



Donor Families Australia celebrating our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary



## DONOR HEROES' NIGHT 18<sup>th</sup> May

### Media Information Sheet

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 that decided to be an organ/tissue donor. 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 35 plus years.

This years 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, sadly this donation rate has dropped by 24% in 2021 down to 421 donors and has only risen up by 33 to 454 organ donors in 2023. This figure equates to 17.34 Donors per Million or similar figures achieve prior to 2015.

Donor Families Australia encourages all Families to have that all important conversation when a family member wishes to become a Donor and to register with the Australia National Organ and Tissue Donor Register.

### 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. 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 late 2012 and its membership is currently close to 1,000 with over 2,755 followers on our Facebook page. DFA also produces a quarterly newsletter with a projected circulation of 6,000. 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.

On 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 approximate **25,000 Donor Heroes** who have given themselves to save or benefit others during the past 37 years. DFA recognises all organ and tissue donors as well as living donors drawing on data provided from DonateLife and ANZDATA.

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 18<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

2022 resulted in involving a total of 260,127 Facebook "Reaches, Likes, Engagements, Comments and Shared postings" which exceeded our original goal of 250,000. The event for the first time reached out to several overseas organisations and it is hoped that this international exposure will continue to grow. On the evening of 18th May 30,623 actions on Facebook involving posting photos of their light/candle and Donor Hero loved one accompanied by comments supported by family, friends, and the community at large occurred.

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 porch light or candle and upload it onto our DFA's Facebook Page at [facebook.com/DonorFamiliesAustralia](https://facebook.com/DonorFamiliesAustralia) together with your comment. Donor Families are also encouraged to also post a photo of your Donor Hero if you wish. You may also wish to post on your own Facebook Page, Instagram or Twitter account which can help highlight Donor Heroes' Night.

## How to go about posting my photo?

Once your photo has been taken on your phone, undertake the following steps:

- Download the photo onto your computer (not required if you are posting from your phone,
- Go to the DFA's Facebook Page within Facebook and enter Donor Families Australia within the Search field or enter the following link within your Internet header  
**[www.facebook.com/DonorFamiliesAustralia](https://www.facebook.com/DonorFamiliesAustralia)** and press return

DFA's Facebook head is as follows



- Scroll to the Post Heading “Donor Heroes Night”



- Click on “Comment” to initiate your donor hero post, then click on the camera icon to add your photo.
- To add an additional photo e.g. your donor hero loved one, under your own post, click on reply to add your own personal photo.
- Samples of previous posts from past years are displayed below.

## Samples from DHN 2022





Author

Donor Families Australia

Donor Families Australia has always believed that our loved ones are Donor Heroes within the Organ and Transplant System. Ben has been my Donor Hero on this night for the past 29 years having saved the life of a middle aged gentleman and a 12 year old girl at the time. On behalf of all Donor Families I say "Our Donor Heroes will never be forgotten". Donor Heroes Night is for you Ben and the approximate 25,000 organ and tissue donor that have given the "Gift of Life" over the past 40 years.



Love Reply Commented on by Graham Harrison 41w



Author

Donor Families Australia

My Donor Hero, my mate, missing you - Mum and Dad



Like Reply Commented on by Graham Harrison 41w



Robyn McCanna

My porch lights are on shining pink in loving memory of our beautiful daughter/sister/sister in law & Aunt Sally McCanna who gave the gifts of her heart, kidneys, pancreas & liver on the 12th May 2014 ❤️❤️ Also remembering Lui Polimeni, Julia Kovacs, Bill Spencer, Harry Laurie & Andrea Dotta, all beautiful hero's who gave the ultimate gift when they couldn't stay xxxx



Love Reply Hide 41w



Robyn McCanna

Steven & Maria honouring his sister & SIL with their pink porch light. My beautiful grandchildren Lucas, Sally & Ava showing their love & support of their angel Aunty Sally McCanna ❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️



Love Reply Hide 41w





Janelle Colquhoun

Tonight, on Donor Heroes' Night, I'm commemorating the living and deceased people who have saved so many lives by donating organ and tissue. I've lit a candle in honour of my anonymous donor hero, who was 27 when she passed away, but has given me so far an additional 14 years of life. Thank-you to my Donor Hero for this incredible gift, and to her amazing family who made the decision to donate at such a terrible time in their lives.



Love Reply Hide 41w



Top fan

Dave Reynolds

Neralie put the extra in extraordinary in everything she did ❤️ To live life is to love I will always be indebted to you Ner. An Angel From Heaven Just On Loan ❤️❤️



Love Reply Hide 41w



Author

Donor Families Australia

Dave Reynolds too beautiful and too young to be a Donor Hero Dave.

Like Reply Commented on by Graham Harrison 41w



Top fan

Dave Reynolds

Donor Families Australia I believe all the Donors are true HEROS and all beautiful in their own way. They shall all live on forever in a special way 🙏

Like Reply Hide 41w



Reply to Donor Families Australia...



Top fan

Dave Reynolds



Like Reply Hide 41w



Top fan

Dave Reynolds

# Media Enquiries

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

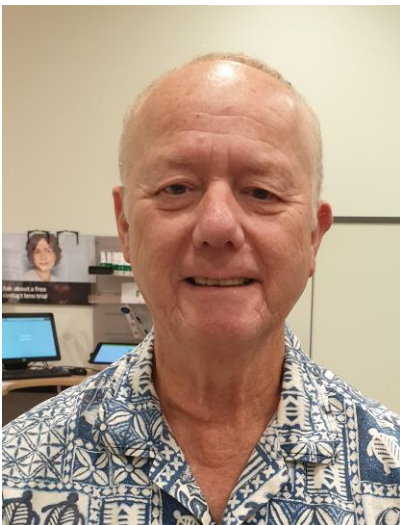


## Co-Organizers:

**Bruce McDowell**  
0427 645 262

Chairman of Donor Families Australia  
[mcdowellbj08@gmail.com](mailto: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.



**Graham Harrison**  
0421 697 048

Coordinator, Donor Heroes Night  
[gharrison1953@gmail.com](mailto:gharrison1953@gmail.com)  
(Overseas between 7<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> April 2023)

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 15<sup>th</sup> April

to 4<sup>th</sup> June but will be in mobile/Internet contact at irregular intervals. When unavailable please contact Warwick Duncan.



**Warwick Duncan** Recipient Representative

0422 714 014

[warwickdymphna@gmail.com](mailto:warwickdymphna@gmail.com)

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.

## State/Territory Contacts

- ACT** **Barry Mewett** 0408 024 110 [barry.mewett@bigpond.com](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:freebeck73@hotmail.com)  
Rebecca is a State rep. and a daughter to her Donor Mum who passed away in 2010
- VIC** **Warwick Duncan** 0478 779 572 [warwickdymphna@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](#)

DFA Twitter; [@donor\\_families](#)