



THE HON MARK COULTON MP

Minister for Regional Health, Regional Communications and Local Government
Federal Member for Parkes

Ref No: MS20-000839

Dr Mal Washer
Chair
Organ and Tissue Authority
PO Box 802
CANBERRA ACT 2601

13 NOV 2020

Statement of Expectations

Dear Dr Washer

I write to outline my expectations of the Organ and Tissue Authority (OTA), with a focus on the 2020/21 financial year. This outline will assist with the Australian Government's commitment to effective governance and performance of OTA, guided by the *Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority Act 2008* (the AOTDTA Act) and the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act).

VISION

The Government's vision for OTA is a high-performing and collaborative agency that saves and improves the lives of Australians through the effective delivery and enhancement of the national organ and tissue donation system for transplantation.

The objectives of OTA, as outlined in the AOTDTA Act, include:

- improving organ and tissue donor consent rates;
- supporting clinical system improvement;
- supporting development and implementation of policies, protocols, standards and codes of practice; and
- advising the Minister on program and policy matters.

I wish to also outline the expectations for how OTA manages its relationship with the Government, other agencies and stakeholders, and around issues of transparency and accountability.

PRIORITIES

1. I expect OTA to continue to work collaboratively and in partnership with the Commonwealth Department of Health and state and territory health departments to lead the national program for organ and tissue donation in Australia. With a continued focus on driving best practice in hospitals to sustain the growth in donation and transplantation outcomes.
2. I expect OTA to continue its work promoting and raising community awareness about organ and tissue donation for all Australians. Increasing the number of Australians who have registered their desire to become donors and discussion with their family should be the central goal for these efforts due to the correlation between registration/family awareness and consent for donation.
3. I expect OTA to continue to provide expert advice into to current sector review and

reform processes. In particular, supporting work to address recommendations from the Review of the Australian organ donation, retrieval and transplantation system, and the Analysis of the Australian Eye and Tissue Sector.

4. Further, I expect OTA to deliver priorities within its legislated functions and objectives and as directed by Government. This may include additional responsibilities arising from reforms agreed by all Governments. My expectation is that OTA will provide national leadership and be adaptable and responsive to emerging priorities and issues throughout the year including any further impacts COVID-19 may have on the success of the national program.

RELATIONSHIP WITH MINISTER AND GOVERNMENT

5. Under the AOTDTA Act, the Minister is responsible for issuing policy principles and appointing OTA's Chief Executive Officer and members of the Board. In accordance with the AOTDTA Act, the Minister may give written directions to OTA or its Board, about the performance of its functions.
6. OTA is expected to provide the responsible Minister with accurate and timely advice on significant issues in its core area of responsibility. Significant issues might include: matters for which the Government is likely to be accountable in Parliament; important operational or budgetary issues; and any other issues including COVID-19 which may impact on Government operations or policies over the next 12 months. Where the Minister provides direction to OTA, the Government expects OTA to determine – in accordance with best practice – the methods and procedures for carrying out the policy directive.
7. The Department of Health plays an important role in providing policy advice to the responsible Ministers in their oversight of portfolio agencies. To ensure the Department can undertake this advisory role in an accurate and timely way, OTA should inform the Department of relevant issues and information affecting the portfolio.
8. OTA and the Department should mutually foster an effective working relationship based on principles of open communication, reciprocal advice, and appropriate information sharing. Under the PGPA Act, the accountable authority of a Commonwealth entity has a duty to encourage officials to cooperate with others to achieve common objectives.
9. OTA will work in partnership with the Department, providing information and expert advice to enable policy development and decision, longer-term policy considerations, and policy oversight of government funding, including data and methodologies, which underpin funding arrangements.

RELATIONSHIP WITH EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

10. Organ and tissue donation is a truly nationwide pursuit with countless stakeholders across the nation. It is imperative OTA engages in a collaborative manner with the various stakeholders and interest groups to ensure governments, sector, and community are working to the same outcomes; including increasing the rate of organ and tissue donation and transplantation and making donation a normal conversation in Australia.

ORGANISATIONAL GOVERNANCE AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

11. The OTA Board is accountable for the performance of OTA's functions and its financial management. The Board is responsible for exercising powers and discharging duties in good faith and in the best interests of OTA – and therefore of the Government. The specific functions of the Board are legislated under the AOTDTA Act.
12. OTA is required to operate within budget. Requirements for OTA's financial management are set out in the PGPA Act and the Finance Minister's Orders. I expect OTA will aim to ensure efficiency in its operations and demonstrate value-for-money in delivery of its services.

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

13. OTA operates as part of the Government and is accountable to the Parliament, and ultimately to the public, through the Minister for Regional Health, Regional Communications, and Local Government; the Parliamentary Committee process; and the tabling of its Annual Report.
14. I expect OTA to provide regular communications to the public demonstrating how its decisions and intended outcomes align with its legislative and strategic objectives.
15. In particular, I expect OTA to integrate performance measures into its Corporate Plan and subsequently report on outcomes against each measure in its Annual Report. The Government will assess OTA's performance against these measures as part of its oversight function in determining whether OTA is successfully achieving its objectives in leading the national program in collaboration with state and territory governments and the DonateLife Network.
16. OTA should ensure it sets high human resource standards and ensure the organisation is appropriately placed to implement Government policies. OTA employees should be aware of, and adhere to, the general duties of officials under the PGPA Act, the Public Service Code of Conduct, and the Public Service Act 1999. OTA is also required to comply with the Australian Public Service (APS) Bargaining Framework in relation to APS employees.

I would appreciate your response to this letter in the form of a Statement of Intent outlining how the Agency proposes to meet the expectations outlined here and to ensure the Government's priorities are reflected in the Agency's strategic and operational plans. OTA has a leadership role in advancing the Australian Government's national program for organ and tissue donation for transplantation and I am keen to understand how its strategic direction will improve organ and tissue donation and access to transplantation for all Australians.

In the interest of transparency and accountability, this letter and your response will be made public.

Yours sincerely



Mark Coulton MP

cc: The Hon Greg Hunt MP, Minister for Health