



**Senator the Hon Fiona Nash**  
Minister for Regional Development  
Minister for Rural Health  
Minister for Regional Communications  
Deputy Leader of The Nationals

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Canberrans celebrate 10 years of the Gift of Life DonateLife Walk**

Thousands of Australians showed their support for organ and tissue donation by taking part in today's 10th annual Gift of Life DonateLife Walk around Lake Burley Griffin.

Minister for Rural Health and Nationals Deputy Leader Fiona Nash was joined by the Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, His Excellency General the Hon Sir Peter Cosgrove, to officially open the 2016 Gift of Life DonateLife Walk.

Thanking the many people who attended the walk, Minister Nash said the Gift of Life DonateLife Walk promotes organ and tissue donation and serves as an important reminder for Australians, to register their desire to be an organ donor and to discuss their donation decisions with their loved ones.

"Events such as this annual walk help increase awareness and encourage more Australians to register as an organ and tissue donor," Minister Nash said.

"We worship our sporting stars and we can admire organ donors with the same passion - after all, organ donors save lives. The recognition of donor families also needs to increase.

"Australia has a world class reputation for successful transplant outcomes, both in terms of survival rates of the recipients and the number of organs that are able to be transplanted from each donor.

"When a deceased person is a registered organ donor and their family know of their wishes, the family allows the donation to go ahead 91 per cent of the time. This compares with 42 per cent of the time if the deceased was not registered and the family did not know their loved one's donation decision.

"As of May, Australians will be able to register to become an organ donor in less than 10 minutes online. All paperwork required to become an organ donor under the current system will be axed. This could potentially hugely increase Australia's pool of potential organ donors given there are 4.3 million Australians who have indicated a wish to be an organ donor but haven't yet completed the paperwork."

Minister Nash said Australia has continued its improvement in organ and tissue donation and transplantation, with a record 435 deceased organ donors transforming the lives of 1,241 Australians in 2015. Many more generous Australians also became tissue donors.

“Australia increased its donation rate by 14 per cent from 2014, achieving a national donation rate of 18.3 donors per million population (dpmp) in 2015. This increase met the national target of 18.2 dpmp set by all Australian Health Ministers.

“In the ACT organ donation rates are exceptional with a donation rate of 21.2 dpmp, above the national average, with a record 13 deceased organ donors last year.

“Today I honour those Australians and their families for their generosity, which saved and transformed the lives of others,” Minister Nash said.

“Organ donation is a rare event, with only around one per cent of all deaths in hospitals occurring in the specific circumstances in which organ donation is feasible.

“That is why it is so important to register your intentions and discuss your decision with your family and friends.”

The Gift of Life DonateLife Walk is supported by the Australian Government through an Organ and Tissue Authority Community Awareness grant.

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