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**CONSIDER GIVING THE GIFT OF LIFE – REGISTER AS AN ORGAN AND TISSUE DONOR THESE HOLIDAYS**

More than 1000 Australians will spend these holidays waiting for the ultimate gift of life - an organ transplant.

The AMA is encouraging all Australians to consider registering as organ and tissue donors, in the spirit of giving.

“As families come together to share the holidays, Christmas festivities and holiday gatherings can be a good time to discuss your donation decision with your family members,” AMA President, Dr Tony Bartone, said today.

“Australia is a leader in organ and tissue transplantation, in terms of transplant outcomes. While donation rates are continually improving as a result of reform measures introduced in 2009, we can do better.

“We still do not have sufficient donated organs to meet the needs of those who might benefit from a transplant.

“By increasing Australia’s rate of organ and tissue donation, more individuals and their families can benefit from receiving life-enhancing transplants.

“This is also good for our healthcare system, as the transplantation of organs and tissues such as kidneys and corneas, is cost-effective compared to the expense of providing ongoing treatment to those waiting for a transplant.

“Less than 2 per cent of people in Australia who die in hospitals can become donors, as particular circumstances have to occur for a patient to be medically suitable to donate.

“That is why it is so important for every Australian to consider becoming a donor.

“In Australia, your family will always be asked to confirm your donation decision. In nine out of 10 cases, if the loved one is a registered organ donor, families agree to proceed with organ donation. That drops to four in 10 when the family is unaware or unsure of their loved one’s donation decision.

“The AMA supports organ and tissue donation, and strongly encourages every Australian to register their decision donation on the Australian Organ Donor Register, and discuss that decision with their families.

“We sincerely thank every organ donor for their generosity, and every donor family for making such a generous decision during a very difficult time in their lives.”

The AMA *Position Statement on Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation 2017* is at <https://ama.com.au/position-statement/organ-and-tissue-donation-and-transplantation-2017>

**Background**

- About 1400 Australians are on the transplant waiting list at any given time, with a further 11,000 on dialysis.

- In 2017, 1402 Australians received organs from 510 deceased donors. A further 9,600 Australians received eye or tissue donations.
- In 2017, a streamlined online registration form was established to make joining the Australian Organ Donor Register even easier. Just head to the DonateLife website at <https://donatelife.gov.au> to register.
- DonateLife has a wide range of information available for potential donors, donor families, and health professionals. Resources are available in a wide number of languages, and there are resources specific to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and to multicultural and multi-faith communities.

*Source: DonateLife (the Australian Government Organ and Tissue Authority)*

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