

RAA Member Panel

Organ and tissue donation

Organ and tissue donation is an emotional topic and for many. The decision to become an organ or tissue donor can be a complex one and one that your family members must support if you were ever in position to be a possible donor.

In 2015, South Australia had the highest donation rate based on population. A few facts on organ and/or tissue donation in Australia include:

- One organ and tissue donor can transform the lives of more than 10 people.
- Around 1,600 people are on the Australian organ transplant waiting list at any time.
- In 2015, 435 organ donors gave 1,241 Australians a new chance in life through an organ transplant.
- Less than 1% of people who die in hospital are able to donate their organs; even fewer can become tissue donors.

In the latest Member Panel survey, we asked RAA Members for their thoughts on this important topic.

Eighty per cent of respondents reported that they wanted to be an organ and/or tissue donor, with 87 per cent of these members indicating their family and friends are aware of their decision. This is significantly higher than the 60 per cent identified by the Australian Government's Organ and Tissue Authority.

More than 65 per cent of RAA Member Panel respondents identified themselves as a registered organ and/or tissue donor on their drivers licence.

Interestingly, 82 per cent of respondents were aware that family members have the ultimate say regarding organ or tissue donation regardless of what your stated intentions are. However verbatim comments indicated an overwhelming stance against this, with respondents believing family members should not be able to override an individual's wishes. Additionally there was strong support for organ/tissue donation to be 'opt-out' rather than 'opt-in'.

Comments provided by panellists were overwhelmingly in support of a system that respects their decision. The vast majority of comments identified the benefit of an opt-out rather than opt-in donor registry, one that respects the individual's rights.

More Information

If you want to be an organ and/or tissue donor you must register on the Australian Organ Donor Register www.donatelife.gov.au.

It is also recommended you nominate your intention on your licence, Last Will and Testament and any Advanced Care Directive that you may have to ensure your decision is clear.

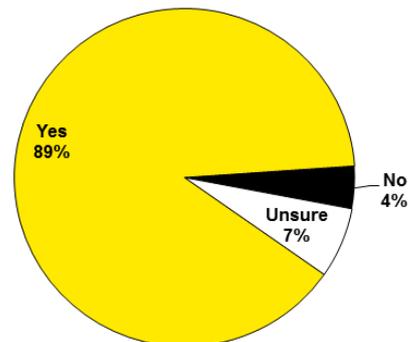
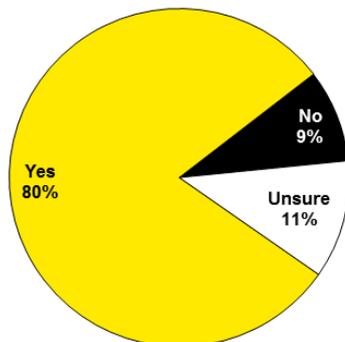
It is important to have the very difficult conversation with your closest family members to emphasise why you have made the decision to be a donor.

What our members had to say:

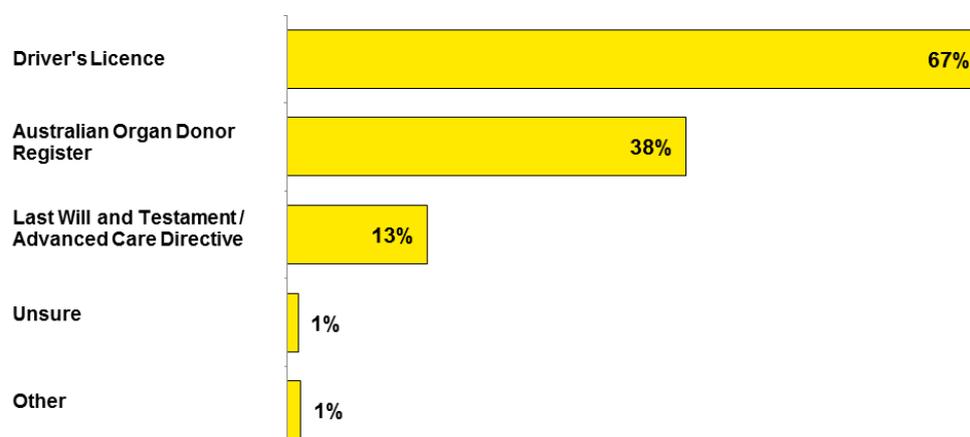
- Should have an opt out system, not opt in. It also should be binding - relatives can't overturn your wishes.
- I am of the belief that if I am prepared to TAKE a donated organ etc, then I must be prepared to GIVE myself.
- Like a person's will, I don't think a person's decision to donate their organs should be contested by disagreeing family members.
- It is something that has been in the back of my mind for a long time but I just haven't come to a final decision. Maybe I should decide sooner rather than before it is too late.
- Needs to be advertised via rego renewals more
- Everyone is scared about the possibility of unseemly haste to harvest organs, i.e. switch off longer-term life support and so on. We all know that miracles can happen.

If it is possible, do you want to be an organ and/or tissue donor?

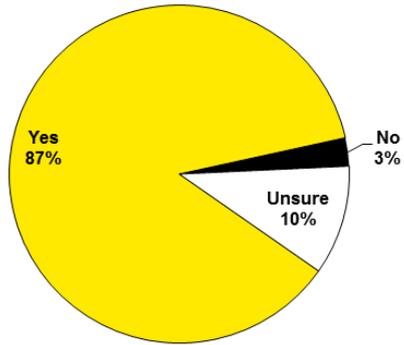
Have you registered to be an organ and/or tissue donor?



How have you registered your decision to be an organ and/or tissue donor?



Are your family and friends aware of your decision to be an organ and/or tissue donor?



Do you know that if you are in a position to become an organ and/or tissue donor, your family members will be asked to support your donation decision and can decline?

