

DonateLife
BOOK OF
LIFE

A collection of life-saving and life-changing stories from people touched by **organ and tissue donation.**





Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC
Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia

Foreword to the DonateLife Book of Life

by Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce, AC
Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia

As the inaugural DonateLife Ambassador, I have been privileged to observe the impressive leadership of the DonateLife team and agency network in managing organ and tissue donations throughout the country, and in educating Australians about the issues that are central to our decisions to give life.

Inspired by the work of these outstanding professionals, the *DonateLife Book of Life* is a heartfelt appeal to all Australians urging us to find out the facts about organ and tissue donation, to make well informed decisions, and to discuss those decisions with the people close to us.

Here is a collection of stories from brave and thoughtful Australians whose lives have been touched and transformed by a donor's life-affirming decision. These honest and grateful accounts pay tribute to the generosity of lives tragically and abruptly ended: the ultimate act of giving life to another as one's own life passes.

The *DonateLife Book of Life* starts its journey around Australia in DonateLife Week, Sunday 20 to Sunday 27 February 2011, a campaign led by the Australian Government's Organ and Tissue Authority to raise donation awareness among Australians and to increase our donation rates.

It is my hope in 2011 that, as these stories are shared across the nation, many more of us will be moved to think, talk and act on a decision that can help bring life and healing to thousands of Australian lives.

This is a decision for all of us and each of us. We share life and we share a capacity to give life. Our personal experiences of living and giving are most powerfully told through our stories. This book is our carriage and our conduit for ensuring that our decisions bring the greatest good to the greatest number in the Australian community.

We are forever indebted to those Australians who have chosen to give life. They have made their mark in the most profound ways and the *DonateLife Book of Life* bears their courageous stamp.

May these pages travel far and deep across our generous land.

6 February

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2011

**Organ and tissue donation
for transplantation is based
on the concept of altruism.**



Thank you to my unknown donor

I was 28 years old and lived a spontaneous outgoing lifestyle. I worked hard and enjoyed socialising. I was soon diagnosed with kidney failure due to an unfortunate case of extreme food poisoning.

After feeling unwell over a few days, I visited my GP and was prescribed blood pressure medication to treat the symptoms. By the time I admitted myself to the hospital, it was too late. I was told that I had to dialyse three nights a week and that the average waiting period for a transplant was approximately seven years.

Although I am afraid of needles, I chose to dialyse using home haemodialysis to maintain my lifestyle. For three and a half years, my routine was work, dialysis and sleep. It was mentally and physically exhausting. The immediate future was uncertain and the new constraints on my lifestyle made it difficult to keep up with work, friends and family.

I received an unexpected phone call from the hospital offering a kidney transplant. I thought I would have been waiting another three and a half years. Initially, I thought it was a prank in cruel humour. It was after a few more probing

questions that I realised the phone call was indeed from the hospital.

I was filled with so much excitement on my way to the hospital that all the nightmares of transplant surgery never crossed my mind. The transplant took place immediately. There were no complications.

It has now been one and a half years since my transplant and things are going smoothly. I am exercising again, eating well and focusing on looking after myself and my donor's kidney.

People are always surprised by the amount of anti rejection medication I take, but in all honesty, life is much better now compared to when I was dialysing.

To this day, I don't know what I ate that led to the food poisoning and am still afraid of needles.

I would like to say a big thank you to my anonymous organ donor for giving me a second chance in life. Without you, I would still be living through the pain associated with dialysis.

Taing



**Do you know the
donation decision
of your loved ones?**



Gaynor's story

In November two significant things are happening. I turn 50, and it is the fifth anniversary of my kidney transplant. I am acknowledging these special events by writing my story for the *DonateLife Book of Life*.

At 33 I was unexpectedly diagnosed with renal disease. I was a working woman, a wife and a mother of two young children. What started with fluid on my legs ended with a kidney biopsy, a diagnosis of renal disease and an uncertain future. My treatment was pills, chemotherapy and attitude, as I was too busy to be dealing with renal disease.

I went into remission and when the disease would flare up, my specialist would fight with more chemo and more drugs. We travelled this path for 12 years knowing that a transplant would be our final destination.

People knew I had kidney disease and would amaze me with offers of a kidney when I needed one. Family, friends, work colleagues – many very generous offers.

Of all the people who had offered a kidney, I felt one was in the right space, had come from the right place and I knew would probably do it

if at all possible. So I rang my friend and asked her if she was serious with her offer— she said absolutely.

We went into 'transplant mode' and amazingly we were reasonably compatible given we were unrelated, hitting three markers. The rest could be taken care of with drugs.

My husband, friend and I all drove to Sydney for my transplant surgery and it was hugely successful.

Five years on, my girlfriend is well and running half marathons and I am well, happy, healthy and thankful. Every day I am thankful.

I am thankful to my husband, children, family and friends for their love and support, to my specialist for his knowledge and expertise, to the transplant team and the staff for their expertise and care, and to other medical professionals involved over the years. Most especially, I am thankful to a friend who gave me a gift and the opportunity to have quality of life.

Thank you.

Gaynor



DonateLife Walk 2012

**Australia is a world
leader for successful
transplant outcomes.**



Hero

My husband Turk (Alan), put his life before others as he rushed to help two small kids from a car that had crashed into a guard rail.

He lifted the kids aged five and six from the car, and was assisting the driver when another car hit him. Turk was thrown in the air and he died at the scene.

Luckily, a doctor turned up and he was on life support for two days.

He always joked about parts of him not being good enough for transplantation. There are now many people leading a better life because of him. Someone now has a new heart and two others have his kidneys.

He also gave bone tissue. He had a blind eye, but someone now can see out of it.

He is my HERO.

Irene



Turk loved all creatures great and small

Discover the facts
Decide about becoming
an organ and tissue donor and
Discuss your decision with
the people close to you.



Stewart

Story of encouragement

My son Stewart was tragically killed in a freak motor bike accident. I still find it hard to believe that he is gone and that I just can't wake up from this nightmare.

Stewart was like an angel that shone a light on this dark world. He lived to be a good servant of God and helped people in need. He was only 19 when he volunteered in Uganda and spent a further six months there when he was 21.

On the day of his accident he did some unpaid work to help out his boss, then he was fixing tiles on a roof and then crawling under a house to fix some piping.

It seems so unfair that the only time he had to relax and enjoy himself was when he went for a ride on his bike with his friend. It ended in tragedy.

He touched so many lives through his willingness to support anyone in need. Where God gave him eternal life, he too willingly gave

the gift of life to six people through organ donation.

Stewart wanted to be a Minister and I was recently sent a tape where he was a guest speaker at a local church. He preached about encouragement and how we need to always support those in need. It made me smile again from within and I realised just how proud I was of him.

He has given me encouragement, and at the end of this year I am going to Uganda to volunteer.

I will continue to promote the importance of registering to donate and talking about it with your loved ones.

Stewart may be gone but he will always live on. Knowing about the lives he has changed through organ donation has brought me a sense of peace and balance in trying to cope with the tragic loss of my beautiful son.

Helen



Stewart in Uganda

**Do the people close
to you know your
donation decision?**



Hayden – born an angel

Hayden has always been an angel. Having an older brother with Aspergers, Hayden stepped up and was the little 'big' brother. From very early on he looked out for his brother and protected him. He wasn't just a brother but a best friend and they idolised each other.

Hayden went to get his brother from a friend's house at the end of our street and never made it home after tragically being hit by a motorcycle.

Because Hayden was such a giving child, the decision to donate his heart valves was very easy. This is what Hayden would have wanted—to be able to help someone else.

Hayden was always trying to ensure others were happy and helping out whenever he could. His teachers always praised him and said he was the one child that would always put his hand up to help out.

Hayden tried many sports in his short nine years and fell in love with tennis. This was his niche sport.

Hayden wasn't exactly sure of his career path but he knew that he wanted to help others. He was quite sure that he would either be a nurse or a teacher.

As parents we are heart broken to lose our son at such a young age but we are forever proud of such an inspiring young boy!

Robyn, Jeff and Ryan



Hayden

**The majority of
Australians support
organ and tissue donation.**



Angus's story

My name is Angus. I am now 21 but my story begins when I was nine years old. I was camping with my family and friends when I became sick. Nothing too concerning at the time, just typical flu like symptoms. But after a week I hadn't improved so my parents decided I should see our GP.

The blood tests showed kidney failure, and just like that, I was off in the ambulance to the hospital. Completely oblivious to the situation I remember thinking how cool it was to be riding in the back of an ambulance!

Fortunately, both of my parents were compatible as donors so I did not need to wait for a kidney. I was even more fortunate to be bumped up the transplant list allowing me to avoid dialysis.

I received my Mum's kidney. The transplant couldn't have gone any better and I have had no kidney related complications in more than 12 years! I don't recall much detail from that period of my life, and to be honest I didn't really understand the severity of what I had gone through. All I remember is that I wanted to be a normal kid again, playing cricket with my mates. Thanks to my doctors I was given that opportunity.

One of the risks of a kidney transplant is the ongoing medication and associated complications. Unfortunately such a complication eventuated and I was diagnosed with bladder cancer at the age of 20.

Given my suppressed immune system the prognosis wasn't great as a strong immune response and the prospect of my body beating the cancer was considered unlikely. The oncologist even recommended that my bladder be removed and that I live the rest of my life with an external bag. Thankfully the willingness of my neurologist to 'give the treatment a go' resulted in the best possible outcome and I was able to beat the cancer—although I still require six monthly maintenance treatments for the foreseeable future.

I am extremely thankful to all the doctors involved and consider myself to be very lucky.

Lastly, I would like to thank my Mum for the kidney! I owe you one.

Angus



Angus in intensive care after kidney transplant

**In Australia family consent
is always sought before
donation can proceed.**



The anniversary

It's an international day of sadness but each year my family remembers September 11 as the day that brought them hope.

I was eight and having chemotherapy for leukaemia. The worst bit was when my long brown hair fell out. Although Mum spent time buying and making me hats, it just wasn't the same. All my friends were enjoying school and out having fun while I seemed to be stuck in hospital forever.

When a new chemotherapy wasn't working the doctors suggested a bone marrow transplant. My Dad was a match, and the bone marrow transfusion was scheduled for 11 September 2002—the first anniversary of the terrorist attacks.

I was worried because of the date, known to be a tragedy. Eight hours later the transfusion was over and I was feeling better than I had in months.

I grew into a healthy teenager enjoying life again, but when I was 16 I was diagnosed with Wilson's disease—a hereditary disease that unfortunately meant I needed a liver transplant. The two illnesses were unrelated. It was just incredible bad luck.

In another amazing coincidence, just a week after my diagnosis, a suitable liver became available. Some people wait years for a donor organ. I'd found luck in a very unlucky situation.

I felt a combination of emotions after realising the date, it was September 11. It was many years since Dad gave me his bone marrow. Dad said, "It must be your lucky transplant day." I was filled with hope now that my luck had finally changed and my fears melted away. But I also felt sad for the family who'd lost a loved one. Their kindness had given me a second chance.

In ICU after 10 hours of surgery, I was exhausted. I was moved to the ward after three days and a few weeks later I was at home and cured.

September 11 is a day I always mark. I remember the victims in New York and the illnesses I was able to overcome and am thankful I'm still here. For me, it's an anniversary of life.

Paige



**Australia is a world
leader for successful
transplant outcomes.**



Organ gifts save lives

Hi, my name is Jennifer.

In 2004 I was diagnosed with a rare deficiency which affected my lungs. I was living on 20% oxygen and told I would need a double lung transplant.

I was afraid and couldn't quite get my head around the idea as I didn't know a lot about transplants. I had what I believed to be a good quality of life where I could still do most things, just at a much slower pace. I also have twin boys that needed their mum.

Seven years later I was still on oxygen and finding life a little hard at times. It was then I decided that I did need the double lung transplant. My boys were 13 years old by this stage.

After being on the list for only one and a half months, I received my precious gift. This has not only changed my life, but the life of my children.

I think about my donor and their family every day. The decision they made gave me a gift of life that I will cherish forever. I am taking care of their loved one, whom now is a part of me. I will be forever grateful.

I would like to thank my family and friends for their support and strength, even when they were hurting inside. I could not have done this alone. So thank you for your love and patience.

I feel amazing and make the most out of every day. Life really is beautiful. Thank you. xxx

Jennifer



Jennifer with her sons

**The majority of
Australians support
organ and tissue donation.**



My dad, Mark

My dad was, and still is, my biggest inspiration. He was a single parent who raised his only daughter to be strong, adventurous, honest and hardworking – just like him.

He travelled the world and never held back on adventure. When I was 15 we began our backpacking trips together, leaving the country for months at a time to follow the roads less travelled over the next few years. During these trips he would spend as much time as possible teaching me his thoughts on the world around us.

Back at home, he built his business from scratch and worked hard to put me through school, where he was strict on my studiousness. Dad taught me that you got nothing out of life without hard work, honesty and being a good person. He never missed a chance to sneak a life lesson into our everyday life.

Dad was killed when I was 18.

In one fell swoop I lost my hero, my teacher and my protector. He died of a brain haemorrhage, caused by the hand of another man.

My family had already been through hell; we lost my aunt in the Bali bombings, and another aunt when she was a toddler. This would be the third child my Grandparents had lost and they couldn't bear the thought of walking away from Dad for the last time. They wanted to be there with him. You can't blame them.

I knew Dad wanted to be a donor.

I'll tell you, it's not easy to convince a big family in a time of such heartache and I didn't succeed without a fight! But I did, because I knew it was so important to him and it was what he would have wanted. It was his last sneaky little life lesson!

It's hard to express how much of a comfort it is to be apart of the donor community these days. Even five years on the letters still bring a smile to my face. I am so thankful that Dad taught me to be strong and my family are grateful too because they share the same comfort in receiving the letters and stories from the recipients and families.

I know chances are that I will never meet our recipient families but if I ever did, I would give them the biggest smile and hug and thank them for living and loving every day, in honour of my dad.

Tara



His life; full of adventure

**Less than 60% of families
give consent for donation to
proceed – often because they
do not know the wishes
of the deceased.**



A second chance

My name is Racquel. Last year I celebrated my 40th birthday and this year I will celebrate 17 years of life that I would not have had, were it not for a kidney transplant.

When I was 23, my kidney function deteriorated after years of kidney disease. I went onto dialysis and managed this at home for four months. During this time the staff at the hospital spoke with me about having a kidney transplant. My doctor confirmed that without a transplant I would die.

When I received the call, I had no idea that it would change my life so dramatically. I had a kidney transplant and was cared for by the team at Westmead hospital. Over the years I have taken immune suppression medication and I have been very happy to see real progress happening in the transplant world.

I feel as though I was not only given a second chance, but as though I was given life. I am blessed to have achieved so much during the last 17 years.

I am completing a degree in social welfare and I work for a charity with disadvantaged children. I'm in a loving relationship, I've travelled the world and I say thank you every single day.

A transplant not only changed my life, it saved my life. Were it not for the very courageous and generous decision that someone made, I would not be here today.

Racquel



In LA at Cafe Gratitude

**Any day is a good day
to talk about organ
and tissue donation.**



My second chance in life

I cannot find the words to thank the family and the donor of my liver—who is now resting in peace.

I was put on the transplant waiting list two days after my wedding. I was not allowed to go on a honeymoon because I was so sick. I can't look at my wedding photos now.

I was told they had a liver for me and that I would go into surgery for a couple of hours. I was shocked, surprised and scared ... but happy. So many mixed emotions running around.

After waiting for 14 months, constantly being hospitalised, I am back to life. I enjoy every minute of life and it felt like I was born again when I opened my eyes after the surgery.

May the person who donated their organs rest in peace.

I wouldn't be here now if you didn't consider organ donation. I can't thank you and your family enough. Sad to know such a good and thoughtful person is not here anymore. My thoughts are with you.

Eda



Me with my cousin two months before and two months after my liver transplant

**The most important thing
that helps a family's decision
is their knowing the donation
decision of their loved ones.**



Rodney – the perfect man

Rod is a very much loved man. He lived happily married to Val for 38 years, had three children (Tracey, Trent and Kylie) and six grandchildren—the youngest whom he sadly never got to meet.

There wasn't anything Rod couldn't or wouldn't do for his friends or family. He could not be summed up in one word. A few words that do describe him are patient, helpful, calm, perfectionist, handyman, loving and family man. It has also been said he can 'walk on water'. We thought he was perfect.

He loved cars and absolutely anything to do with cars. Our family grew up watching all kinds of car racing. On Bathurst weekend, it was always best to leave the house as there was to be no talking while the race was on, Val included!

He enjoyed many hobbies including photography, gardening, working in his shed and lawn bowls which he took up when he retired only two years before we lost him.

So we were all very shocked when at 66 years of age, he suffered a stroke and brain haemorrhage. He survived hours of brain surgery and eight weeks in hospital. Sadly he had a fall in hospital and had another bleed on his brain. He was unable to recover and he was declared 'brain dead' the next night.

It was then we had some major decisions to make. Thankfully we had all talked about our wishes to be an organ donor and we knew Rod had registered to do so. He'd had a discussion with us all and made sure we all registered as well. So even in the saddest time of our lives there was no wavering in our decision

for Rod's organs to be donated. The staff from DonateLife could not have been any more helpful, caring or understanding. They made this extremely difficult time so much more bearable for us all.

We then said that final word...Goodbye.

So even in death he is helping others. Six people are now able to go on living a more comfortable life. We know Rod would be as proud of us for following his wishes as we are of him.

Val, Tracey & Trent



Rodney

**Australia is a world
leader for successful
transplant outcomes.**



Mum

Our beautiful Cheryl (Mum) left us—the result of a choking accident (food). It is hard to comprehend and brain death is even harder. On arrival at the hospital we were told to expect the worst and then asked if we had considered organ donation.

We spent the next four days bedside, barely speaking let alone discussing organ donation. We were all hoping that this reality would somehow turn out to be a bad dream.

Over the coming days all the tests were pointing to brain death. We would have to turn off the machine.

The dreaded day arrived and family and friends said their goodbyes. We were given some time in between brain tests. Two are performed, the second one would be the official time of death.

Among the four of us, two of us were in favour and two still unsure. We didn't know mums wishes. Finally we made the decision, we would donate. Even if you're in favour of organ donation it is still scary—all of the what ifs etc. Knowing she was a kind and giving person helped us to make the decision. I must say, in that moment of great sadness and

loss you can't help but feel somewhat happy for someone else. Someone else wont have to experience what you are now. The whole grieving process is strange, nothing seems normal.

A few weeks had passed and we were anxious to know the outcome, hoping something good had come from all we had, and still were going through. My brother had been staying with me and I was taking him home the day I collected the mail. Hesitantly I opened the envelope and read the results out loud. You can imagine the happiness and relief we felt when it read three people had benefited and all were doing well. There were a lot of tears that day.

Mum we are so proud of you. You are our hero, our angel and we love and miss you every day. We hope all the recipients lead long and happy lives.

To DonateLife, all the medical staff, donors and their families you are truly amazing people. This experience has changed our lives forever and we will continue to support organ donation and DonateLife in their endeavour to save lives.

Angela



**Any day is a good day
to talk about organ
and tissue donation.**



A special son and brother. Forever young.

Our darling boy Michael was only 33 years old when he collapsed at home with a severe bleed to the brain (Aneurysm).

He had many friends who were shaken and sad when the news filtered through that Michael had passed away.

His family including my husband and I, Nick and Patricia, his loving sister Tina, her two little boys Lachlan and Mitchell (Mike's nephews whom he loved to bits) their dad Dan, Mike's big brother Paul and his Nana are all still very shocked and grieving in their own way. We miss him heaps of course, but we talk about him often and have a little cry for what should have been.

His story didn't end with him leaving us to start his next journey, in fact it was a new beginning for others. Because of his wishes his heart, kidneys, pancreas, liver and also his retinas and corneas have gone to help others lead a healthier life.

We learnt of his wish to donate from an advertisement on TV asking for families to have a sit down meeting to discuss this very delicate subject. So we, together with Michael, sat down and discussed what we each wanted.

Mike casually remarked that if anything happened to him he couldn't see the point of organs rotting in the ground when others could be helped to live a better healthier life.

This was Michael. He was always thinking of others. Sadly for us our darling Michael did pass away in hospital only a few months after this discussion.

After he collapsed at home, he was then taken to hospital but his lovely caring and thoughtful brain was gone. Because he had already told us that he wanted to donate his organs, it made it so much easier at that very incredibly sad moment in our life because we knew his decision. We just signed the papers.

It was and still is very, very sad that our youngest son died. Knowing that part of him is still living, that he has helped others to survive and that his last wish was extremely kind and caring — certainly helps us with our pain and grief.

Kisses good night as always Mike.

Patricia



Mike. A special son and brother

**40% of Australians
do not know the donation
wishes of their loved ones.**



Turia's story

I was badly burned during an ultra-marathon in 2011. After we were rescued I was put in an induced coma and airlifted to Darwin. It was there that doctors performed an eschartomy on me – slicing me from my feet to my thighs and from my hands to my shoulders. After Darwin, I was flown to Concord in Sydney.

After the doctors debrided (removed) my dead and burned skin they needed something to 'cover' me. As there was absolutely no skin tissue available in Australia they ended up using a synthetic skin replacement.

Sometimes there's no substitute for the real thing and this turned out to be true in my case. My doctors frantically searched the world for some skin tissue and managed to find some in America.

Then came their next problem. In Australia, it is illegal to import any skin tissue – customs would not let the package of life-saving skin through. In a race against time, my doctors put it plain and simple: 'if you do not let this skin through, she will die'.

The skin was rushed to the hospital, where the doctors performed miracles. Not only did they bring me back from death twice, but they also managed to put me in a relatively stable condition.

I want to debunk a few myths about skin donation here. Firstly, all the skin I have on my body is my own skin.

Because I was burned so badly, I didn't have enough unburned skin for the doctors to harvest and graft—they used cadaver (donated) skin to cover me while my own skin grew.

Only 1 out of 100 of people who die will make suitable organ donors. This number jumps significantly when you start talking about skin and other tissue—it's one in five. I was dumbfounded when I found out that there was no skin available in Australia.

I will be eternally grateful to the three Americans who donated their skin. Without it, I definitely would have died, and I definitely wouldn't be here today to tell my story.

Turia



Turia

**Australia is a world
leader for successful
transplant outcomes.**



Angels of humanity

With your heart
I can survive
With your eyes
My sight revived
With your lungs
I breathe new life

With your liver
Blood pumps through me
Your kidneys
Help me live
Without dialysis

Your skin heals
My horrific scars
Burns now slowly fade
So to my pain

Your gift of organs
Given to me and my family
The Miracle of Life
We dared to believe
We would ever receive

We are sad
You lost your battle
To survive
But forever grateful
For your gifts of life

We promise to live for you
Enjoying each precious new day
Because of you
For your courage
And your strength
We will remember always

Your humanity
And your family
Who gave us a special part of you
Your spirit will live on
For eternity

As you gave yourself to us
In our desperate hour of need
You are our hero
Not just an organ donor
But the precious giver of life
An Angel of Humanity

Thank you we wish to say
To you, but cannot
For you are gone
But NEVER forgot

So we say thank you
To all the future heroes
And their families
Who make that heroic decision
To donate
The gift of life
To others

Thank you our heroes
You are inspiring for all to see
Our Angels of Humanity
May you Rest in Peace

Karen

**Most religions support
organ and tissue donation
for transplantation**



Ongoing generations

I have had renal failure all my life and I am currently 56 years old.

Straight after my honeymoon (age 20) I received my first access device (fistula) to go on haemodialysis at home which lasted four years.

As a couple we were always told we would not be able to have any children.

After receiving my kidney transplant at the age of 24 my life completely changed for the better, but I was still unable to conceive.

Then a miracle happened. After prayer my body healed further. Two weeks later I had a healthy period and two weeks after that I fell pregnant.

Ron and I had beautiful boy/girl twins—Samuel and Maree.

My transplant lasted 23 years in which time we were able to travel and live normal lives.

After the transplant failure, I went onto PD (Peritoneal dialysis) for eight years and now I have been back on haemodialysis for two years.

The best news now, is that my twins are 28 years old and are both married. I now have a one year old baby granddaughter Bonnie.

The next generation...

Suzi



Samuel, Ron, Suzi and Maree at the twins 21st. (Inset Suzi with her twins shortly after their birth)

**Ask and know your
loved one's donation wishes**



Birthday gift!

In honour of DonateLife Week I would like to share my story.

In 2004 a week after my 40th birthday, my husband Trevor (on his birthday) donated his kidney to me.

My life started again with increased physical stamina and energy, improved brain function and mood stability. I have had perfect kidney function since then and Trevor has also had perfect kidney function.

He was in hospital for only three days, recovery time six weeks and return to normal kidney function within months. His operation was performed through key-hole surgery.

Donate life!

Tracey



Tracey and Trevor

**If you want to donate life,
discuss it today, OK?**



Forever grateful

After some months of being treated for a duodenal ulcer, I was referred to a physician who immediately diagnosed me with a renal problem and within two days I was admitted to hospital. I was 56 years old. I was told months later that an ulcer can be caused by renal failure.

It was there that I was diagnosed with 'microscopic polyarteritis'. My wife Loretta and I were trained in home haemodialysis and this worked well for us. We have a very active life style and were able to work around dialysing times. We didn't allow it to dominate our lives. I didn't want to be an invalid and I wanted to go to work, which I did until retirement.

One morning Loretta was preparing dinner for family and close friends whose first grandchild was to be born that day. I was at work. At 11:15am Loretta received a phone call from the hospital asking how I was feeling. Then they asked "how would Brian like a kidney?" No

need to tell you the answer. The lamb roast was off. Some friends said "fancy putting off a lamb roast for a kidney".

As we began the three hour trip to hospital we reflected and prayed for the family who were grieving but were so generous. They have given me such a wonderful 16 years (so far).

I have experienced the birth of grandchildren and enjoyed all their activities. Sport, dancing and great family times which I would never have had without the generosity of my donor family. They are a big part of our lives even though we do not know them. I made a promise to them that I would look after and care for this kidney. I treat it as a very treasured gift—which it is.

With the help of the wonderful team in the renal unit and my local renal physician, I am a very happy and healthy man and very, very grateful.

Brian



Brian

**Less than 1 in 5 Australians
have discussed in detail their
donation wishes with
their loved ones.**





Australian Government
Organ and Tissue Authority



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Alternative format

The *DonateLife Book of Life* is available electronically on the Authority's website at www.donatelife.gov.au