

Australians urged to register for organ donation following a 25 per cent decline during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr Graham Harrison, Co-founder of Donor Families Australia, urges Australians to their intent to be organ and tissue donors following a 25 per cent decline in donor and transplant activity during the COVID-19 pandemic.¹

According to data released by The Department of Health earlier this year, Australia has recorded a 25 per cent drop in donor and transplant activity over the past two years, as the nation's healthcare system struggled with staffing, restricted family visits and general logistics.

For Graham, the task of raising awareness about the importance of tissue and organ donation hits close to home. Graham donated the organs of his 10-year-old son Ben in 1993 after Ben died unexpectedly during surgery. To commemorate the contribution that Ben and tens of thousands of other organ and tissue donors have made to the lives of their recipients, Graham leads a team from Donor Families Australia which runs the annual *Donor Heroes' Night* event on May 18th each year – the anniversary of his son's passing.

"Donor Heroes' Night is a great opportunity for Australians to get behind tissue and organ donation by sharing stories of their donor heroes. Each year, thousands of participants head to www.facebook.com/DonorFamiliesAustralia with the intention of 'leaving a light on' for our donor heroes. All visitors to our page are encouraged to upload a picture of their porch light or candle and add a note of remembrance or gratitude for their donor hero. Last year the campaign had 125,000 active supporters, and Graham hopes for an even better turnout this year.

Graham and other Donor Heroes' Night supporters are buoyed by recent reports that organ donation registrations are now increasing. "I want to offer a sincere 'thank you to everyone who says yes to tissue and organ donation. Over 1850 Australians are currently waitlisted

¹ <https://www.health.gov.au/ministers/the-hon-dr-david-gillespie-mp/media/record-registrations-recorded-despite-covid-impacts-on-organ-donations#:~:text=Overall%2C%20this%20equates%20to%20a,like%20the%20UK%20and%20Canada.>

for organ transplants. I encourage everyone to have a conversation with their loved ones about their wishes to donate, take the time to understand the process and be sure to register your intent on the national organ donor registry".

Further information on Donor Heroes' Night and the benefits of organ and tissue donation can be found at: <https://www.donorfamiliesaustralia.org/donor-heroes-night>

Associated hastags: #DonorHeroesNight #DonorHeroes #DonorFamilies #leavealighton #forevergrateful

MEDIA ENQUIRIES

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BOILERPLATE: Donor Families Australia is a national member-based independent support and advocacy group comprising families who have donated their loved ones' organs and tissue. It's the only organisation of its kind in Australia specifically dedicated to Donor Families. <https://www.donorfamiliesaustralia.org/>