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GIVE THE GIFT OF LIFE THIS CHRISTMAS

The AMA is encouraging Australians to use family time this Christmas to discuss organ donation, and make the serious commitment to register to become an organ donor.

AMA President, Dr Michael Gannon, said today that becoming an organ donor is giving the gift of life to other people.

Dr Gannon said that around 1600 people are on the Australian organ transplant waiting list at any one time.

“That is 1600 people who can directly benefit from another person’s decision to become an organ donor,” Dr Gannon said.

“One organ and tissue donor can help more than 10 people by saving a life, improving the quality of life, and restoring bodily function.

“But only one per cent of all hospital deaths occur in the specific circumstances that allow for organ donation.

“This is why every potential donor counts.”

Dr Gannon said that potential organ donors need to go the extra step beyond talking about organ donation with family, friends, and loved ones – they have to register.

“Registration is a vital factor in becoming an organ and tissue donor,” Dr Gannon said.

“In Australia, the family will always be asked to confirm the donation decision of the deceased individual before donation takes place

“The majority of Australians – 69 per cent – are willing to become organ and tissue donors.

“When their loved one was registered as an organ donor, 91 per cent of families agreed to organ donation.

“If they knew their loved one wanted to be an organ donor, but had not actually registered their decision, 75 per cent of families agreed with the decision.

“While those families who are aware of their loved one's wish to become an organ donor are more likely to agree to donation, 64 per cent do not know or are not sure of the donation decision of their loved ones.

“Only 52 per cent of families agreed to organ donation when their loved one had not registered or discussed their donor wishes.

“That is why it is important to register, and equally important for donors to make their families aware of the registration.”

Dr Gannon said the AMA strongly encourages all Australians to consider becoming organ and tissue donors.

“Families come together at Christmas, and there is no better time to discuss the life-saving decision to become an organ donor and ensure this decision is honoured by family members,” Dr Gannon said.

“But potential donors should also make sure they register on the Australian Organ Donor Register.

“Registration will help make certain that your gift of life saves and enhances other lives.”

In 2015, 1241 Australians received an organ transplant from 435 organ donors.

Those wishing to donate their organs can register their consent on the Australian Organ Donor Register at <http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/medicare/australian-organ-donor-register>

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