

ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION

KEY MESSAGES

Organ and tissue donation: Key facts

- Organ and tissue donation saves lives. One donor can save and transform the lives of up to 10 people and improve the lives of many more.
- Around 1,400 people are on Australian transplant waiting lists at any one time, and a further 12,000 people are on dialysis.
- Organ donation is a rare event – only about 1-2 per cent of people who die in hospital are eligible to donate their organs. However, many more people have the potential to become tissue donors.

Australian Organ Donor Register (AODR): Key facts

- In NSW, you can no longer register your donation decision via your driver's licence.
- The Australian Organ Donor Register is the only register to record your decision to become an organ and tissue donor.
- It takes less than a minute to register your donation decision on the Australian Organ Donor Register at donatelife.gov.au.
- Once you've registered, it's important that you share your decision with family and friends. Families play a crucial role in the donation process because they are asked to confirm the donation decision of their loved one.
- We know that families that have discussed and know the decision of their loved ones are much more likely to say 'yes' to donation. For many, the donation process provides them with comfort in their loss of a loved one.

Australian transplant waiting lists: Key Facts

- In Australia, organ transplantation waiting lists are kept for each transplantable organ – heart, lungs, kidneys, liver, intestine and pancreas.
- A person is put on a transplant waiting list when they have end-stage organ failure, all other treatments have failed and their medical specialist believes they will benefit from a transplant.



Health

NSW Organ & Tissue
Donation Service

Incorporating:
NSW Bone Bank
Lions NSW Eye Bank
Australian Ocular Biobank

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- Waiting times depend on the availability of suitable donated organs, sensitivities or special requirements of the recipient and the allocation of organs through the transplant waiting lists. While this is usually between six months and four years, it can be even longer.
- When a person is put on a transplant waiting list they receive support from a transplant coordinator, who keeps them and their family informed of developments and timelines.
- When a match is found, the transplant coordinator arranges for any necessary tests or scans, and coordinates the surgical team.

Organ and tissue donation among culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) groups: Key facts

- Organ compatibility or a match increases with people from the same ethnic background but is not a guarantee.
- Historically people from diverse cultural and religious groups have been harder to engage about the benefits of organ and tissue donation due to perceived myths and misconceptions about the donation process. However, this is changing.
- Events such as the *Life Giving Stories* are important to raise the profile of and start a community conversation about the benefits of organ and tissue donation.
- Most religions support donation, as an act of compassion and generosity, and religious leaders from the Islamic, Hindu, Catholic, Jewish Buddhist and Greek Orthodox faiths have all acknowledged their support.

Who can donate?

- The majority (78%) of Australians aged 65+ years are willing to donate organs and tissues, yet 37% assume they are too old to be considered for organ and tissue donation.
- People in their 70's and 80's have saved the lives of others through organ and tissue donation.
- Don't rule yourself out – count yourself in!
- Each potential donor is assessed on an individual basis. There is every possibility you may be able to donate your organs or tissues.

Register today at donatelife.gov.au.