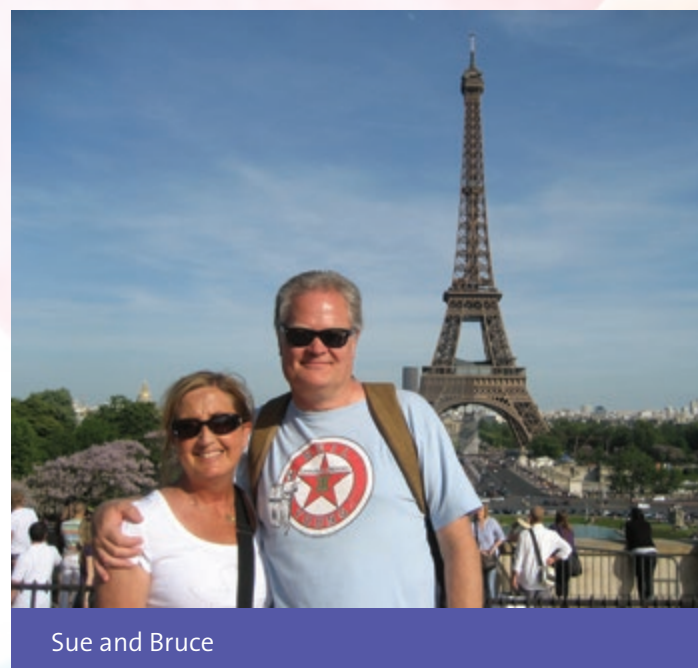
A few hours later, nursing staff presented Sue with a near full bag of urine produced by her new organ. A strange sounding gift, but anyone who has undergone a kidney transplant will appreciate the profound joy that such a sight would bring.

All that happened almost 20 years ago and our life together since has taken on dimensions that we never dreamed possible.

Being so close to an environment of expectation and hope over such a prolonged period, I have no hesitation in recommending that all families discuss and carefully consider the wish and gift of organ donation and the potential it has to change not only a recipient's life, but that of those around them.

Don't take your organs to heaven – heaven knows we need them here.

Bruce



Sue and Bruce

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



My Dad, his legacy

My Dad passed away in early 2014. Today, and for all the years to come, we will live with the consequences of him being gone and while the pain is not the raw shock and denial it was one year ago, that feeling of loss will always be there. Yet I still consider myself lucky as I have the comfort of knowing my Dad was an organ donor and something of a hero to many, myself included.

The fear that you will never hear or see your loved one again can be overwhelming. My Dad spent his last night playing cricket on the beach, laughing with his daughters over homemade shortbread ice cream, and watching 'The Hobbit' with his son and wife. It was the perfect end to a brilliant life, almost as though he had designed his last night with us himself. But within hours we were faced with the question of whether or not we would donate his organs. Phrased like this it seems harsh, but for those who need that second chance at life it really does come down to yes or no.

I do not believe I have ever experienced such kindness as that from the doctors and nurses at the hospital. With us they cried as we said goodbye, held our hands as we sat in shock, and how they treated Dad with the greatest respect through the entire process. Today we live with the relief that we made this decision. It offers hope against the finality of death and out of our loss came the ability to prevent another family from suffering the heartache that we have.

Organ donation is a beautiful creation, and one that stems from great tragedy. Perhaps this is what makes it the most precious gift of all and reminds me why my Dad's life was so valuable. For those who have received an organ and those who make it possible, I want to say how grateful I am. You hold a very special place in my heart for letting my Dad live on.

Charlotte



Dad

Do the people close
to you know your
donation decision?



Gail's story

My name is Gail. I received my first corneal transplant in 2010 at the age of 56 and my second in 2014.

My vision gradually deteriorated over 30 years from the degenerative condition Fuchs' Corneal Dystrophy. Your sight can be compared to looking through a dirty window or waxed paper. Everything is dull, distorted and foggy.

I was a full time teacher, mother, played sport, sat on committees and held executive positions at club and association levels but poor vision impacted every aspect of my life.

I needed to buy a desk incline for marking at home; I had difficulty reading and assisting students with their onscreen computer queries; I couldn't track a tennis ball quickly enough and reading the fine print on documents, cleaning products and food packaging was impossible without a magnifying glass. I could only shop in familiar places and drive to nearby locations. My life started to depend on memory, hearing and touch.

I realised it was time for professional help when teaching 60 students with a colleague I called a student at the very back the wrong name. Teachers and students laughed it off but I was devastated. I could manage the personal time consuming, annoying and frustrating adaptations necessary to function but my vision was now impacting the children to whom I had a 'duty of care'.

Since my transplants I have moved into and decorated a new house, had two daughters marry in the same year, been presented

with three granddaughters, started netball coaching again and can consider future travel. I'm the 'on call' Gran for minding Maya, Laura and Ava. Although retired from teaching I have my own little collection of granddaughters to educate.

I can be involved in so many more life opportunities now because a special kind of person and family wanted to make a difference to someone else.

Donation is a gift whereby grief and sadness transpose into another's relief, gratitude and thankful acceptance.

The most soul stirring feeling is the giver/ receiver connection that you have. You make a pact to honour, respect, protect and care for your investment. You're in this together and that's worth fighting for.

Gail



Gail

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



A long way from home

In 2006 I had to move a long way away from my home in a remote NT community to start haemodialysis in Darwin, nearly 800 km away. After about a year of haemodialysis as well as training to do my own peritoneal dialysis I was finally able to go back home. The peritoneal dialysis at home was successful for about a year and after that I had to leave my community once again to restart haemodialysis. This time I was able to have haemodialysis in Katherine. I stayed there until I got the call for a kidney transplant a few years later.

I had the transplant in Adelaide and returned to Darwin a few weeks later for follow-up care. I stayed in Darwin for approximately another year.

Finally everything was going well and I was able to return to my home and to my family. My family were very happy for me. I was well enough to be able to return to my work as a community plumber.

The transplant has changed my life because I feel well and I don't have to go and live away from home to go and have dialysis anymore.

I really want to thank the doctors and the person who was my donor for my second chance at life.

George



George

**Around 1,500 people are on
official transplant waiting
lists at any one time.**



Ben's Story

Life-support machines winked and beeped in the cardiac intensive care unit at the Children's Hospital, as I gazing numbly at the unconscious figure of our ten-year-old son, Ben.

When the surgical team had attempted to move aside Ben's aorta (sutured to his breastbone ten years before), a tear resulted. Ben required a heart-lung machine to pump blood through Ben's arteries and veins and "breathe" for him while they could repair his aorta. But before it was fully operational, Ben's blood pressure plunged, depriving his brain of oxygen for between ten to twelve minutes.

As I had already done countless times, I vigorously massaged his hands and feet, trying to transfer some of my strength to him, willing him to keep going. Yesterday my precious son had been healthy. Now I struggled to comprehend that he was battling for his life. How could things have gone so wrong so quickly I wondered?

At 1.30a.m. the following morning, the registrar asked me to return to the ward. The pressure in Ben's head was increasing. By 5.30a.m., I was still desperately rubbing Ben's hands and massaging his feet when a social worker materialised like a guardian angel to support my wife and I. I was losing my son.

At 6a.m., the Registrar took us aside. He had done everything possible he gently explained, but the gauges indicated that Ben's brain was dying, although further tests would be needed to confirm this. We cried as were several nurses.

An independent Medical team arrives at 9a.m. to carry out a few tests to confirm Ben's current state. At 12.30p.m., the doctor's confirmed our greatest fear; "I have to tell you officially your son is brain dead".

Elayne and I were silent, drained. Even in our grief, Elayne and I knew that we wanted to donate Ben's organ so as to save other families the agony we were experiencing. At 4.30p.m., after a third and final reflex test, we meet the donation coordinator who describes the operation to remove Ben's organs, stating the transplant team would treat his body with the utmost of respect. At 6a.m. the following morning, Elayne and I accompanied Ben to surgery for the last time.

For four hours, we walked in silence round the hospital grounds. Finally, a nurse escorted us to a 'quiet room'. Ben lay on a bed, dressed in his green flannel pyjamas, his hair neatly combed. I picked him up and Elayne and I cradled our son in our arms for the next 1½ hours, stroking and talking to him for the last time.

Graham and Elayne



Ben

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



One of the lucky people

I was lucky to receive a kidney transplant a couple of years ago. After spending about eight years receiving dialysis treatment it was great to be free to live at home and enjoy activities with my family again.

The transplant operation was in Adelaide a long way away from my home community in the Northern Territory (NT). I stayed in Adelaide for about six weeks after the transplant. When I returned to the NT I spent

another couple of months in Darwin for follow-up care and then I was able to return to my home community and family.

I now enjoy activities like fishing and camping and visiting family members. I don't want to go back on dialysis. Since having the transplant I feel well and I am motivated and have energy to do things.

Janie



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



Jeannie's story

I am a Warlpiri woman – my name is Jeannie.

I was born at the Lajamanu community on the northern end of the Tanami Desert. After attending school in Lajamanu and Darwin, I travelled in Australia before getting jobs in Darwin, Lajamanu and Katherine.

I did a lot of work for the Language Centre – Diwurruwurru Jaru Aboriginal Corporation in Katherine. I got sick while I was in Katherine and got sent to Darwin to start dialysis before returning to Katherine where my treatment continued.

One night about midnight, after I had been on dialysis for about two years, two police officers came and knocked on my door and told me to call the doctor. When I rang the doctor he told me he had good news and that there was a kidney available for me. I felt happy – really happy. I travelled from Katherine to Darwin and then flew to Adelaide for the transplant. After being in hospital I then stayed in a nearby hostel for follow-up.

My second son Paul, who lives in Adelaide, came and visited and looked after me. My first son David, who was adopted out at a young age to lovely parents, got in touch with me later through an organisation called Link-up. Both of my sons have their own families now and I am very proud of them.

The kidney transplant has allowed me to enjoy life again and I can travel home and spend time with my people and visit others. I love being free to travel and talk about the land. I could just get in the car and drive home, about 900km away. It gives me great joy to see my family and the new additions to it.

The new kidney is a great privilege and I am very grateful to have a transplant. It's good to talk with other people about transplants and donations. It is up to you as an individual whether you want to have a transplant or to donate organs – it is really important to think about it and make up your own mind.



Jeannie and her dogs

60% of Australian's
have discussed their
donation decision with
their loved ones.



My Sister

I would like to tell you a tale of two eyes and the person who saw her world through them. Julie first opened her eyes in Calcutta, India, the fourth child of a family preparing to migrate. When those eyes closed not half a decade later, it was halfway across the planet in the country she loved fiercely.

From an early age, Julie embraced the Australian sporting ethos. Her eyes showed themselves excellent from the beginning.

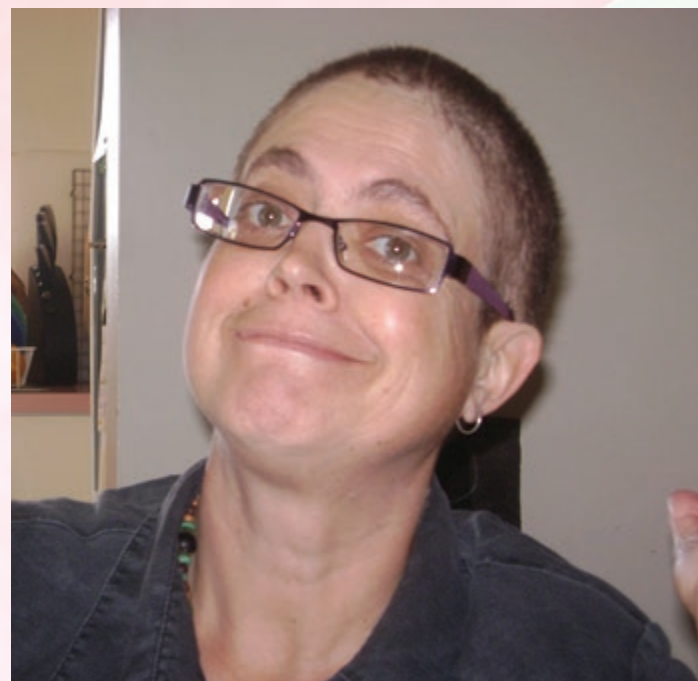
Julie was a fixture in women's cricket in her state and nationally. She played for local clubs and in the state squad before she'd quit her teens. Julie played indoor cricket with the same flair. Her quick eyes and hands made her a very successful wicketkeeper. She played in both indoor and outdoor championship sides.

When her playing days ended, she served on the state Women's Cricket Association Board. She believed that one gave back as much, if not more, than one received in the pursuit of something which had given you an opportunity to excel. All her life she loved the sport which gave her so much: success, and more importantly, lifelong friendships.

What she did she embraced with vigour. Her eyes travelled across the globe far and wide. She gave of her time, energy, intellect, finances. But most of all she gave her heart without reserve. She welcomed friends in need into her home, she financed the dreams of musician friends, she was at the core of fundraising, and fun raising, always looking for her opportunity to contribute.

And in the end, there was yet more to give. Whatever was of physical value beyond her death, she was ready to offer. And thus two corneas light two recipients' eyes. But Julie's gift is not just to the recipients of her corneas. The gift is to her family as well. Her selflessness rewards us with the knowledge that two little flames burn brightly on, two diamonds sparkle in two new worlds, two other families have cause to celebrate, that one last time, Julie's generosity made a difference.

**Priscilla
Sister**



Julie

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



Kathryn's story

In 1984 at the time of my transplant I was advised that my donor kidney may last between five and 10 years. In early 2014 I celebrated the 30th Anniversary of my transplant!

I was 13 when I found out I had kidney problems. Despite this I continued to play competitive tennis and also travelled to America and Indonesia.

My kidneys started to fail and I was on home dialysis four times a day for eight months while on the transplant waiting list. I was able to work full-time, and my great group of friends made up for my lack of an external social life.

I was 26 when I received the phone call – the donor kidney and I were 99 per cent compatible. I was one of the first people in the state to take a special anti-rejection drug which I mixed each day into a strawberry milkshake to disguise the horrible taste!

Four years later I met my future husband Paul who was unfazed by the fact that I'd had

a transplant. We travelled extensively both before and after our marriage in 1991.

We tried unsuccessfully for about five years to start a family but were advised that the only way would be adoption. Six weeks later I fell pregnant naturally. My Fertility Clinic doctor could not believe what he saw – it was truly a miracle.

On 11 October 1996 we welcomed our son Daniel into the world. At the time I was only the 18th woman in Australia to have a child naturally after a kidney transplant. Daniel is now 17 years old and completing Year 12.

My parents, parents-in-law, my husband, our son and all our friends have always been there to support and love me. I don't think I could have done it without them.

I do not know the family who donated the kidney to me but I am eternally grateful because they gave me a second chance at life. If I hadn't received my transplant I would not have experienced the joy of getting married or giving birth to our wonderful son. Thank you.

Kathryn



Kathryn, Daniel, Paul and Janette

**Each year around
1,800 corneal transplants
are performed to give
the gift of sight.**



I can see clearly now

I can see clearly now, clear on how important organ and tissue donation is.

My beautiful courageous baby sister passed at the young age of 31 from complications associated with Crohns disease.

Before my sister passed away she discussed with our family how she wanted to donate whatever she could. Although it was difficult for me to understand how she wanted to become an organ and tissue donor, the rest of my family was on board with her decision.

Following lengthy discussions with her, she explained to me the importance of organ donation and how she wanted to help someone in need of a transplant.

When my sister lost her battle with Crohns, a battle that gave me so much inspiration, she still continued to live on through the gift of sight.

My sister's corneas have let someone see clearly, not only the recipient but myself as well. She opened my eyes to the importance of organ and tissue donation and now I am on the register. I have also discussed my donation decision with my family.

Not only did she donate to a recipient, she donated to me too. I thank her for opening my eyes as well. She has given me an understanding of what is needed for life to go on even though she cannot be here.

Kerrie



My Nedda (Nereida). My amazing courageous inspirational little sister

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



My Mum

I am 29 years of age and I've been a full time carer for my mum since I was 23.

During my 20's, my mum was diagnosed with liver disease which required me to visit her daily, looking after her and taking her to weekly appointments and blood tests.

As time passed, we began spending more time in hospitals. Her quality of life was slipping away.

When her health began to deteriorate further, she was placed on the liver transplant waiting list. This news left me both excited and scared.

In late 2012, we finally received the call which would change our lives and give mum a second chance at life.

When we arrived at the liver transplant ward, we were given a private room. The following day, the liver team announced that the transplant was going ahead. My father had arrived by this stage and there were tears of happiness.

I walked beside mum's trolley to the theatre waiting area and we said a prayer together. Mum's surgery took 11 hours and the surgical team called every two hours to update us on their progress.

After she was transferred out of ICU, she had a minor stroke and was in a coma for a day. She lost movement in her arms and was very unbalanced on her legs. She temporarily lost

her long term memory and would forget things she had just said.

Following her transplant, mum underwent rehabilitation to strengthen her muscles, regain her memory and work on her speech, reading and writing.

Finally by Christmas 2012, my mum arrived home. We were together as a family.

Someone out there saved my mum's life and I couldn't thank them enough. Considering the odds my mum is definitely blessed and we are extremely lucky to have her with us.

The best Christmas present I could ever receive is the gift of life, my mum.

Lauren



Mum, before (left) and after (right)

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



Young at heart

This is how people spoke of my husband, 'young at heart'. He lived his life enjoying himself.

Only a couple of months before his death, our daughter sat him down and asked the question that he had always procrastinated over. 'Yes' he stated. If anything should happen to him, he would like his organs donated.

When he suffered a massive stroke and did not regain consciousness, even though our family was in complete shock, it was an easy decision to make as we knew his wishes.

My husband lived his life helping everyone and he continued to do this by living on in others. This has given our family peace knowing that 8 people were given a new lease on life because of the donation he gave.

Lorraine



Lorraine and her husband

Do you know the
donation decision
of your loved ones?



The story of Nathan

Nathan was in a very good place.

He'd just spent his 22nd birthday in New Zealand with his girlfriend, Hannah, exploring the South Island and meeting members of her family.

He returned home to Sydney after two weeks away with the air of a young man who knew where he was headed with his life and was very content with the prospect.

At work, he was about to be promoted to fully qualified motorcycle technician having completed his four-year apprenticeship with distinction and an industry award for excellence.

Just three days after his return, Nathan was on his way to work when his motorcycle collided with a van. The result was a catastrophic head injury from which there would be no recovery.

A few months earlier when he renewed his driver's licence, Nathan told us he'd ticked the donor box. So, when the doctors asked quietly and respectfully if we'd consider donating his organs, we were able, without hesitation to agree.

As a result, one person is breathing with his lungs, another has been given one of his kidneys, the second kidney has gone to a child and one of his heart valves to a baby. One other heart valve is in storage to be used as an eligible recipient comes along.

Thanks to the nurses, doctors and members of the organ donation unit at the hospital who looked after Nathan, and us, as if we were family. Your extraordinary professionalism, compassion and empathy helped us every step of the way as we fulfilled Nathan's express wish to be an organ donor.

For that we are truly grateful.

Not a day goes by when we don't think of our son and no words can describe the feelings, emotions and sorrow that well up every time we do. The memories of him growing up, his passion for his mates, motorcycles and sport, his love of family and girlfriend and his life's huge potential.

Knowing Nathan's gifts have improved and even saved the lives of four people, and potentially one more, is tremendously important to us and has made losing him just a little bit easier.

Rob, Karin, Dylan, Jessika and Hannah



Nathan on his NZ trip

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



Damian's Destiny

My younger brother Damian at 38 suffered a bleed to his brain. He was lucid and coherent when I took him to hospital, just complaining of a massive headache. Within an hour he was placed on life support and mum and I were given the worst news you could ever hear, there was no hope of recovery.

Through our heartbreak we learnt that he had registered himself as an organ donor. He was a fit, healthy man, so losing him

was very unexpected. We are incredibly proud of the fact he had registered himself.

Through the loss of my brother, over a dozen friends and family have registered themselves on the Australian Organ Donor Register. His legacy will live on forever.

Talk to your family and friends about your wishes.

RIP Damian

Sharon



Damian

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



Tony's story

The miracle that changed my life

One night I found myself sitting up in bed unable to breathe. I went to work the next day feeling unwell and arranged with my boss to leave at lunch to go and see the doctor. The doctor recognised that something was seriously wrong and at the hospital I was shocked to be told I had cardiomyopathy (an enlarged heart).

I spent eight days in an Intensive Care Unit (ICU) in the Northern Territory (NT) before being transferred to Adelaide for further tests and treatment. After having an angiogram in Adelaide I was transferred to Melbourne where I had my first pacemaker inserted. It lasted for about four years and then I needed another pacemaker. The second one lasted approximately 12 months and then I became increasingly unwell. I was in and out of hospital for several months. Eventually I travelled from NT to Melbourne accompanied by a cardiologist. I was in the Cardiac Ward there for about six weeks and by this time I felt terrible. It was a struggle for me to walk around.

Suddenly a very precious gift, a donated heart became available. I was told the heart was a good match (97%) for me. I was taken to theatre and I woke up in ICU about 10 hours later. I have been well ever since. My recovery has been a miracle. I continue to have a cardiologist review every six months. This year

marks the seven year anniversary of my life changing transplant. I am extremely grateful to my donor and the donor's family.

The experience has completely changed my life in many ways. I am a more spiritual person now. I am far more caring towards others and I feel that God has led me into a ministry of visiting the sick in hospital. I am very happy with how my life has turned out and I wish to thank the Lord and the many people including medical and hospital staff who have helped me.

Tony



Tony

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



Down one, down two, down three... GO!

At age 7 our little girl Tessa has dealt with a lot. She has a mummy with Leukaemia, has undergone spinal procedures, had a broken leg and received a kidney transplant.

Tessa's health deteriorated sometime around Easter. She had become tired, weak and had a lack of appetite. We put it down to recent surgeries and school. Then on Good Friday, Tessa nearly collapsed at a netball game. We knew something wasn't right, so we drove to the nearest hospital which was 40 minutes away. When we arrived, Tessa was taken in for routine tests, including a urine test which she could not produce.

Godsend number one was the doctor's request to do a blood test. Tessa underwent two more tests as her haemoglobins and kidney function were extremely low. Tessa was flown out urgently to a larger hospital.

Godsend number two was the support from the nephrology team at the next hospital. We were informed that Tessa had gone into renal failure, later diagnosed as Chronic Renal failure. She needed her blood flushed and needed peretential dialysis. After 4 weeks we were allowed to return home and the waiting began for a donor kidney as my husband and I were not compatible.

After 16 months we received that long awaited call.... there was a kidney for Tessa. This was **godsend number three!** The drive to the hospital was the longest drive of our

lives and a rollercoaster of emotions. You are never prepared for the agonising wait to see if the kidney is a match, the fear for your child, happiness for their recovery and then the sadness that someone has had to die for your child to be well.

Tessa is now a new girl, full of life, love, energy and a little bit of attitude. We are so lucky to have our new girl back with us and so grateful to the family that donated their loved ones organs. We are still a family of five thanks to someone else and we will forever hold them and their family in our hearts.

Tracey



Tessa

Do the people close
to you know your
donation decision?



Only you can make the decision

Hello you mob!
Awungana? (Hello, and how are you?)

My name is Victor and I am from the Tiwi Islands which is situated about 80km north of Darwin. I was educated on Bathurst Island and also at a Catholic College in Country Victoria where I was boarding. I did not like boarding school at the time but now I am really glad that I went there and I thank my mother and sister for making sure I got a good education.

My first real job was working with Power & Water where I did an apprenticeship. Later I became a School Teacher and taught on the Islands for eighteen years.

Suddenly everything changed and I had to stop working due to kidney disease. My wife and I had to move to Darwin so I could have dialysis treatment three times a week and we have been here ever since.

After nine years of dialysis I received the gift of a kidney transplant. I had to quickly travel to South Australia for the operation and my missus came with me to support me while I recovered.

My aim now is to help people understand about kidney disease and organ donation.

After the transplant I feel much better. I work for the Aboriginal Interpreter Service and I have been doing casual work for them for nearly five years.

I would like you mob to know that the best way to look after your body is to drink plenty of water and to exercise and take care of yourself. Only you can make the decision to do that.

Mana Nimpangi! (Goodbye for now!)

Victor



Victor

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





Australian Government
Organ and Tissue Authority



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Enquiries

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Alternative format

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