

31 July 2015

Use your time wisely during DonateLife week (2-9 August)

During DonateLife week South Western Sydney Local Health District (SWSLHD) is urging families to use their time wisely and have a chat that may one day save many lives.

SWSLHD Organ and Tissue Donation Specialist Medical Professor Anders Aneman said DonateLife Week provided an opportunity to discuss organ and tissue donation with loved ones, and to ask them about their donation decisions.

“In Australia, families will always be asked to give their consent to donation if the situation ever arises. Even if you have registered your decision to be a donor, your family will still be asked to give consent,” Prof Aneman said.

“Families that have discussed and know each other’s donation decisions are much more likely to support donation.

“Having a chat with your family about donation can make a life-saving difference to people waiting for a transplant,” he said.

Prof Aneman said there were three steps people should take during DonateLife Week.

“**Discover** the facts about organ and tissue donation by visiting donatelife.gov.au.

“**Decide** and register your donation decision on the Australian Organ Donor Register.

“And finally, **discuss** your decision with your loved ones,” he said.

The facts:

- Only around one per cent of hospital deaths occur in the specific circumstances where organ donation is possible, although many more people can become tissue donors.
- One organ and tissue donor can save or transform the lives of 10 or more people.
- Last year, 1,117 Australian lives were transformed through the generosity of 378 deceased organ donors and their families who agreed to donation. Nearly 4,000 tissue donors helped to improve the lives of over 5,500 tissue transplant recipients, some receiving multiple grafts.
- There are 1,600 people on the organ transplant waiting list in Australia.

DonateLife Week is a national awareness week led by the Organ and Tissue Authority to promote organ and tissue donation. For more information, visit donatelife.gov.au.