



22 May 2010

IT'S OK!

Gift of Life President, Anne Cahill Lambert, today urged all Australians to have the conversation about organ and tissue donation. A new national advertising campaign commences on Sunday, 23 May. Its focus is *to donate life, discuss it today, OK?*

The Prime Minister launched the campaign this morning at The Canberra Hospital and spoke about a patient from our region, Dean Jobson. For the last few years, Dean has been effectively carrying an external heart device around in a bag to keep him alive. He recently received a heart transplant and is now an outpatient at St Vincent's Hospital in Sydney. We hope to welcome him home to Goulburn in the next few weeks.

The campaign will encourage Australians to discuss their wishes with their loved ones in relation to organ donation. This is because consent will be sought from the people closest to them and it is important that they know loved ones' intentions. Organ and tissue donors save lives; Dean Jobson is a living testament to this.

"Just because you have registered or ticked your licence doesn't mean that you will automatically be a donor when you die. Consent will always be sought from those closest to you, that's why discussing it with them is so important."

We know that Australians generally support organ and tissue donation – the research tells us that upwards of 80% of Australians support it. However, this translates poorly at the time of death with family consent rates being less than 60%. Australia is a world leader in transplantation surgery, but languishes near the bottom of league tables on organ and tissue donation. There are more than 1,700 people who are on transplant waiting lists and many more who cannot get onto those lists because of the shortage of organs and tissue.

"When you see the advertisements over the coming month, it would be great if you could take time to have the conversation with your loved ones. To donate life, discuss it today, OK?" said Ms Cahill Lambert.

ENDS

Contact: Anne Cahill Lambert 0400 127 211

Fact sheets and advertisement at www.donatelife.gov.au