

GIFT OF LIFE INCORPORATED – PRESIDENT’S REPORT 28 NOVEMBER 2011

Over the past year, Gift of Life has been busy pursuing its main priorities: policy advocacy as well as the promotion of greater community awareness and education aimed at boosting organ and tissue donation.

On the advocacy front, we have met with Parliamentary Secretary for Health Catherine King, Chief Minister Katy Gallagher, CEO of the Organ and Tissue Authority Yael Cass as well as Authority staff and have been involved in regular meetings of DonateLife ACT advisory groups. We have pursued assistance with events and activities we organize as well as issues such as the NSW RTA driving licence now under review, live donation, better retrieval processes, assistance with extra logistic costs for those in rural areas and improved and consistent national procedures for organ allocation.

We made presentations at the annual DonateLife network forum, DonateLife Communications Charter signatories meetings and made a major contribution towards the preparation of the recently released DonateLife national community speaker’s guide which has been warmly received by DonateLife network agencies around Australia as a helpful tool in getting key messages across.

Our main events and activities during the year have once again been the re-named DonateLife Walk last February which attracted high profile representation and over 1800 participants. The Chief Minister’s Awards for ACT citizens who have made a major contribution to community awareness involved over 100 guests. Both events attracted wide and positive media coverage during national DonateLife Week. We have also presented awards to a range of senior school colleges in recognition of their active and strong participation at the Walk. We took part in university orientation week and we were also involved with various other fun runs/ walks.

By year’s end we have begun to move into new areas such as making contact with indigenous and priority cultural/religious groups with a view to encouraging them to take a greater interest and involvement in organ and tissue donation. We are extending our links to the ACT business community and we plan to improve

our media links. We are also beginning to explore means of giving more recognition to and appreciation of the role of donors and their families in the transplant process.

All of this represents a significant agenda to be continued and sustained during the coming year.

While organ and tissue donation rates around Australia are now at record levels and continuing to grow significantly, we need to sustain or boost the rate of increase in organ and tissue donation. The need to ask and know your loved ones' donation wishes and to sign on to the national register remains paramount, so consent rates will rise significantly. Good progress is now being made, but much more remains to be done.

David O'Leary
President
Gift of Life Incorporated
28 November 2011