



Holly's Insight

Roadmap to the Future

It is a privilege to work with a wonderful group of dedicated members that make up the DFA Board. It is timely to look back from where we started our humble beginnings to where we are aiming to ensure that Donor Families views are heard and are taken into consideration within the Organ and Tissue Donation System.

The launch of Donor Families Australia in 2013 provided a wonderful opportunity for Donor Families to improve community acceptance of organ and tissue donation and the care of families who make organ and tissue donation decisions. The generosity of donors and their loved ones transforms the lives of others, both at the time of the donation decision and long afterwards, because donor families are the best advocates of organ and tissue donation.

Many health care professionals have been fortunate to have witnessed the courage and kindness of families who have made donation decisions at times of great sorrow. The members of Donor Families Australia continue to provide energetic inspiration, advocacy, guidance, compassion and care to ensure Australians receive the information and support they require to make donation decisions they never regret.

Many in our community are confused about the process of organ and tissue donation. DFA provides opportunities for discussion, education and collaboration about a range of matters that impact on Australian donation practices including the need to properly care for and acknowledge live donors, tissue

donors and their families as well as organ donor families. The gift of donation is truly extraordinary and builds our humanity.

If Australia is to achieve equivalence with international leading practice it is important to make organ and tissue donation normal. A conversation about donation should be a part of expert end of life care for every Australian. Understanding the donation process and knowing loved ones' wishes are just so important to helping to save lives and providing meaning from what are often tragic circumstances of unexpected death. This is, because most people wish to help others and to honour the wish to donate. Despite this, many families never have the opportunity to have those wishes properly considered because either donation isn't mentioned, or the person conducting the conversation at the time of death lacks the knowledge and skill to properly support the family making those decisions. Donor Families Australia helps to identify and fill these gaps.

In 2016 the DFA Board met and formulated our Strategic Roadmap and Plan for our future direction.

**Dr Holly Northam, Faculty of Health,
University of Canberra**

