



# Jillian Skinner MP

## Minister for Health Minister for Medical Research

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### MEDIA RELEASE

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#### **NSW GOVERNMENT REFORMS ORGAN DONATION**

Changes aimed at doubling organ donation rates in NSW have been signed into law, the Minister for Health and Minister for Medical Research, Jillian Skinner, announced today.

“The Human Tissue Legislation Amendment Bill puts patients first by considering their wishes regarding organ donation. It encourages community conversation about the donation of organs and as a result aims to double rates in this state,” Mrs Skinner said.

“As the Minister for Health, I am committed to ensuring positive and practical steps are taken to increase our state’s organ donation rate.

“It’s no longer acceptable for our state to be trailing the rest of Australia when it comes to this life-changing and life-saving choice.

“Organ recipients really are the living proof of the success of organ donation and as a state we need to be talking more about the importance of giving the gift of life.”

The Human Tissue Legislation Amendment Bill has made a number of changes to the Human Tissue Act 1983 and the Anatomy Act 1977.

“Donating tissues and organs saves lives; it’s as simple as that and it was for this reason I announced the *Increasing Organ Donation in NSW: Government Plan 2012* to combat low rates of organ donation in this state.

“This plan will see the transfer of existing donors from the state Roads and Maritime Services organ donor register to the national Australian Organ Donor Register run by Medicare,” Mrs Skinner said.

Other initiatives of the *Increasing Organ Donation in NSW: Government Plan 2012* include:

- Increasing community education and awareness campaigns to encourage people to have discussions with their families about organ donation;
- Employing specialists in hospitals to help families deal with the difficult decision about consenting to donation;
- Providing guidelines for doctors to help them uphold a patient’s desire to be a donor;
- Promoting living donation programs

“Already we’re seeing clinicians training to be designated requestors – a role which will assist families of those who have chosen to donate their organs.

“It’s these changes that will encourage an increase in organ donation rates in this state for the benefit of future patients and their families.”

Chris Thomas, chief executive officer of Transplant Australia, said the NSW Government’s commitment to organ donor families and organ recipients will go a long way to improving rates in NSW.

“The Minister for Health has shone a light on this important issue and has demonstrated her commitment to ensuring organ donation rates increase in NSW,” Mr Thomas said.

“There’s no doubt that changes needed to be made to the way organ donation was approached in NSW and it’s great to see the NSW Government driving these reforms.”