



PRIME MINISTER

MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AGEING

PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AGEING

\$136.4 million national plan to boost organ donation and save lives

The Rudd Government today proposed a major new national reform package to establish Australia as a world leader in organ donation for transplantation.

Despite more than 90% of Australians supporting the idea of organ donation, Australia has a longstanding shortage of organs for transplantation.

To address this, the Government proposes a total Commonwealth funding package of \$151.1 million, including new funding of \$136.4 million over four years to boost the number of life-saving organ transplants for Australians.

This is an important development for the 1,800 Australians on transplant waiting lists.

The key features of the reform package include:

- **\$67 million** to fund dedicated organ donation specialist doctors and other staff in public and private hospitals;
- **\$46 million** to establish a new independent national authority to coordinate national organ donation initiatives.
- **\$17 million** in new funding for hospitals to meet additional staffing, bed and infrastructure costs associated with organ donation.
- **\$13.4 million** to continue national public awareness and education;
- **\$1.9 million** for counselling for potential donor families; and
- Other significant measures including enhanced professional education programs, consistent clinical protocols, 'clinical trigger' checklists and data collection for organ transplants in hospitals.

A new national organ donation and transplantation authority would be set up by 1 January 2009 to drive and oversee a comprehensive set of reforms outlined in the attached fact sheets.

The reform package will be proposed to the States and Territories at tomorrow's Council of Australian Governments' meeting.

The Rudd Government is confident that in the spirit of cooperation all states and territories will sign up to the new National Plan to Boost Organ Donation.

Transplantation is a highly successful treatment that transforms the lives of individuals and the families who care for them.

Australian families deserve the best organ donation and transplantation system in the world, but our current system falls short.

As a consequence of long waiting lists, Australians spend years with more costly treatments such as dialysis. This costs our hospitals \$83,000 per person per year, compared to the cost of a kidney transplant - \$65,000 per recipient for the first year and \$11,000 a year thereafter.

As Australia's population ages and more Australians are affected by lifestyle diseases such as obesity and diabetes, the demand for transplants will continue to grow.

The package developed has drawn together the best international evidence and practice, as well as the expertise of stakeholders such as the Transplantation Society of Australia and New Zealand, the Cognate Committee on Organ and Tissue Donation, and ShareLife.

The package does not change the framework of legal consent for donation. The families of all potential donors will be supported to make the choice of whether to donate at what is a very difficult time.

The package continues the Rudd Government's commitment to making our hospital system work for Australian families.

The Government will undertake detailed consultation on implementation of the package with relevant groups including the states and territories.

SYDNEY

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