



## Your Views Matter – April, 2016

**An important recommendation from the Ernst and Young review of the national reform agenda on organ and tissue donation and transplantation was, the OTA should consider revising the Donatelife logo in light of the concerns expressed by donor families (Recommendation 18, p.52). Lead in Sentence.**

Increasing evidence that the logo causes some families distress motivated DFA to conduct an anonymous on-line survey to gain a clearer understanding of donor family views of the logo and its meaning to them. The survey captured a 'snap shot' of 66 donor families through the DFA Facebook site from mid-September to mid-December, 2015. This article reports the survey findings and discusses their implications.

DFA Chairman, Bruce McDowell, invited donor families to respond to a short survey. An image of the Donatelife logo, symbols representing international organ donation organisations and the 'recycle' symbol provided context for the questions. The response to the first question, Do you associate the Donatelife logo with the recycle symbol? was equally balanced 49.23% (32) answered yes and 49.23% (32) responded no. Seventeen people provided additional comments, with most directed towards explaining their view of the logo: "Yes, it is a direct copy of the recycle logo," and "... even the arrows are in the same place."

Some could not see the association: "Not even in my wildest dreams" and "never have, never will"; to the view, "Yes, but rather than

recycle, renewal of life, rebirth." Another view: "it's not inspiring as a logo." Several respondents mentioned how the logo contributed to their distress, "My 10 year old gave the gift of life but to think of him as recycled is just not on." And, "My daughter was not recycled at the end of her life." And simply, "It's distasteful."

People who answered yes to the first question were asked: Are you uncomfortable with this association to your loved ones organ/ tissue donation? Thirty six people responded. The majority, 64% (n=23) indicated that, yes, they were uncomfortable with the association. Conversely, 11 people (30.5%) indicated no, the association did not concern them. Nine comments were posted responding to this question, with most describing personal anguish associated with the logo: 'I think it is very offensive to have an association with recycling when referring to my loved ones gifts'; And: 'It appears to be just cheap marketing as far as our family is concerned'.

Respondents were asked: Would you like DonateLife to have a different logo? The majority, 53.5% (31) indicated yes it should be changed. 46.5% (27) said no. Eight did not

answer. Comments regarding this question were provided by 28 people. Strong feeling was expressed by some: "It's a rehash of the freaking household recycling. It's offensive to both donors/donor families and recipients. We're nowhere NEAR at a place we can be that flippant." And: "I can understand why it upset some people" or "I don't like to think of my son being 'recycled' but in saying that, that's kind of what happens. I think it's the arrows that make it uncomfortable." Another, "The heart is fine but not when it resembles the recycle logo. I find that very upsetting." And "Something more meaningful and thought provoking would be more appropriate." Another view, "Not one that looks like a heart, other organs are transplanted too."

Of those who commented no, they did not want to Donatelife to have a new logo, several identified pragmatic concerns that influenced their view to retain the status quo: "I think the cost involved in changing the logo could be used more productively." Another expressed anxiety that: "This [logo] is recognisable now at a time when donations are on the increase." A small number did not associate the logo with the recycle symbol but were still keen to see the logo changed: "acknowledge the importance of the donor family ...the DonateLife logo is outdated and old, it needs to be revamped." One person commented that they "loved the original rose pin."

A passionate view from one family encapsulates their positive association between the memory of the donation and the logo, "Without fear or prejudice in the spirit of our loved one, and finding a balance can strengthen connections to what the current logo represents. At the end of the day it's what's in your heart and mind, changing the logo shouldn't make any difference about how you feel about the whole process- at no stage did we as a family ever connect with

anything other than organ and tissue donation...We love the magenta 'heart' with never ending arrows'.

It is known that branding plays a significant role in representing organisations, their ethos and professionalism. Transparent and respectful communication between the OTA and the community is essential for continued progress in increasing organ and tissue donation. Branding plays an important strategic role in representing an organisation's values, purpose and methods; and establishing trust in our contemporary world where 'a total brand experience' and identity extend the importance of the brand and may even capture the 'persona, soul and essence' of an organisation, and build pride from within and outside of the organisation (Kylander & Stone, 2012). With the review comes the opportunity to constructively gain a better understanding of the OTA and what it stands for and who it represents.

If the current logo is truly representative of the organisation, its ethical basis and the people it serves there will be no need to change. But if as we have discovered, the logo or branding is already known to cause hurt, distress and offense to those who are core to its meaning, surely it is time to change. Some families clearly linked their positive experience of the care they received through the organ donation process with the logo. However, it is possible that other families associated negative experiences with the logo too. The comments were weighted towards views expressed by families who wanted the logo changed: 'Yes, the recycle one is offensive' to 'Anything but their current logo and colour scheme as well'. The recommendations 'A beautiful gift deserves a beautiful, meaningful logo' and 'I strongly believe the logo should send a more humane message' are powerful pointers to future directions.

To conclude, although this was a small

survey, confined to a limited community and does not represent all donor families. It provides useful information that will be helpful in guiding how organ and tissue donation is represented in the future. Holly Northam. PhD :)

## References

1. Ernst and Young (2015) Review of the national reform agenda on organ and tissue donation and transplantation. Available from: <https://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/health-mediarel-yr2016-nash002.htm>
2. Kylander, N. & Stone, C. (2012). The role of brand in the nonprofit sector. Stanford Social Innovation Review. Available from [http://ssir.org/articles/entry/the\\_role\\_of\\_brand\\_in\\_the\\_nonprofit\\_sector](http://ssir.org/articles/entry/the_role_of_brand_in_the_nonprofit_sector)