

December 6, 2011

Media Release

Transplant Australia welcome NSW Discussion Paper to improve donation rates

Transplant Australia, the national community voice for organ and tissue donation and transplantation, has today (Tuesday, December 6) welcomed the release of a NSW Government Discussion aimed at increasing the rate of organ donation.

Transplant Australia National Chairman, Dr Alan Amodeo OAM, congratulated the NSW Health Minister, Jillian Skinner, for tackling head-on issues which were potentially undermining overall efforts to increase donation in NSW.

“Transplant Australia is extremely pleased at the progress made so far with the National Reform Package to lift the rate of donation across the country. The Organ and Tissue Authority, established by the Federal Government, is making good inroads into saving more lives,” Dr Amodeo said.

“However we see this discussion paper as an additional shot in the arm aimed at removing some of the blockages that have long existed. Folding the donation option to tick a box on the NSW driver’s licence into the national Australian Organ Donor Register is a recommendation we have long supported.”

Transplant Australia is concerned that many people in NSW when confronted by the driver’s licence option default to a ‘no’ position because they have not had the opportunity to be properly informed about donation.

Transplant Australia also believes laws which better respected an individual’s wishes to become a donor were worthy of public debate and should be supported.

“We speak to many community groups and the number one concern of those who believe in donation is that their decision may be overruled by a grieving loved one. The right of these people who have made an informed decision needs to be honoured and we would support this change,” Dr Amodeo said.

“That said, this issue can be minimised by encouraging all of those who believe in donation to inform their loved ones and at the same time to ask and know their loved one’s wishes. Good family discussion will ensure that donation opportunities are maximised.”

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Dr Amodeo said Minister Skinner had already demonstrated a strong commitment to maximising donation rates in NSW and helping to save more lives.

“We were appreciative of the O’Farrell Government’s decision to support the staging of the Australian Transplant Games in Newcastle in 2012. This will undoubtedly shine a spotlight on the living proof of donation. That is those recipients who are alive today because of the generous decision of an organ donor.

“This discussion paper will add to community understanding and generate significant comment which will undoubtedly help donation rates.

“NSW had a proud history of transplantation with many firsts at St Vincent’s, Royal Prince Alfred and Westmead Hospitals. We are very hopeful that the recommendations will be adopted and that NSW will lead Australia in donation and transplantation for the long-term.”

Further information:

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