

MEDIA RELEASE

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Young Australians key to boosting national organ and tissue registration rates

Young Australians are being urged to join the Australian Organ Donor Register (AODR) as they are least likely to have registered as organ and tissue donors or spoken to their family about wanting to be a donor.

In a recent survey conducted by YouGov Galaxy, 88 per cent of respondents aged 18-25 were aware they could register to be a donor but just 14 per cent reported having signed up.

The actual number of young Australians registered is even less. In Australia you can register from the age of 16 and the AODR shows just 8.1 per cent of those aged 16-25 are currently on the register.

This DonateLife Week (28 July – 4 August) is all about promoting the importance of organ and tissue donation to the youth of Australia, and encouraging them to register and tell their family.

“This latest research suggests there could be around 1 million young Australians who are keen to register, but haven’t,” Lucinda Barry, CEO Organ and Tissue Authority said.

“Nine out of 10 families agree to donation when their family member is registered to be a donor, so boosting registration is important.”

One in 10 young Australians 18-25 years surveyed were unaware they could donate their organs and tissue.

Of the cohort who were aware they could register, around one in three had not yet considered whether they wanted to, and another one in three wanted to register, but didn’t know how to go about it.

Of those young respondents not registered, 37 per cent said they ‘wanted to, but have not got around to it,’ and 37 per cent had been put off by common organ and tissue donation myths.

“One of the most common myths about organ donation is people thinking they can’t donate because of their lifestyle choices, are too old, or sick to become a donor,” Lucinda Barry said.

“People who smoke, drink or don’t have the healthiest lifestyle can still donate. You don’t have to be in perfect health to save lives.

“We encourage you to register and let a doctor make the decision if you would be a suitable donor when the time comes.”

The survey showed that young people were the group least comfortable talking to their families about organ and tissue donation.

DonateLife youth ambassador and kidney transplant recipient, Clement, 22, assured young Australians that registering is quick and easy.

“You can register through the DonateLife website, it only takes a minute – you just need your Medicare card number handy.

“I know that, being young, organ and tissue donation is something we don’t often think about but I’m proof that it can affect people at any age, and often out of the blue.

“We all have the opportunity to potentially gift someone life. So please check out the facts and register now – that way you know your decision is more likely to make a difference,” Clement said.

In 2018, 1,782 lives were transformed by 554 deceased and 238 living organ donors and their families.

Lucinda Barry said all young Australians could do their bit to help ensure more lives were saved through donation in future years.

“If you’re already registered, find a “plus one” to join you on the Donor Register this DonateLife Week. It’s a simple act that will help us boost the number of potential organ and tissue donors in Australia.”

“With more than 1,400 people currently on the waiting list for a transplant, and a further 11,000 people on dialysis, every new registration counts,” Lucinda Barry said.

Check your current registration status by [filling in this form](#), logging into your MyGov Medicare account or calling the Australian Organ Donor Register on 1800 777 203.

You can register as an organ and tissue donor [here](#).

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