

# Life Giving Stories

## LIFE GIVING STORIES INSPIRED WOLLONGONG AUDIENCES TO START CONVERSATIONS WITH LOVED ONES ON ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION

Close to 200 people attended this year's award-winning storytelling event Life Giving Stories on Saturday 17 November at the Bruce Gordon Theatre at the Illawarra Performance Arts Centre (IPAC) in Wollongong which featured inspiring storytellers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who shared their journey on the ultimate gift of life.

The heartwarming stories of Fulvia Nisyrios whose family originally came from Italy and settled in Wollongong, Rupesh and Mili Udani, both born in India, Rita and George Germanos from Lebanese background, Jaime Estrada raised in the Philippines and Australian-Vietnamese Andrew Vien-Debetaz all left the audiences inspired to have conversations with their loved ones about the importance of organ and tissue donation and to register as donors.

On its fourth successful year, Life Giving Stories has traveled to regional NSW for the first time and showcased the inspiring journey of organ and tissue donors and recipients to increase awareness and highlight the importance of organ and tissue donation amongst multicultural communities in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region.

Life Giving Stories 2018 was produced by the NSW Multicultural Communication Service in partnership with the NSW Organ and Tissue Donation Service, Contemporary Asian Australian Performance and the Multicultural Health Service Illawarra Local Health District with the support of the Multicultural Communities Council of Illawarra.

The presentation of the storytellers was accompanied by extraordinary photographs from private collections, these stories revealed engaging and inspiring insights into extraordinary generosity. After the performance, a Q & A panel discussion was held where the audience asked questions from the storytellers about their experiences and they also learned more about organ donation from Dr Cartan Costello, Donation Specialist from the Wollongong Hospital.

After the stage production, a number of people immediately registered to be organ and tissue donors with the OTDS team members taking down registrations on the day.

This inspiring theatre production which won the Public Sector Category at the 2016 Australian Multicultural Marketing Awards was directed by master storyteller / photographer William Yang and writer / producer Annette Shun Wah.

### **FACTS ON ORGAN DONATION**

- *Organ failure happens to people of any age regardless of gender, ethnicity or religion.*
- *Organ donation is encouraged and supported by most religions and is considered a generous act that enables people to give the ultimate gift of life to others.*
- *Organ compatibility or a match increases with people from the same ethnic background but is not a guarantee.*
- *More than 1,500 Australians from all walks of life are waiting for a lifesaving transplant right now*
- *Each organ donor can save up to 10 lives and improve the lives of many others.*

Join the conversation: [www.facebook.com/lifegivingstories](http://www.facebook.com/lifegivingstories)

Register to be an organ donor today on [www.donatelife.gov.au](http://www.donatelife.gov.au)

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An initiative of:

**NSW Multicultural Health  
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and **NSW Organ and Tissue  
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