



Organ and tissue donation opt-in and opt-out consent systems

What's the difference?

Australia's 'opt-in' consent system



Australia has an 'opt-in' system where consent is needed before donation can happen.



People can register to be a donor on the Australian Organ Donor Register.



Families will be asked to agree to donation when their family member dies.

The 'opt-out' consent system



Some countries have an 'opt-out' system where the law considers all adults to be donors.



If a person does not want to be a donor they need to communicate this, usually on a register.



In most countries with an opt-out system, donation will still not happen if the family objects.

In both systems families are approached before organ and tissue donation proceeds.



In both systems the priority of doctors and nurses is to care for patients and support their families as they come to terms with the death of their loved one and make a choice about organ and tissue donation.



Families are involved in both systems to provide information about their loved one's health before they died. This will help determine transplant suitability.



Organ donation is a rare event

Not everyone can become an organ donor when they die.

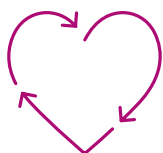
To be an organ donor, a person must die in a hospital's intensive care unit or emergency department and be medically assessed as suitable to donate organs for transplantation.

Only around 2% of people who die in Australian hospitals can be considered for organ donation. In 2021 only 1,250 people had the potential to be an organ donor.

Some people believe that changing to an opt-out system will result in many more donors in Australia. However changing the legal consent system will not increase the number of people who die in a way that allows them to become a donor.

If you are unable to donate your organs, you may still be able to transform the lives of others through eye and tissue donation.

How to increase donation?



Have donation specialist staff to support families in hospital

It is important that well-trained donation specialist nurses and doctors talk with families about donation in a sensitive and caring way. They can help families make an informed decision that is right for them and their family member.



Register on the Australian Organ Donor Register

An opt-in system means people register to be a donor. In Australia, 9 in 10 families say 'yes' to donation if their family member has registered to be a donor.



Talk to your family about donation

In the hospital, families will always be asked to consent to donation. In Australia, only 4 in 10 families say 'yes' to donation when they don't know if their loved one wanted to be a donor.

Registering to be an organ and tissue donor is easy. You just need your phone, Medicare card and one minute.

Head to donatelife.gov.au or you can join through the Express Plus Medicare app when you download your COVID-19 vaccination certificate.