

25 July 2024

**Don't just think about it...make it happen!**

**Take action to give the gift of life.**

**DonateLife Week - 28 July to 4 August**

[donatelife.gov.au](https://donatelife.gov.au)



The Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) is urging more rural and remote Australians to make next week (DonateLife Week 2024) the week they take action and register to be an organ and tissue donor – and importantly, discuss their decision to donate with their family.



“Only 2% of Australians die in a way that makes it possible for their organs\* to be utilised – namely in a hospital and on a ventilator” **RDAA President, Dr RT Lewandowski, said in the lead-up to DonateLife Week 2024.**

“This very low number makes it critical for more Australians to register to become organ donors, and importantly to discuss this with their family so their decision is respected when they pass away.

“While 80% of Australians say they support organ and tissue donation, only around 36% are actually registered as a donor on the Australian Organ Donor Register.

“Increasing to 80% the percentage of Australians who are registered as organ donors would be an incredible achievement, and would give many more seriously ill patients a second chance at life through an organ or tissue transplant.

“Everyone over the age of 16 can register to donate their organs and tissues on the Australian Organ Donor Register.

“It doesn't matter how old you are, whether you live in the city or in the bush, or even if you think you're not healthy enough – there is every chance that some of your organs and tissues may still be very suitable for donation.

“It is crucial, however, that in order to be an organ or tissue donor, you have completed a few simple but important steps...and that you don't just think about becoming a donor, you take the steps to make it happen!”

**These steps include:**

- Unless you live in South Australia, you can no longer register to be a donor when applying for your driver's licence - you need to register on the [Australian Organ Donor Register](https://www.donatelife.gov.au). It takes less than one minute to [check if you are already registered](#).

- If you live in South Australia, you can register to be a donor when applying for or renewing your driver’s licence. This is then transferred directly to the [Australian Organ Donor Register](#).
- Even if you have registered, your family will still be asked whether you wanted to be a donor and to give their consent before donation proceeds – so if you want to become a donor, it is crucial that you discuss this with your family (as well as registering formally to be a donor). Your family will also be involved in each step of the donation process and asked to provide vital health information. As such, it is important that you prepare your family so they are comfortable being part of the process.

“We know that many Australians would be happy to donate their organs, eyes or tissue when they pass away, but they just don’t take that next step of registering to be a donor and talking to their family about it – sadly making it a wasted opportunity” **Dr Lewandowski said.**

“DonateLife Week is a perfect time to take action, however...and to register yourself to give the gift of life!”

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*Statistics and information courtesy of the [www.donatelife.gov.au](http://www.donatelife.gov.au) website.*

*Find resources for DonateLife Week 2024 here - [www.donatelife.gov.au/donatelifeweek-resources](http://www.donatelife.gov.au/donatelifeweek-resources)*

*\* Eye and tissue donation can occur up to 24 hours after your death, and you need not have died in a hospital for donation to be possible – but you still need to have registered formally as an organ and tissue donor to enable it to occur.*

**A high resolution photo of Dr RT Lewandowski is [available here](#).**

**Available for interview:** RDAA President, Dr RT Lewandowski  
RDAA CEO, Peta Rutherford  
State specific contacts also available

**Media contacts:** Ineke Kuiper on 0408 669 638  
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