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New facility for eye and tissue banks to help more than 1200 people each year

The Hon. Jillian Skinner MP, Minister for Health and Medical Research, opened the state's new state-of-the-art eye and bone bank on June 27.

The combined services of the eye and bone banks in this newly built facility will improve the lives of more than 1,200 people this year alone.

Both the Lions NSW Eye Bank and the NSW Bone Bank - now combined in the new facility - experienced steady and substantial increases in donations and transplants in 2012. This growth continued in the first quarter of 2013.

Details of the substantial improvement in eye and tissue donation were announced by Mrs Skinner at the opening event.

"It is pleasing to share with you the figures on increased organ and tissue donation in NSW, which are now - in many areas - at unprecedented levels," Minister Skinner said.

"Already we're seeing huge advances in the area of eye donation with a 30 per cent increase in the number of eye donors in NSW from 335 in 2011 to 437 in 2012. Corneal transplant waiting lists also fell in the same period by 43 per cent."

Femoral head and cadaveric musculoskeletal donors have both increased this year, improving the lives of more than 450 recipients, the Minister said.

"It's remarkable and rewarding to see such a jump in organ and tissue donation figures, particularly since the NSW Government launched its *Increasing Organ Donation in NSW* strategy in August last year," Mrs Skinner said.

"With regard to tissue donation, femoral head donations - used in hip surgery - were up by 51 per cent and musculoskeletal donors rose by 16 per cent in this period.

"This is evidence that the NSW Government's approach to

promoting organ and tissue donation is working and while we still have some way to go, these new figures reveal a great improvement in NSW donation and awareness rates," Mrs Skinner said.

The new Lions NSW Eye Bank and NSW Bone Bank will be located on Level 1, North Block at Sydney/Sydney Eye Hospital on Macquarie Street. The development features a purpose-built eye bank laboratory and a dedicated 'quiet' room to conduct the telephone conversations held with potential and actual donor families.

Dr Robert Herkes, State Medical Director of the Organ & Tissue Donation Service, was delighted to announce the medical appointments providing support and leadership to the new facility. Dr Richard Boyle is Medical Director of the NSW Bone Bank and Professor Gerard Sutton is Medical Director of the Lions NSW Eye Bank.



L to R: Corneal recipient Carol Ang, Chief Executive Terry Clout, The Hon. Jillian Skinner MP, Minister for Health, corneal recipient Lina Macri, Lions NSW Eye Bank and NSW Bone Bank Manager Jane Treloggen



Raj Devasahayam at work in the new laboratory

“The organ donation consent rates in NSW have increased from 45% in 2011 to 55.15% in 2012”

Update:
Increasing Organ Donation in NSW, Government Plan 2012

The latest from the State Director

NSW had a total of 88 deceased organ donors in 2012 - the state's highest annual total for organ donation. Donation numbers will fluctuate, however over the last nine months there has been a sustained steady increase.

Last year, 426 patients in NSW received a transplant, 75 from live donors and 351 from deceased donors, each given the chance of a new healthier life.

Between January and June 2012 there were a total of 35 deceased donations (monthly average of 5.8) and between July and December there were 53 donors (monthly average of 8.8). To the end of April 2013, there have been a total of 44 donors, which has resulted in an average 11 donors per month.

While it is difficult to identify the exact reason for this increase it would seem a number of the key state and national initiatives are starting to show results. These include the implementation of the NSW Government Plan, including changes to the Human Tissue Act and the closure of the RMS Registry,

increased community engagement and most significantly donor family conversation training, for doctors, nurses and social workers in our hospitals.

The COMFORT Trial into designated requesters, where specially trained staff undertake family conversations about the possibility of donation, recently enrolled its first patients. The extensive training includes the use of simulation with actors in the role of the grieving family. I am delighted to see that evaluations of the simulation training have been enthusiastic, and thank all those involved in its development and delivery.

The organ donation consent rates in NSW have increased from 45% in 2011 to 55.15% in 2012 – closer to the 75% NSW target. Other performance indicators including the identification rate and donation rate also improved during 2012. These represent a solid start on our journey to achieve world's best practice.

Also of note is the progress made in the tissue banks. In



2012 the Lions NSW Eye Bank had a total of 483 donors, which was an increase of 26.7% over 2011. You may be interested to know that the consent rate for cornea donation is 64%. This is despite the fact that the Eye Bank Co-ordinators are seeking consent following a cold call to the relatives. There were 203 femoral head donors which was a 51% increase on 2011.

Earlier this year staff across the state participated in DonateLife Week 2013 to promote awareness in the community of the importance of 'making your wish count' and knowing your loved ones wishes. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their efforts in making Donatelife Week 2013 in NSW a huge success and for all their ongoing hard work in this important area.

Robert Herkes
State Medical Director

Donation numbers for both solid organs and tissue and transplants have continued to increase in the first quarter of this year - a positive sign that the NSW Government plan is achieving its goal of increasing transplantation surgeries and improving the quality of life for more Australians.

The NSW Organ and Tissue Donation Service is continuing to work closely with strategic partners and build relationships to support new initiatives particularly in the area of culturally and linguistically diverse groups (CALD).

A NSW communication strategy has also been developed to support national key messaging and awareness campaigns.

The specialised simulation education program for designated requesters commenced in January this year and over 30 senior clinicians have completed the training so far. This program is part of a NSW research project and aims to provide specialised training that will support clinicians having the end of life conversations on organ donation.

Improving the donation conversation with families

Support for clinicians called upon to discuss donation with families is a focus area in the NSW Government Plan. With this in mind, the NSW Organ and Tissue Donation Service (NSW OTDS) has introduced a simulation training program, aimed at preparing designated requesters who work in hospitals.

A number of senior clinicians identified as designated requesters, who are participating in the NSW COMFORT study into improving family conversations on organ donation, have taken part in the simulation training.

The program was developed collaboratively between NSW OTDS and the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) and is conducted in new state-of-the-art simulation laboratories on the Sydney campus.

Realistic scenarios are played-out with professional actors in the role of family members. Debriefing experts guide a feedback session reviewing videos of the sensitive conversations.

The program has been extremely well received and highlights the value of simulation training to improving end of life conversations involving organ donation.

Five training sessions have been conducted to date, with over 30 clinicians. More sessions are scheduled through to December 2013.

Innovative training workshops for clinicians

The Communication with Families regarding Organ and Tissue Donation after Death in Intensive Care (COMFORT) study is a quality improvement initiative to evaluate the approach to families when discussing organ and tissue donation in the hospital.

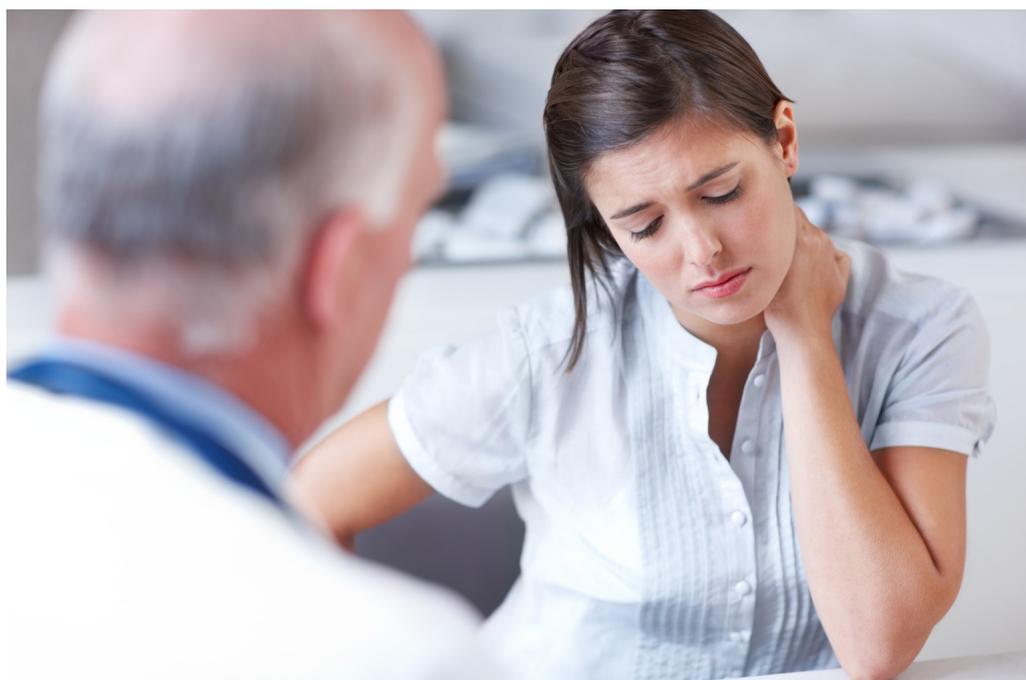
Select health professionals are receiving advanced training in the sensitive communication required to help bereaved families make decisions about donation that are considered, and not a reaction to the circumstances of death. These people - 'designated requesters' - will lead donation conversations in select NSW hospitals.

There are currently eight hospitals in NSW participating in the COMFORT study. These are John Hunter Hospital, Liverpool Hospital, Prince of Wales Hospital, Royal North Shore Hospital, the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, St George Hospital, the St Vincent's Hospital and the Tweed Hospital. The study has received approval from a lead NSW Human Research

Ethics Committee. Four hospitals have already received local governance authorisation: John Hunter Hospital, Liverpool Hospital, Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and the Tweed Hospital. Early in May, John Hunter and Royal Prince Alfred commenced the COMFORT study.

The study was presented at the annual meeting

on clinical trials in intensive care of the Australian and New Zealand Intensive Care Society Clinical Trials Group, to raise awareness of this quality improvement initiative. The project was well received with many commenting about the importance of conducting the study.



DonateLife and give our people a second chance

Let's
have a
yarn ...

A gathering of local indigenous families who shared a meal and discovered facts about organ donation was held at the Minjungbal Aboriginal Cultural Centre, South Tweed Heads during DonateLife week in Northern NSW.

This event embraced the traditional way of sharing information among indigenous families, through having a yarn and a meal. The use of culturally appropriate information enabled this process to be conducted in a respectful way.

Flyers and a pamphlet were developed together with local indigenous people utilising their words and art to tell the story of organ donation, to support the inaugural 'Let's have a yarn day'.

The barbecue was managed by the indigenous men's group, while food was prepared by the indigenous ladies walking group.

Participants were given a T-shirt which reflected the messages in the indigenous organ donation pamphlet. A burnt orange T-shirt displayed local artwork demonstrating family discussion and the logo – 'Donate life and give our people a second chance of life' – extended the message. The T-shirts were highly sought after and proudly worn.

Local Elder Auntie Dale performed the welcome to country and talked about the importance of indigenous people learning about organ donation so that they too may be able to help their own people. This was followed by a local indigenous leader, Elder Patrick, who is highly respected in the Northern Rivers indigenous community, sharing his journey which included receiving a heart transplant 20 years ago and a kidney transplant five years ago. Patrick's story had the audience captivated and helped to initiate conversations among participants.

Indigenous NRL Titan star Preston Campbell talked about his upcoming trip to Sydney to be considered as a donor for his aunt who is on dialysis. Preston then joined in the sharing of a meal, initiating conversations about organ donation wishes.

While many local indigenous people were unable to attend due to wet conditions and local flooding, many who attended took both the pamphlet and registrations forms. Organisers say that the 'Goori grape vine' has been working overtime since the day.



Remembrance Day 2013

The 22nd Service of Remembrance and Reflection for all those touched by organ and tissue donation took place on May 25. Facilitated by DonateLife NSW this annual event acknowledges organ and tissue donors and their families whose compassion and generosity of spirit has given life and hope to others at a time of great personal sadness.

The chosen theme for the Service this year was 'Remembering in Special Ways', utilising the symbolism of the forget-me-not flower. Mr Terry Clout, Chief Executive of SESLHD, led the proceedings, which included speakers from the families of donors and transplant recipients. Several shared their experiences and reflections, complemented by a vocalist and a harpist.



Dr Janice Brewer played the harp

Chief Executive Terry Clout with Dr Tim Furlong and his family members including his sister (pictured centre, holding flowers), who is a corneal recipient



Orientation for new clinicians

Eleven newly-appointed donation specialist medical staff from across NSW were taken through the rigorous orientation program in April.

These specialists will join existing donation specialist medical staff playing an important role supporting organ donation in their respective hospitals.

The staff participated in interactive sessions focused on key aspects of the donation process: GIVE clinical trigger, legal aspects, family donation conversation, donation process and management, and data management.

An expert panel of physicians from Royal Prince Alfred and St Vincent's Hospitals attended to participate in case discussions surrounding medical suitability. The day was extremely successful and plans are underway to hold another session later in the year.

NSW OTDS wishes to thank the specialists who contributed to the success of the day: Dr Arvind Rajamani, Dr Gordon Flynn, Dr Peter Saul and Dr Anders Aneman and the organising committee members Dr Arvind Rajamani, Ms Leigh McKay and Ms Nicola Seifert.

Welcome the new Donation Specialist Medical Staff: Dr Michael Sutherland (Coffs Harbour), Dr Kishore Sanghi (Port Macquarie), Dr Oliver Flower (Royal North Shore), Dr Roger Harris (Royal North Shore), Dr Hemal Vachharajani (Royal North Shore), Dr Michael O'Leary (Royal Prince Alfred), Dr John Gatward (Royal Prince Alfred), Dr Heike Koelzow (Royal Prince Alfred), Dr Elena Cavazzoni (Children's Hospital Network), Dr Theresa Jacques (St George), Dr Cartan Costello (St George) and Dr Matthew Macpartlin (Wollongong).



Health
NSW Organ & Tissue
Donation Service

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