

20 February, 2014

## Have the chat that saves lives during DonateLife Week

Five-year-old Eastlakes boy Joshua Humiz is alive today because of the kindness of a stranger.

Joshua was born with no kidney function and received a life-saving kidney at Sydney Children's Hospital in Randwick on his second birthday.

During DonateLife Week (23 February to 2 March, 2014), Australians are being urged to discover the facts about organ and tissue donation, and to register their donation decision on the Australian Organ Donor Register.

Most importantly, everyone is being asked to 'have the chat' with loved ones to make sure their donation decision is known.

Joshua's father David said it was an important conversation to have.

"I had had the conversation and was registered as an organ donor even before we had Josh," Mr Humiz said.

"It is important to me to know that I have the ability to help someone else, and to make sure my family understands my wishes, and we live every day grateful to the person who also had this conversation with their family, and who saved our little boy."

Mr Humiz said life had changed dramatically for the better for the family since Joshua's transplant.

"When Joshua was a baby he was hooked up to life-saving dialysis machines seven days a week for 10 hours," he said.

"It was very difficult because when he was in pain, or he wanted a hug, or if he wanted to go to the toilet, we could not pick him up or take him, we'd lie next to him in his bed to cuddle him and comfort him."

Mr Humiz said Joshua started kindergarten this year and has grown to become a "normal" little boy who loves watching and playing sports.

Cassandra Reed, Donation Specialist Nurse for Prince of Wales Hospital, said in the same way that we discuss what we want to have happen in the event of our death, we also need to talk about whether we would like to become an organ and tissue donor.

"It's a conversation we can have today, that helps prepare our loved ones should they be offered the opportunity to proceed with organ and tissue donation," Ms Reed said.

"With one organ and tissue donor able to transform the lives of 10 or more people, it's a conversation that could one day save lives."

In Australia, the family will always be asked to confirm the donation decision of the deceased before donation for transplantation can proceed. Families that have discussed and know each other's donation decisions are much more likely to support organ and tissue donation proceeding.

“Even if you have previously made a decision about organ and tissue donation, DonateLife Week is a great opportunity to remind your family about your donation decision, and to ask and know their decision.”

For more information visit [www.donatelife.gov.au](http://www.donatelife.gov.au)