

Donor Heroes' Night 2022

Donor Families Australia

Media Information Sheet

18th May 2022



Donor Families Australia (DFA) welcomes the Media in supporting and celebrating Donor Heroes' Night with Donor Families, Recipients, and the Australian community.

Donor Heroes' Night allows Donor Families to commemorate their Donor Loved One, Recipients to thank their Donor Family and the community to acknowledge those involved in organ/tissue donation and transplantation. DFA has long recognised that Australia's organ and tissue donors are our HEROES within the organ/tissue and transplantation area, having enabled the saving or greatly improving the lives of tens of thousands of Aussies over the past 40 plus years.

This event also seeks to raise the profile of organ/tissue donation and transplantation across the broader Australia community, following the nation's highest yearly donation rate of 554 in 2018 dropping by 24% in 2021 down to 421 donors.

Who is Donor Families Australia?

Donor Families Australia is a national member-based independent support and advocacy group comprising primarily of families who have donated their loved ones' organs and tissue and recipient associate members. DFA's manifesto is to; **Care** and support donor families, **Advocate** by providing a voice for donor families where change is required, **Educate** the wider community of the benefits of organ and tissue donation, and **Share** our own experiences within our membership. It's the only organisation of its kind in Australia specifically dedicated to supporting Donor Families. DFA was established in April 2013 and its membership is currently close to 1,000 with over 2,350 followers on our Facebook page. DFA also produces a quarterly newsletter with a projected circulation of 5,000. Further detailed information can be found at <https://www.donorfamiliesaustralia.org/>

What is Donor Heroes' Night about and its History?

Donor Heroes' Night is a dedicated event which celebrates, honours, and commemorates the men, women and children of Australia who have given the gift of life through organ and tissue donation.

In May 2020, the inaugural Donor Heroes' Night was undertaken. The event was inspired by thousands of Aussies commemorating ANZAC day when they came out of their homes in the early morning to remember our ANZAC Heroes, light a candle or played the last post in their memory. So why couldn't the same be done to acknowledge and celebrate the 25,000 plus Donor Heroes who have given themselves to save or benefit others. This includes organ and tissue donors as well as living donors (kidney & liver).

2020 resulted in 50,000 Australians through the various social media platforms being involved.

2021 saw this number rise to 125,000 that were involved in the weeks leading up to and including the night of the 18th May.

250,000 is the goal for 2022 and on the night of 18th May 30,000 are anticipated to be involved posting photos of their lights and Donor Hero loved ones accompanied by comments supported by family, friends, and the community at large.

This Event is also the biggest yearly events that is raising organ & tissue donation awareness from a donor family perspective.

Who are our Donor Heroes?

Donor Heroes are people from all walks of life who have donated their organs and/or tissues or are living donors (kidney & liver) so that others may live or have an improved life.

In Australia we honour the lives of many thousands of donor heroes who have given the gift of life and or improved life to others. They're our brothers, sisters, parents, friends and children.

You can find a list of [Donor Heroes](#) and [their stories](#) on the Donor Families Australia website at <https://www.donorfamiliesaustralia.org/our-heroes> as well as viewing the Virtual Donor "HERO" Wall.



Who and how can the community take part in Donor Heroes' Night?

Leave a Light or equivalent for all our Donor Heroes

- if you are a donor family member,
- if your mate was a donor hero,
- if you know of a donor hero,
- if you are a recipient,
- if you are a recipient family member,
- if you are in need of a transplant,
- if you have signed the National Organ/Tissue Donor Register,
- if you support Organ/Tissue Donation,

Take a photo of your light (e.g. Porch Light), and upload it onto your Facebook, Instagram or Twitter page and as well as posting onto DFA's Facebook Page at <https://www.facebook.com/DonorFamiliesAustralia> together with your comment. Donor Families are also encouraged to also post a photo of your Donor Hero if you wish.

Samples from DHN 2021

Author
Donor Families Australia
To our son Ben,
To our Peter Pan,
To our Donor Hero,
You are forever in our hearts,
Mum and Dad have missed you so much
Ben's donation saved both a young 12 year old girl with a heart/double lung and David Ridoutt that required a kidney transplant 18-05-1993
Alas David has since passed away.



Love · Reply · Commented on by Graham Harrison · 33w · Edited

Author
Donor Families Australia
My mate Ben



Like · Reply · Commented on by Graham Harrison · 26w

Helen Day
Tonight I leave my balcony light on for the National Donor Heros Night for my son Stewart who saved six lives through organ donation on 1 May 2012 and for the family whose child saved my brother-in-law with new lungs on 10 February 2020.



Like Reply Hide 40w

Kristel Latham
My porch light is on with added colourful lights, in honour of my donor hero (Liver Transplant recieved 16/1/21) and his family. Without your generosity and kindness I would not be here today. My most heartfelt gratitude for your incredible gift to me. Thank you. 🙏🥰



Like Reply Hide See Response 40w

MeiLing Lucas Egan
In memory of my beautiful brother Jay Lucas.
22/02/2016



Like Reply Hide 40w

Julie Wilson
My light is on tonight for my 18yo son Brodie who gave the gift of life to 5 people.
Always Loved Forever Missed ❤️❤️
1-7-2013



Pam Adams
Lights on in honour of donor heroes, families & friends.



Love Reply Hide 40w

Media Enquiries

DFA members listed below are available to provide information, interviews or to organise interviews at a local level

Co-Organizers:

Bruce McDowell

0427 645 262

mcdowellbj08@gmail.com



I live in Perth WA with my wife Karen whilst previously residing in Geraldton for the past 30 years, raising our family of 3 children. After our 19 year old daughter Alysha passed away in 2008, I became a Donor Dad. I could not be prouder of Alysha for becoming a Donor Hero. At the time of becoming a Donor Family there was no organisation that supported and or advocated for Donor Families. With liked minded families Donor Families Australia was established in 2013. Bruce is the DFA Chair and State rep. It is very pleasing to see this group grow from strength to strength.

Warwick Duncan

0422 714 014

warwickdymphna@gmail.com

from 16th April



Warwick is one of Australia's longest standing Recipients having received his transplant in 1989. He has been involved in Transplant Australia initially but during the past decade has been actively promoting Organ/Tissue Donation and Transplantation. He also has a bucket list that he is actively completing due to his ongoing health which includes a trip to Mt Everest Base Camp with a photo of his donor in his pocket. Warwick joined DFA in 2018 and has remained a very active member within our organisation.

Graham Harrison

0421 697 048

gharrison1953@gmail.com

up to 16th April



Graham is a founding member of Donor Families Australia and with the support of his wife Elayne been heavily involved in supporting organ and tissue donation and providing support and advocacy for Donor Families, following the death of his 10 year old son and the donation of his organs in May 1993. Graham went onto be involved in ABC Australian Story, Sixty Minutes, Transplant Australia, ShareLife and Donor Families Australia. It was Graham that has conceived the concept of Donor Heroes Night after observing how the public became involved in ANZAC Day during the Covid pandemic. For this years event Graham will be on country and off the grid from 15th April to 4th June but will be in mobile/Internet contact at irregular intervals. When unavailable please contact Warwick Duncan.

State/Territory Contacts

ACT Barry Mewett

0408 024 110

barry.mewett@bigpond.com

Barry is a Territory rep. and an active Donor Partner following the passing of his wife Jean in 2005

Dr Holly Northam OAM 0412 289 295

holly.northam@canberra.edu.au

Holly is a Territory rep. provides donation and transplantation ethical guidance drawing on her medical doctorate and experience as a RN & RM

- NSW Philippa Delahoy** philippa.delahoy@pfizer.com
 Philippa the DFA Secretary and State rep. and a Donor Partner following the passing of her husband Scott in 2011.
- Graham Harrison** 0421 697 048 gharrison1953@gmail.com (as above)
 Graham is a State rep. and a Donor dad following the death of his son Ben in 1993
- NT Helen Day** 0418 646 389 helen.day1@hotmail.com
 Helen is the Territory rep and a Donor mum following her son Stewart tragic accident
- QLD Janelle Colquhoun** 0414 385 530 jc@salubriousproductions.com
 Janelle is a State rep. and Recipient rep. following her transplant in 2008
- SA Jackie Robson** 0418 369 741 jackie.robson@hotmail.com
 Jackie is a State rep. and a Donor Partner following her husbands sudden passing in 2016
- TAS Rebecca Free** 0448 007 718 freebeck73@hotmail.com
 Rebecca is a State rep. and a daughter to her Donor Mum who passed away in 2010
- Karen Garner** 0423 876 442 karenandjayse@gmail.com
 Karen is a State rep and a Living Kidney Donor to her Partner (Husband)
- VIC Warwick Duncan** 0478 779 572 warwickdymphna@gmail.com (as above)
 Warwick is a Recipient rep. and a Recipient following his transplant in 1989
- Leanne Campbell** 03 9438 3447 leannercampbell@gmail.com
 Leanne is Deputy Chair/State rep. and a Donor Parent to her son Brett following his death in 2009.
- David Reynolds** 0407 460 756 ivydowns@bigpond.com
 David is a State rep. and proud Donor Husband to his Wife following her sudden death.
- WA Bruce McDowell** 0427 645 262 mcdowellbj08@gmail.com
 Bruce is the DFA Chair and State rep. following the death of his daughter Alysha in 2008
- Anthea Openshaw** 08 9795 5388 neill.ant@bigpond.com
 Anthea is a State rep. and Donor wife to husband Neill who died in 2014.

Additional References

DFA Website; <https://www.donorfamiliesaustralia.org/>

DFA Donor Heroes' Night; <https://www.donorfamiliesaustralia.org/donor-heroes-night>

DFA Website Virtual Donor Heroes' Wall; <https://www.donorfamiliesaustralia.org/the-virtual-donor-wall>

DFA Facebook Event Page; <https://www.facebook.com/DonorFamiliesAustralia>

DFA Instagram; [donor_families_australia](https://www.instagram.com/donor_families_australia)

DFA Twitter; [@donor_families](https://twitter.com/donor_families)