



# Australian Organ Donor Register

## What is the Australian Organ Donor Register?

The Australian Organ Donor Register (the Donor Register) lets people record their decision about becoming an organ and tissue donor for transplantation after death.

The Donor Register can be accessed 24 hours a day by authorised medical personnel.

This ensures that, in the event of death, a person's decision to donate is recorded and accessible.

Recording your decision on the Donor Register is voluntary and you have complete choice over which organs and tissue you are prepared to donate. Donation can involve:

- organs—which include kidneys, heart, lungs, liver and pancreas
- tissue—which includes heart valves, bone tissue, skin and eye tissue.

If you do not want to become an organ or tissue donor, you can also register your decision not to donate on the Donor Register.

## Why should I consider donating organs and tissue?

For people with serious or life-threatening illnesses, organ or tissue transplantation could mean another chance at life. More than 30 000 Australians have received transplants in the last 60 years. Improved survival rates now mean that most organ or tissue recipients can look forward to a better quality of life. By choosing to record your wishes on the Donor Register, you could save the lives of up to 10 people.

## Am I eligible to register?

Anyone aged 16 years and over and living in Australia can register their organ donation decision on the Donor Register.

Anyone can donate organs and tissue—there is no age limit on the donation of some organs and tissue. While your age and medical history will be considered, you shouldn't assume you are too young, old, or not healthy enough.

## How do I register?

You can register:

- in person—at a Medicare office
- over the phone—call **1800 777 203\*\***
- online—**[www.medicareaustralia.gov.au](http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au)**

If you do not want to become an organ or tissue donor, you can register your decision not to donate on the Donor Register in the same way.

## **Can I change the details recorded on the Donor Register?**

You can change any of your details recorded on the Donor Register, including your donation decision by filling in a change of details form available from any Medicare office or online at **[www.medicareaustralia.gov.au](http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au)**

## **Why do I need to provide my Medicare card number to the register?**

While it isn't compulsory, providing your Medicare number will help us keep track of your address details. Without current address details, a life saving opportunity may be lost.

## **Should I discuss my decision about donation with my family, partner or close friends?**

It is important that you discuss your organ donation decision with your family, partner or close friends. They will be an important part of the donation process so you need to make sure they are aware of your decision to register.

They may be asked to confirm that you had not changed your mind since you registered your decision. Where you

have recorded your consent to donate organs and/or tissue your family, partner or friends will be asked questions regarding your medical history to determine which organs and/or tissue may be suitable for transplantation.

The more family members who know of your decision about organ and tissue donation, the easier they will find it to make sure your decision is respected and fulfilled.

## **When can organ and tissue donation occur?**

In most cases, a person may only donate organs where they have been declared brain dead in an intensive care unit in hospital. Brain death is when blood circulation to the brain stops and the brain stops functioning and dies with no possibility of recovery. A series of tests carried out by two independent and appropriately qualified senior doctors establishes that brain death has occurred.

Less than one per cent of all people who die in hospital die in this way and therefore can donate their organs.

People are sometimes concerned or confused about the difference between brain death and coma. Brain death is completely different from a coma. A patient in a coma is unconscious because their brain is injured in some way, but their brain continues to function and may heal. Medical tests on a patient can clearly show the difference between brain death and coma.

More people have the opportunity to donate tissue for transplantation such as eye tissue, heart valves, bone tissue and skin tissue. This is because tissue donation does not need the same circumstances as organs do for transplantation to be successful.

## **How are organs and tissue removed?**

The removal of organs and tissue is no different to any other surgical operation and is performed by highly skilled professionals. The donor's body is always treated with dignity and respect. The donation of organs and tissue does not alter the physical appearance of the body, nor does it affect funeral arrangements

## **Summary checklist**

- Record your organ and/or tissue donation decision on the register.
- Talk to your family to make sure they know your wishes.

## **For more information on the Donor Register**

Online **[www.medicareaustralia.gov.au](http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au)**

Email **[aodr@medicareaustralia.gov.au](mailto:aodr@medicareaustralia.gov.au)**

Call **1800 777 203\*\***

TTY **1800 552 152\*\*** (Hearing and speech impaired)

TIS **131 450\*** (Translating and Interpreting Service)

\* Call charges apply.

\*\* Call charges apply from mobile and pay phones only.

## **For more information about organ and/or tissue donation**

### **New South Wales**

Level 6, 4 Belgrave Street  
Kogarah NSW 2217

Call **02 8566 1700**

### **Australian Capital Territory**

Canberra Hospital  
Yamba Drive, Garran ACT 2605

Call **02 6244 3071**

## **South Australia**

Level 6, 45 Grenfell Street  
Adelaide SA 5000

Call **08 8207 7117**

## **Northern Territory**

1st floor, Royal Darwin Hospital  
Rocklands Drive, Tiwi NT 0810

Call **08 8922 8786**

## **Victoria**

538 Swanson Street  
Carlton VIC 3053

Call **03 9349 4762**

## **Queensland**

Level 4, Building 1  
Princess Alexandra Hospital  
Ipswich Road, Woolloongabba QLD 4102

Call **07 3240 2350**

## **Western Australia**

6th floor, Albert Facey House  
469 Wellington Street, Perth WA 6000

Call **08 9222 0222**

## **Tasmania**

Level 3, Hobart Corporate Centre  
85 Macquarie Street, Hobart TAS 7000

Call **03 6270 2209**

## **Australian Organ and Tissue Authority**

Level 5, 51 Allara Street  
Canberra City ACT 2600

Call **02 6198 9800**