



Australian Government

Australian Organ and Tissue Donation  
and Transplantation Authority



# Strategy

2022–2027

A photograph of two women in pink medical scrubs standing on a wide set of stone stairs. They are both smiling and holding a large, three-dimensional purple recycling symbol. The woman on the left has her right arm raised. In the background, a modern building with a glass and metal facade is visible under a clear sky. Other people can be seen walking on the stairs in the distance.

## Purpose

To save and improve the lives of more Australians through organ and tissue donation and transplantation



# Values and behaviours

## Commitment

We are passionate about who we are, our work and our future



## Collaboration

We work together to achieve shared goals



## Excellence

We strive for the best quality national outcomes



## Integrity

We operate with trust, respect, honesty and compassion



## Innovation

We keep an open mind and have courage to make improvements



# Saving and improving the lives of more Australians

The Organ and Tissue Authority (OTA) and the DonateLife Network were established in 2009 to lead the delivery of the national program, DonateLife, to increase organ and tissue donation rates.

**One organ donor can save up to 7 lives and help many more through eye and tissue donation.**

Globally there is a gap between the supply of and the need for organs for transplantation. This is due to a rising prevalence of chronic disease as well as advancements in medical technology, that mean transplantation is the optimal and sometimes only treatment option for people with organ failure. Transplantation can save lives, restore health, improve the quality of life, and offers significant cost benefits to the health system.

International and Australian experience has shown that a coordinated and consistent national approach across the hospital system and clinical practice, with sustained public awareness leads to increases in donation and transplantation rates.

Australia has an 'opt-in' donation consent system. People can register their intent to be a donor on the Australian Organ Donor Register. Family agreement is sought when donation is possible, so it is important that people also let those closest to them know if they want to be a donor.

The national program has been developed to prioritise continuous improvement with reference to international best practices. We will continue to monitor the international landscape, including approaches to consent systems, registration and clinical practice and the impacts on donation and transplantation outcomes.

The operating environment for donation and transplantation remains complex and challenging. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact the health system, the health workforce, and the community, causing a significant decrease in donation and transplantation activity over the last 2 years.

Over the next 5 years, we aim to return donation and transplantation activity to pre-pandemic levels and to drive further improvements. To achieve this, we will prioritise building support across the community, optimising opportunities in the clinical sector, and enhancing systems to enable quality outcomes. We are committed to exploring additional large scale registration initiatives to significantly increase the number of people who are registered donors. We will continue to drive best practice in hospitals through data and accountability. We will also explore further opportunities for living kidney donation with the aim of increasing rates.

Collaboration is integral to increasing donation and transplantation in Australia. The OTA provides leadership to drive, implement and monitor a national approach in partnership with the DonateLife Network, which delivers the national program in 95 hospitals across Australia through an agency in each state and territory and 260 donation specialist staff.

State and territory governments, the organ donation and transplantation sectors, eye and tissue sectors, hospitals, community organisations and the public are critical partners in the national program's success.

**Since the start of the national program, around 16,000 people have received a life-changing organ transplant thanks to the generosity of more than 5,000 deceased organ donors and their families.**

People are at the heart of DonateLife. We thank all the generous donors and their families who have transformed the lives of people needing a transplant through organ and tissue donation.

We also acknowledge the dedication and commitment of our donation specialist staff and transplantation teams. Transplantation is only possible through the donation of organs and tissues, and its life-changing benefits would not be possible without this shared commitment.

# Goals and objectives

## Build support

More people say yes to donation



Raise awareness



Increase family discussion



Increase registration

## Optimise opportunities

Donation and transplantation services deliver the best outcomes



Identify donors & increase consent



Drive excellence in donation services



Increase safe & equitable transplantation

## Enhance systems

Enable quality outcomes through information, technology and resources



Monitor, collect, analyse & report national performance



Advance quality, safety & efficiency



Sustain specialist resources

# Build support

## More people say yes to donation

Sustained community support for donation is crucial to improving donation outcomes in Australia. Donation is only possible through the generosity of individuals and their families who say yes to donation, to save and transform the lives of others.



### Raise awareness

#### Objective

More Australians understand the need for organ and tissue donation and the benefits it gives to another person needing a transplant.

#### Why it's important?

Access to life-changing and often life-saving transplantation depends on the willingness of people to donate and public awareness and confidence in the donation process.

40%

of families say yes to donation if they are not aware of what their family member wanted



### Increase family discussion

#### Objective

More Australians talk to their family about organ and tissue donation.

#### Why it's important?

In Australia, families are always asked to agree to donation. It is important registered donors have discussed their donation wishes with their family.

60%

of families say yes to donation when they know their family member wanted to be a donor



### Increase registration

#### Objective

All Australians who want to be an organ and tissue donor register on the Australian Organ Donor Register.

#### Why it's important?

Around 4 in 5 Australians aged 16 years and over support organ and tissue donation but only 1 in 3 have registered to be a donor. Being a registered donor has a direct impact on families agreeing to donation.

90%

of families say yes to donation if their family member is registered

# Optimise opportunities

## Donation and transplantation services deliver the best outcomes

Only around 2% of deaths in hospital occur in a way that organ donation is medically possible, so every donation opportunity is precious. A national approach enables as many Australians as possible to have the opportunity to donate, so that more people have access to life-changing transplantation.



### Identify donors & increase consent

#### Objective

DonateLife receives notification of all patients approaching end-of-life in intensive care and emergency departments for assessment for potential organ donation.

#### Why it's important?

Notification to DonateLife means the opportunity to donate is explored whenever it is possible and that the wishes of individuals are respected. Suitability for donation is ascertained and the person's registration status is checked so their wishes can be made known to their family. Donation specialists assist families through providing accurate information and support, including throughout the entire process if donation proceeds.



### Drive excellence in donation services

#### Objective

Lead, implement and monitor nationally consistent best donation practice in Australia through clinical practice improvement initiatives to provide exceptional care throughout the donation process.

#### Why it's important?

Donation leading to transplantation is a complex process with many steps. Optimising practices in donor identification, family approach, donor care and assessment, organ allocation and retrieval are important in enabling the best outcomes for donors, their families and for those on the transplant waitlist.



### Increase safe & equitable transplantation

#### Objective

Support the donation and transplant sectors to adopt best clinical practices, policy and technology that enables optimal organ allocation and utilisation so more people have access to life-changing transplantation.

#### Why it's important?

Transplantation is the best and sometimes only treatment option for organ failure, saving or enhancing the life of the recipient, and providing benefits to their family and the broader community. Supporting the sectors to adopt robust practices, policies and frameworks will improve access to and outcomes from organ transplantation.

# ~1,800

Australians are waitlisted for a life-changing organ transplant

# Enhance systems

## Enable quality outcomes through information, technology and resources

Underpinning a coordinated and consistent national approach is the effective use of enabling capability – information, technology, and resources – an essential part of achieving continuous improvements in clinical practice and community awareness.



**Monitor, collect, analyse & report national performance**

### Objective

Monitor, collect, analyse and report information and data to provide evidence, support decision-making and drive continuous improvement in organ and tissue donation and transplantation.

### Why it's important?

Clinical data informs program design and delivery, which drives best clinical practices and efficiencies in donation and transplantation practices.

Data about community attitudes, beliefs and expectations is critical in addressing barriers to donation and informing the approach to increase donation consent rates.

National performance data is distributed to support strategic decision-making and continuous improvement across the donation and transplantation sectors.



**Advance quality, safety & efficiency**

### Objective

The organ donation and transplantation system is safe, efficient and effective through clinical guidelines, timely surveillance practices and the adoption of state-of-the-art technology.

### Why it's important?

Transplant recipients, donors and families, as well as the Australian community trust that the organ donation and transplantation system is as safe and effective as possible.

Optimal systems and state-of-the-art technology enable improvements in efficiency, equity of access, donation and transplant outcomes, and mitigation of emerging risks.



**Sustain specialist resources**

### Objective

Dedicated resources are available through collective funding from the Commonwealth and state and territory governments to enable the system to have the infrastructure and expertise necessary to support donation and transplantation.

### Why it's important?

Resourcing should not be a barrier to donation and transplantation. An effective system requires funding to employ specialist staff and cover associated donation and transplantation costs.

# 260

donation specialist staff support 95 hospitals across Australia



# Performance measures

## Targets by 2027

### Increase the donation rate

- 25 deceased organ donors per million population (~680 deceased organ donors per year)
- 14 living donors per million population (~380 living organ donors per year)

### Increase the transplantation rate

- 2,000 transplants per year, from deceased and living donors (~75 transplants per million population)

### Build support

**50%** of eligible Australians (16 years and over) are registered on the Australian Organ Donor Register

**90%** of registered donors have discussed donation with their family

**40%** of eligible Australians (16 years and over) are aware of the DonateLife brand

### Optimise opportunities

**70%** national organ donation consent rate

**100%** routine notification to DonateLife of all planned end-of-life in intensive care units and emergency departments

**95%** of donation conversations with families involve a donation specialist nurse

### Enhance systems

Hospital and jurisdictional performance data and analysis disseminated

Waitlist, donation and transplantation data is publicly available

Increased utilisation of donation and transplantation information systems

We thank all the generous donors  
and their families who have  
transformed the lives of people  
needing a transplant through  
organ and tissue donation.

We also acknowledge the dedication  
and commitment of our donation  
specialist staff and transplantation  
teams. Transplantation is only possible  
through the donation of organs and  
tissues, and its life-changing benefits  
would not be possible without this  
shared commitment.



[donatelife.gov.au](https://donatelife.gov.au)