

**GIFT OF LIFE INCORPORATED – PRESIDENT’S REPORT  
DAVID O’LEARY – AGM 29 NOVEMBER 2012**

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

On the advocacy front, we have met with Parliamentary Secretary for Health Catherine King, ACT Chief Minister Katy Gallagher, CEO of the Organ and Tissue Authority Yael Cass as well as Authority staff and made submissions on various issues such as the replacement of the NSW RTA driving licence system with the national Organ and Tissue Donor Register run by Medicare. We are delighted to learn that this important change was recently introduced by the NSW Government.

We took part in the annual DonateLife Forum involving agencies throughout Australia and DonateLife Communications Charter signatories meetings. Recently, I was appointed by the Government to become a member of the Organ and Tissue Authority Advisory Council. This is the first time that representatives of leading community organisations such as Gift of Life have been given the opportunity to contribute to the policy process in this way. We also participated in meetings of DonateLife ACT advisory committees.

We have organised a range of events and activities. GoLi’s DonateLife Walk last February attracted high profile representation and around 2,400 participants – a record over the six years we have organised the event. The Chief Minister’s Awards for ACT citizens who have made a major contribution to community awareness involved over 100 guests. Both events attracted wide and positive media coverage during national DonateLife Week. We have presented awards to a range of senior school colleges in recognition of their active and strong participation at the Walk. We also took part in university orientation week at the ANU and Market Day at the University of Canberra.

We have begun to take an interest in areas such as contact with indigenous and priority cultural/religious groups with a view to encouraging them to become more involved in organ and tissue donation. We have established links to the ACT business community. We have established closer links with the media. We are also currently exploring with the ACT Government our proposal for a commemorative sculpture in Canberra to promote organ and tissue donation and to recognize the generous role of donor families.

While organ and tissue donation rates around Australia are now at record levels and continuing to grow significantly, there is a need to increase the rate of organ and tissue donation. We need to make people’s wish count through family discussion and signing onto the national register, so consent rates rise significantly. Good progress is being made through the Government’s reform program, but much more remains to be done.