



**Health**  
NSW Organ & Tissue  
Donation Service

Incorporating:  
NSW Bone Bank  
Lions NSW Eye Bank  
Australian Ocular Biobank

Part of the  
**DonateLife**  
network



# NSW Tissue Bank Newsletter

November 2020



Welcome to the November edition of the NSW Tissue Bank Newsletter

## A SPECIAL TRIP TO VIEW DONOR MEMORIAL TREE

The NSW Tissue Bank hosted a very special visit from a donor family to view the donor memorial tree that is a feature in the office reception area.

Each month, the first name of every donor is added to the leaves of the tree and over the course of the year, forms a unique symbol demonstrating the generosity of those and their families who have said 'yes' to tissue donation. At the end of each year, the complete tree is captured in a photo which is printed and framed to honour the individuals and the collective.

Lindsay Sutherland, Sue Thompson and Isabel Burgess-Thompson were visiting to honour their family member, Mark who was an eye donor in early 2020.

*Pictured: Mark's family with the donor memorial tree*



The NSW Tissue Banks incorporating the Lions NSW Eye Bank, NSW Bone Bank and Australian Ocular Biobank, acknowledges the outstanding generosity and long term support of the Lions NSW-ACT Save Sight Foundation.

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## AN UPDATE FROM THE LIONS INTERNATIONAL WORKING GROUP

The Lions International Working Group are in the process of creating four important working sub-committees:

1. Eye Banking Operational Support and Emerging Eye Banks
2. Purchasing and Logistics
3. Advocacy and Legislation
4. LCI Brand & Mission: Marketing & Communications

NSW Tissue Bank Manager, Jane Treloggen will be participating in the Advocacy and Legislation group, which will involve liaising with Australian representatives from all sub-committees.

Due to the resurgence of COVID-19 in the United States, the work of the Lions International Working Group has been delayed.

## TISSUE BANK STAFF PRESENT AT THE ANZ CORNEAL BIOENGINEERING RESEARCH GROUP MEETING

The Annual Australia and New Zealand Corneal Bioengineering Research Group Meeting was held as a virtual conference on Thursday, 19 November.

In a session titled *Outside the box and Commercialisation*, Danielle Fisher, General Manager for the NSW Organ and Tissue Donation Service and Amy Deller, Manager, Clinical Governance and Quality presented on the topic of translating research into therapeutic use and navigating both the regulatory and legislative frameworks for traditional tissue grafts and novel products in Australia.

## CAN I BE A TISSUE DONOR?

Tissue Donor Coordinator, Flavia Russell presented on *Medical Suitability Considerations for Eye and Tissue Donation* at the annual NSW Organ and Tissue Donation Clinical Symposium.

The Symposium brings together donation and transplantation professionals to discuss current and emerging topics within the industry.

Flavia's presentation provided the audience with an understanding of what medical conditions and patient history can prevent or enable someone from becoming a tissue donor. Here are some common questions and answers about eligibility for tissue donation...

### Am I too young or old to be a tissue donor?

- **Eyes:** you can donate your eyes from the age of 2, and there is no upper age limit
- **Musculoskeletal:** you can donate your bones between the age of 15 — 90
- **Skin:** you can donate your skin between the age of 17 — 70
- **Cardiovascular:** you can donate your heart valves from birth to the age of 65

### Can I donate my tissue if I've had a body piercing or a tattoo?

**Yes. If it's been 6 months since your piercing or tattoo, you can be a tissue donor. With particular blood tests, it can be even less.**

### Can I donate my tissue if I've had a melanoma?

**Yes. If the melanoma was removed more than 5 years prior with no recurrence, you can be a tissue donor. However, you cannot become an eye donor if you have an ocular melanoma.**



## WELCOMING OUR NEW PROCUREMENT & PRODUCTION OFFICER, ALEX

Alexandra Viglianti joined the NSW Tissue Bank in August, 2020 and has been appointed as a Procurement and Production Officer.

Alexandra comes to us with a Science degree, majoring in anatomy and histology and an Arts degree, majoring in archaeology.

Complementing these science skills and knowledge, is Alexandra's musical talent and experience as a self-employed piano teacher as well as her time spent working in a pharmacy, honing her 'doctors writing' interpretation skills.

We welcome Alex to the team and look forward to her valuable contributions to our work.

*Pictured: Procurement and Production Officer, Alex*



## SAFFRON DAY GETS MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITIES TALKING ABOUT ORGAN DONATION

Australians wore the colour orange on Thursday, 22 October in memory of seven year old organ donor, Deyaan Udani who became India's youngest organ donor in 2016.

In addition to saving four lives as an organ donor, Deyaan also donated both his corneas to give the gift of sight.

Deyaan's parents created Saffron Day to honour his legacy and encourage others to have the important conversation about organ donation, like Deyaan did. A pinch of Saffron goes a long way, as does the generous gift of organ donation.

It is common among some religious and multicultural communities for there to be misconceptions or fears around organ donation, and discussing death can be taboo.

Saffron Day resonates particularly well with culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and multicultural groups came together to celebrate Saffron Day last month.

*Pictured anti-clockwise: Saffron Day celebrations; organ donor Deyaan Udani, SBS World News cover Saffron Day*





## AUSSIES DON THEIR FAVOURITE SPORTING JERSEY IN MEMORY OF NATHAN

On Friday 4 September, schools and workplaces across Australia allowed students and employees to wear their favourite jersey to begin a conversation with their friends and families about organ and tissue donation.

Jersey Day is inspired by the story of Nathan Gremmo, who tragically died in an accident in 2015. Nathan's family chose to give the gift of life to others to honour the legacy of Nathan's generous personality.

People all over Australia got involved in Jersey Day, with ScoMo sporting a jersey too!

*Pictured anti-clockwise: the Cronulla Sharks; staff at Tweed Hospital; Prime Minister, Scott Morrison*



## Contact Us

Please contact the NSW Tissue Banks on 02 9382 7855 if you have any questions.



## DONATELIFE VOLUNTEER WINS 2020 VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

**Congratulations to DonateLife volunteer, Rupesh Udani for taking out the Volunteer of the Year Award in the 2020 NSW Health Awards.**

After winning the volunteer category award in the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District Awards, Rupesh went on to become one of three finalists in the NSW Health Awards and took out the title on Thursday, 29 October.

The NSW Health Awards recognises the essential role of the health system in NSW, and congratulates teams and individuals for delivering innovative and sustainable health programs in what has been an extraordinary year.

Rupesh Udani, who has been volunteering with the NSW Organ and Tissue Donation Service since 2016, has been recognised for his passion and significant contribution towards increasing understanding of organ and tissue donation among people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Leveraging his strong connections in the Indian-Australian community, and through the brave sharing of his personal experience as the father of a young organ donor, Rupesh has been responsible for an increase in engagement and donor registrations from multicultural communities all over Australia.



"I am extremely honoured to receive this award," Rupesh said.

"My son, Deyaan taught me about organ donation at the tender age of seven. My volunteering work is a way to honour Deyaan's life, and telling his story helps others to understand that organ donation is a noble thing that saves lives."

*Pictured: NSW Tissue Bank Research & Development Scientist, Monira Hoque with Volunteer of the Year, Rupesh Udani*

**TRANSPLANT RECIPIENTS SAY 'THANKS' THIS DONATELIFE THANK YOU DAY**

DonateLife Thank You Day will take place on Sunday, 22 November.

Thank You day is a national day to acknowledge the generosity of donors and their families who make organ and tissue donation possible.

Those impacted by organ and tissue donation can take part in Thank You Day by sharing a 'thank you' message on social media with the hashtags #ThankYouDay and #ThankYouDay2020.

*Pictured left to right: heart transplant recipient, Alf; living kidney donors Gianpiero and Rebekka with their son, kidney transplant recipient Isaak*



# Thank You Day

Thanking organ and tissue donors and their families  
**Sunday 22 November 2020**