

# **Australian Government response to the Mid-Point Implementation Review of the National Reform Agenda – *a World’s Best Practice Approach to Organ and Tissue Donation in Australia***

In July 2008, the Australian Government announced a commitment of \$151 million over four years for A World’s Best Practice Approach to Organ and Tissue Donation for Australia. Shortly thereafter, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) endorsed the reform package.

The aim of the reforms is to implement a world’s best practice approach to organ and tissue donation for transplantation and achieve a significant and lasting increase in the number of life-saving and transforming transplants for Australians.

The Australian Government articulated nine measures to implement the national reform agenda.

In 2010, the first full year of implementation, 309 organ donors saved and improved the lives of 931 Australians; this was the highest donation rate since national records began. The increase is substantial, being a 51% increase on the baseline of 205 organ donors (average 2000-2008), and a 25% increase on the 2009 outcome (247 organ donors).

In recognising these results I still felt it was prudent to review progress in implementing the national reform agenda to assess the impact and potential for future growth, as well as opportunities to improve our implementation strategies.

In March 2011, I commissioned the Organ and Tissue Authority (OTA) to undertake a Mid-Point Implementation Review of the Australian Government’s national reform agenda.

The review was undertaken by an independent reviewer, Australian Healthcare Associates (AHA), a leading consultancy firm in the health and community care sector.

The Review consultants met with over 40 key stakeholders in preparing their report. The consultations included members of the OTA’s Advisory Council, State Medical Directors (SMDs), state and territory health department representatives, OTA Charter Signatories, DonateLife Network staff and international sector experts.

The review primarily focused on 2010, the first full year of implementation, and where appropriate included information about relevant activities in 2011. While the report found that there has been solid progress to date and that this progress equals or betters progress seen in other nations at an equivalent stage in the reform journey, it identifies the following factors as key to the next stage of implementation:

- driving improvements in clinical practice and establishing a Clinical Governance Framework;
- enhancing national performance measurement; and
- expanding a professional education program for DonateLife Network and broader hospital staff.

It is worth noting that many of the findings made in the Report had already been considered by the OTA and the DonateLife Network leadership team, and implementation had already commenced to address each of the key factors for the next phase of the reform.

The Report also finds that future donation rates of 23-25 donors per million population are potentially achievable and that implementation should focus on those hospitals with the greatest potential to increase and sustain donation rates.

I believe that we can only benefit from the opportunities identified in AHA's Report and build on the success we have already achieved.

In order to maintain our current momentum in delivering on the national reform agenda, I am pleased to concurrently release the Review Report and the Government's response.

Catherine King  
Parliamentary Secretary for Health and Ageing  
September 2011

# Mid-Point Implementation Review Report of the National Reform Package – *A World’s Best Practice Approach to Organ and Tissue Donation.*

The Australian Government agrees in-principle with all the opportunities for DonateLife Network enhancement identified in the Report.

<b>AHA opportunity for network enhancement</b>	<b>Australian Government’s Response</b>
<i>Establish a relentless focus by the Authority on supporting and prioritising activities that deliver measurable changes in clinical care of potential donors in DonateLife Network hospitals</i>	<p>This is a key focus of the Organ and Tissue Authority (OTA) which is working in conjunction with the Commonwealth Government, states and territories and the DonateLife Network clinical leadership, to improve training, support and data collection to drive clinical practice reform at the hospital level. This includes hospital performance audits across comparable hospital peer groups to support ongoing clinical development. This is a key strategic priority for 2011-12.</p> <p>In addition, the OTA is working with key stakeholders to implement a performance and reporting framework, as agreed with the Commonwealth Government, states and territories and the DonateLife Network leadership, as a key strategic priority for 2011-12.</p> <p>The OTA has also established a Clinical Governance Committee comprising State Medical Directors, Agency Managers and senior OTA representatives, to develop coordinated national clinical care processes and guidance documents for the hospital staff.</p>
<i>Reallocate DonateLife Network resources</i>	<p>The OTA will review the optimal distribution of resources across the DonateLife Network for 2012-13 onwards. This will be done in consultation with the states and territories and the DonateLife Network leadership.</p>
<i>Develop an active national clinical practice improvement program to optimise deceased donation</i>	<p>The OTA, in consultation with the Commonwealth Government, states and territories and the DonateLife Network leadership has established a Clinical Governance Committee. The committee is guiding and implementing clinical practice improvement programs to support the clinical and operational practice of DonateLife Network hospital teams.</p>
<i>Establish a national professional education program</i>	<p>The OTA, in consultation with the Commonwealth Government, states and territories and the DonateLife Network leadership is developing national professional education and training programs, including by leveraging international resources, for clinician groups within the DonateLife Network. This is a key strategic priority for 2011-12.</p>
<i>Increase the clinical inputs into the design of implementation strategies and programs</i>	<p>The OTA is enhancing processes for clinical input into the national reform agenda through the establishment of the Clinical Governance Committee which will provide further formal mechanisms for clinical input from the sector. The OTA is drawing upon clinical expertise across the DonateLife Network to improve potential training for requesting consent for donation, the</p>

<b>AHA opportunity for network enhancement</b>	<b>Australian Government's Response</b>
	development of the Electronic Donor Record and for improving monitoring of donation performance at the hospital level.
<i>Draw upon expertise in the sector</i>	The OTA will develop more tailored procurement processes where no commercial market exists and where specific expertise is required, in accordance with Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines. The OTA will continue to draw upon sector expertise through its formal committee structures and through the membership of sector experts on its various working groups as required.
<i>Enhance communication across the DonateLife Network</i>	The OTA will enhance communication with community stakeholders and the DonateLife Network of hospital teams and Agency staff by further developing the DonateLife Network Annual Forum and relevant state and territory DonateLife Agency and Hospital forums to maximise communication. With the implementation of the DonateLife extranet in early 2012, the OTA will explore options for peer networking and other options to increase communication across the DonateLife Network.
<i>Reduce administrative complexity</i>	The OTA has reduced the annual jurisdictional reporting burden from quarterly to six monthly progress reports. The OTA will continue this process by implementing the Electronic Donor Record to reduce the administrative burden during the donation process.
<i>Formalise decision-making mechanisms for the DonateLife Network</i>	The OTA will work with the Commonwealth Government, states and territories and the DonateLife Network leadership to further formalise decision-making processes for the DonateLife Network. The OTA will continue to refer matters to the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council and Australian Health Ministers' Conference in relation to targets, priorities and outcomes under the National Reform Agenda including referral of matters to the Clinical, Technical and Ethical Principal Committee where appropriate.
<i>Improve media management</i>	The OTA is currently updating the DonateLife communication strategy and media plan for 2011-13 in consultation with the sector, including addressing special audiences and a broader community engagement strategy – a key strategic priority for 2011-12. In addition the OTA will continue to refine its media management practices in liaison with key stakeholders.