



**Jillian Skinner**  
Minister for Health

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **LET THE TRANSPLANT GAMES BEGIN**

The 15th Australian Transplant Games is underway after Health Minister Jillian Skinner officially opened the event in Western Sydney today.

Mrs Skinner joined athletes, officials and volunteers at the Sydney International Regatta Centre to launch the week-long event.

Athletes from across Australia and countries including New Zealand, India, the United Kingdom and the United States will participate in 20 sporting disciplines, including athletics, cycling, golf, squash, tennis, swimming and cricket.

Mrs Skinner said: "The Australian Transplant Games is a biennial celebration of life - and the life-changing gift of organ donation. It is a unique opportunity for recipients to showcase their health and talents - what better way to thank their donors' families, living donors and clinicians."

"Many people have been preparing for the Games for two years and I am delighted the day has finally arrived for the athletes to get down to business."

The Games are being held in Western Sydney in recognition of the need to boost organ donation awareness and donation rates in multi-cultural Australia. Previous Games have resulted in a flow-on effect in donation rates.

In 2015, NSW recorded its highest ever number of deceased organ donors (127), surpassing the previous record of 102 donors in 2013 and exceeding the 2015 target of 116 donors.

As of the end of August, there had been 85 organ donors in NSW in 2016 - the highest year-to-date number in more than five years.

"Next of kin can override the wish of a deceased person so I urge potential donors to not only register with the Australian Organ Donor Register but, crucially, to let your loved ones know your wishes. One conversation today could save many lives in the future."

For more information about the Australian Transplant Games, visit [www.australiantransplantgames.com](http://www.australiantransplantgames.com)

To learn more about organ donation, visit [www.donatelife.gov.au](http://www.donatelife.gov.au)