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**AMA ENCOURAGES MORE AUSTRALIANS TO BECOME ORGAN DONORS**

*DonateLife Week 2018 – 29 July-5 August*

The AMA is urging more Australians to use this week – *DonateLife Week 2018* – to register to become an organ donor, and to share and discuss this momentous decision with their family and friends.

AMA President, Dr Tony Bartone, said today that Australia is a leader in organ and tissue transplantation, in terms of transplant outcomes, but our donation rates lag well behind world donor leaders like Spain, Portugal, and Croatia.

“Australia’s donation rates are continually improving as a result of reform measures introduced since 2009, but there remains potential for significant further growth,” Dr Bartone said.

“In Australia, as with all developed countries, there continues to be insufficient donated organs to meet the needs of those who might benefit from transplantation.

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

“This has a positive impact on the health care system as transplantation of organs and tissues, such as kidneys and corneas, is cost-effective compared to the expense of providing ongoing treatment for those waiting for a transplant.

“Around 1400 Australians are on the transplant waiting list at any time, with a further 11,000 on dialysis.

“Donation happens infrequently as fewer than two per cent of people in Australia who die in hospital can become an organ donor, as particular circumstances must occur for a patient to be medically suitable for organ donation.

“This is why it is so important for every Australian to consider becoming an organ and tissue donor,” Dr Bartone said.

Dr Bartone said the AMA is a passionate supporter of organ donation and organ donors.

“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.”

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.

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

**Background:**

- In 2017, 1402 Australians received organs from 510 deceased donors. A further 9,600 Australians received eye or tissue donations.
  - In Australia, the family of a potential deceased donor will always be asked to confirm their loved one's donation decision.
  - Registering to be a donor directly influences consent rates. Ninety per cent of families agree to proceed with organ donation when their loved one is registered; however, this rate drops to 40 per cent when the family is unaware of their loved one's donation decision.
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