

Jeannie's story

I am a Warlpiri woman – my name is Jeannie.

I was born at the Lajamanu community on the northern end of the Tanami Desert. After attending school in Lajamanu and Darwin, I travelled in Australia before getting jobs in Darwin, Lajamanu and Katherine.

I did a lot of work for the Language Centre – Diwurruwurru Jaru Aboriginal Corporation in Katherine. I got sick while I was in Katherine and got sent to Darwin to start dialysis before returning to Katherine where my treatment continued.

One night about midnight, after I had been on dialysis for about two years, two police officers came and knocked on my door and told me to call the doctor. When I rang the doctor he told me he had good news and that there was a kidney available for me. I felt happy – really happy. I travelled from Katherine to Darwin and then flew to Adelaide for the transplant. After being in hospital I then stayed in a nearby hostel for follow-up.

My second son Paul, who lives in Adelaide, came and visited and looked after me. My first son David, who was adopted out at a young age to lovely parents, got in touch with me later through an organisation called Link-up. Both of my sons have their own families now and I am very proud of them.

The kidney transplant has allowed me to enjoy life again and I can travel home and spend time with my people and visit others. I love being free to travel and talk about the land. I could just get in the car and drive home, about 800km away. It gives me great joy to see my family and the new additions to it.

The new kidney is a great privilege and I am very grateful to have a transplant. It's good to talk with other people about transplants and donations. It is up to you as an individual whether you want to have a transplant or to donate organs – it is really important to think about it and make up your own mind.



Jeannie and her dogs