



Jillian Skinner MP

Minister for Health Minister for Medical Research

MEDIA RELEASE

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NEW BID TO BOOST ORGAN DONATION

Health Minister Jillian Skinner has urged families to share their wishes regarding organ donation and register to become donors to boost the state's transplantation rate.

Mrs Skinner visited Royal Prince Alfred Hospital (RPA) to launch the Sydney Local Health District plan to boost organ donation and announced NSW Chief Health Officer Dr Kerry Chant would lead a new state-wide steering committee to increase donation rates.

Mrs Skinner met with organ recipients and the loved ones of donors, who shared personal stories about giving and receiving the gift of life.

"The NSW Liberals & Nationals Government is committed to ensuring more people receive the gift of life through the implementation of the *Increasing Organ Donation in NSW: Government Plan 2012*," Mrs Skinner said.

"NSW is blessed with hospitals which are leaders in organ transplantation - RPA, St Vincent's, Westmead, Prince of Wales, Royal North Shore and John Hunter.

"The skilled and dedicated transplant teams who work at these hospitals make it possible for donors and recipients to give and receive the gift life.

"The NSW Government will support these hospitals - through their Local Health Districts - to achieve our common aim of boosting organ donations for transplantation."

Among the initiatives of Sydney Local Health District's *Organ Donation for Transplantation Plan 2014-2017* is the creation of an academic position dedicated to researching ways in which to attract more organ and tissue donors and further enhance areas such as the consent process and organ transport.

This will be a joint appointment by RPA - which is NSW's only liver transplant unit and largest kidney transplant unit - and the University of Sydney. Nationwide recruitment to fill the post is underway.

Mrs Skinner said 2013 was a record year in organ donation and transplants in NSW, with a 16 per cent increase in donors (102, up from 88 in 2012).

But after a strong start to 2014, donations have plateaued.

As of this week, there were 58 organ donors - short of what is needed to reach the nationally-agreed 12-month target for NSW of 120. From these 58 donors, 166 organs were successfully transplanted into 152 recipients.

"I pay tribute to every donor and thank the loved ones who supported their wish to donate," Mrs Skinner said.

"Organ donation is a very rare event - only about one per cent of deaths occur in circumstances which allow organ donation to take place.

"I urge all families to discuss their organ donation wishes with each other and register their decision on the Australian Organ Donor Register."

"One organ and tissue donor can transform the lives of ten or more people. One conversation today with loved ones could save the lives of many."

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

- closure of the NSW Roads and Maritime Services (formerly RTA) organ donor register, moving to the single national Australian Organ Donor Register administered by Medicare
- changing the law to respect wishes of potential donors so that organ donation can proceed where a person changes their mind after registering an objection to donation
- supporting development of education resources for culturally and linguistically diverse communities
- increasing community awareness to encourage people to have discussions with their families about organ donation.
- implementing a new model for placement of doctors and nurses in hospitals with high caseloads of potential donors
- increasing donation clinical specialist staff skills to support families through the donation process
- promoting living donor programs

Organ and tissue donation records in NSW are kept by the NSW Organ and Tissue Donation Service, which reports that 1416 organs have been transplanted from 451 organ donors in its five years of operation.

For more information on organ and tissue donation in NSW visit: www.seslhd.health.nsw.gov.au/SESLHDOrgan

To view the *Increasing Organ Donation in NSW: Government Plan 2012*, visit: http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/pubs/2012/pdf/organ_donation.pdf