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The day our family changed forever

My sister was a special person from the day she was born, as she entered the world on Christmas Day. Our family—mum, dad, Donna and myself had discussed organ donation as a family and all agreed it was a good idea, but never thought it would happen to us.

Mum, dad and myself said goodbye to Donna as she got into her car to drive to visit her best friend. Life changed forever that day when mum and dad received a phone call from John Hunter Hospital to say Donna had been flown there and was in critical condition.

When we arrived, doctors explained that Donna was on life support. The shock is unexplainable and it is not a situation that anybody ever expects to happen. A Donor Coordinator was sent to talk to us and said Donna would be a candidate for donation. Our decision was an easy one as we knew that's what Donna would have wanted. We knew this because we had already had the discussion.

Donna was pronounced brain dead and her organs were removed. Two children and two adults received organs and a new life. This has given our family some comfort over the years, knowing some good could come from our tragedy.

Donna wasn't speeding or doing anything wrong she simply leaned over to change a cassette tape in her car and lacked concentration for a few seconds, which we have all done from time to time. Nobody thinks it will happen to them but if it does, you need to know your loved ones wishes. That's why it is important to discuss it with your family. People need to ask themselves if their child needed an organ, would they accept it? Of course they would, so people also have to be willing to give.

Karen



My sister Donna.

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One chance. One life.

Ashley. A remarkable young man, a larrikin, a devoted family guy and a true hero.

Ashley was 27 years of age and experiencing one of the greatest peaks of his life, attending the Clipsal 500 race meeting in Adelaide driving his very own V8 Supercar. A dream come true.

But in a devastating accident on the track, Ashley's race and life was cut short.

Ashley had lived his life to its utmost potential. He crammed so many outstanding experiences into his 27 years; almost as though he knew he had just that one short chance, one life.

Ashley grew up in a small town, surrounding himself with noble people, who shared his keenness for life. He had a mischievous humour and a smirk that brought delight to the lives of all he met. But for every part cheeky, he had equal parts genuine compassion and respect. A true gentleman and a true larrikin. Ashley was an incredible son, brother, partner, father and mate.

Following his accident and death, true to his giving and generous nature, he was able to give one final, ultimate gift. He was able to donate life. Ashley was a multi-organ donor and directly touched the lives of six people with his gift. Thankfully as a family we had discussed organ and tissue donation and knew what Ashley's wishes were and, that if given the chance, he wanted to donate life. His death was a tragedy that we didn't see coming and we can't imagine having made the decision to donate without knowing his wishes. We share Ashley's story when we can and always encourage families to discuss donation so they know the wishes of their

loved ones. For Ashley to be a donor was a true blessing to our family.

Ash didn't have a second chance at life, of course we - his family - wish he had, but he did make the most of the chance he had, he lived a beautiful life and made us all so proud, he was the rock our family revolved around. His gift gave his donor recipients the chance to live their lives and share their futures with their families and loved ones. They had already battled through sickness and now Ashley's gift has given them a chance that they each deserve. We think about the recipients often and wish them all a magnificent future.

Ashley will always be sincerely missed, it's hard to make sense of losing such a precious person from our world. But ... he will always be remembered for his life, his love, and his gift – one chance, one life.

Ashley's family



Ashley. His gift saved six lives—his love and smile touched many.