



MEDIA RELEASE

21 March 2023

Annual Gift of Life Walk (20th -26th March 2023)

Walk, Talk and Take the Next Step Towards Registering to be an Organ and Tissue Donor

The 2023 Gift of Life Walks is taking place this week between the 20th and 26th March. Walkers can sign up at <https://www.giftoflife.asn.au> to walk any time in this week, anywhere in Australia. Walkers are also welcome to join our traditional community walk around Lake Burley Griffin in Canberra in the morning of 21st March.

People all over Australia are encouraged to get a walking group together whether it's your friends, colleagues, gym buddies, school pals or your dog to help increase awareness about organ and tissue donation. We also encourage our walkers to take the next step and register to become a donor.

We have a selection of free merchandise available including t-shirts, caps, water bottles and dog bandanas to those who get in and register quickly! Gift of Life walkers are encouraged to share their walking adventures via Facebook and Instagram using #giftoflife #giftoflifewalk2023

Catherine Scott, President of Gift of Life Inc. commented that, "With the success of 2021 and 2022 Gift of Life walks, we are inviting people from all over Australia to get a group together, or go on a solo walk with their dog at their favourite place. It's a fun, healthy activity and a great way to spread the important message about joining the Australian Organ Donor register. It doesn't need to be a long walk – anywhere up to 5 kilometres would be fantastic."

"As someone who has the gift of sight as the direct result of organ and tissue donation I feel it is incredibly important to have a conversation with your loved ones about joining the register." Ms Scott continued.

"We're encouraging schools to get involved and organize a walk this year too. Young people are the group with the lowest donation rates, and we're providing more resources for schools nationally to increase awareness in the 16-18 age group," Ms Scott continued.

Gift of Life Board member, Mallie Taylor adds "local residents and organisations are encouraged to have a chat with their friends and work colleagues, pick a day, pick a route that you want to walk, and get out there..and make sure you post about your walk on social media" "most importantly, have the chat with your family so they know your wishes"

Gift of Life is supported by Organ and Tissue Authority, ACT Health and the John James Foundation. For more information about the Gift of Life Walk, how to become a donor, to sign up to walk anywhere in Australia and order merchandise, visit www.giftoflife.asn.au

MEDIA CONTACTS: For more information, please contact Catherine Scott on 0416 117 291 / contact@giftoflife.asn.au



MEDIA BACKGROUND

Gift of Life Incorporated is a not-for-profit association based in Canberra with a goal to promote greater community awareness about organ and tissue donation in order to save more Australian lives.

Gift of Life's two primary goals are to:

- Engage with the Australian and ACT governments on related policy issues, and
- Organise major community awareness raising events and activities during the year.

More information about Gift of Life is available at www.giftoflife.asn.au

About the Annual Walk – Take the next step!

The Gift of Life's Annual Walk is now in its 17th year. Prior to COVID, the Annual Walk was Canberra's largest community activity supporting DonateLife in raising awareness and building the number of people on the organ and tissue donor register. In 2021 and 2022 the Walk was held virtually and now has a national reach. This year we are resuming the traditional Walk around Lake Burley Griffin as well as continuing self-organised walks nationally – up to 5 km anywhere, anytime during the Gift of Life Walk week.

Gift of Life's Annual Walk is an important reminder to every individual and y family to “have the chat that saves lives” with their loved ones to ensure they understand their decision about organ and tissue donation.

This Walk is not a fundraiser and it does not cost to sign up or request merchandise.

Social Media

We ask you to share any photos and videos of the event on your social media using the hashtags #giftoflifewalk2023, #giftoflifewalk, #giftoflife and #donatelife. Also please tag us using @giftoflifewalk, so that we can share your posts.

Merchandise

Merchandise is free for participants and includes t-shirts, hats, caps, dog bandanas and drink bottles (while stocks last).



Some Facts About Organ and Tissue Donation in Australia

Source: [2022 Australian Donation and Transplantation Activity Report](#) and *Summary of the 2022 Australian Donation and Transplantation Activity Report* [DonateLife Fact Sheet](#)

One organ donor can save the lives of up to 7 people and help many more through eye and tissue donation



In 2022 over 1,800 people were on the waitlist for a transplant in Australia.



In 2022 over 14,000 additional people were on dialysis – some of whom may need a kidney transplant.



Canberrans are overwhelmingly supportive of becoming a donor, however only 27% are registered in the ACT and the consent rate is only 58%. Signing on to the register and letting your family know is important if you wish to become a donor.



Only around 2% of people who die in Australian hospitals meet the criteria required to be an organ donor. With only a small number of potential donors, it is vital that they speak with their families about their wishes to help increase our donation rate.



It only takes one minute to register as an organ and tissue donor. Head to donatelife.gov.au/register or register in three clicks via the Medicare app. Then speak with your family about your wish to be a donor.



The percentage of population aged 16 and over registered on the Australian Organ Donation Register in 2022

National Average – 36%

South Australia – 72%

Tasmania – 48%

NSW – 42%

Western Australia – 38%

Queensland – 31%

ACT – 27%

Victoria – 23%

Northern Territory - 16%