

GIFT OF LIFE INCORPORATED – PRESIDENT’S REPORT
DAVID O’LEARY – AGM 4 DECEMBER 2013

During the past year, Gift of Life has continued to pursue its main priorities: policy advocacy as well as promotion of greater community awareness and education through events and activities aimed at increasing organ and tissue donation.

On the advocacy front, we have raised a number of issues with the Government such as our annual walk, “soft” First Person Consent, assistance for living donation, extended criteria for transplantation and growth in hospital funding for organ transplantation to provide greater resources as donation levels increase.

This year my membership of the Organ and Tissue Advisory Council has offered additional opportunities for input and influence. We also participated in the OTA Communications Charter signatories meeting and the DonateLife ACT community and consumer advisory committee. We also attended the very successful international organ donation congress in Sydney recently.

We have organised a range of events and activities. GoLi’s DonateLife Walk in February this year during DonateLife Week attracted high profile representation for the launch and around 3,100 participants – a record over the seven years we have organised the event. Our next Walk will be held on Wednesday 26 February 2014. The Chief Minister’s Awards for ACT citizens who have made a major contribution to community awareness, arranged in association with Gift of Life, involved around 70 guests recently up at the National Arboretum. This year we separated the Awards from DonateLife Week which was a considerable improvement. Both the walk and the Awards attracted wide and positive media coverage. We also took part in university orientation week at the ANU and Market Day at the University of Canberra and for the first time addressed third year medical students at the ANU in a joint presentation with a doctor representing DonateLife ACT.

We have continued to promote our links to the ACT business community and aim to move further in this regard. We have established closer links with the media. We are also currently exploring with the ACT Government and staff at the Arboretum our proposal for a reflective sculpture in Canberra to promote organ and tissue donation.

While organ and tissue donation rates around Australia are now at record levels and continuing to grow significantly, there is an ongoing need to lift the rate of donation. We need to make people’s wish count through family discussion and signing onto the national register, so consent rates continue to increase. Significant progress is being achieved already through the Government’s reform program, but it is still early days in this process. Much more remains to be done.