



Senator the Hon Fiona Nash ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR HEALTH

MEDIA RELEASE

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Walk and Have the Chat That Saves Lives

Thousands of Canberrans of all ages this morning had the chat that saves lives as part of the annual DonateLife Walk around Lake Burley Griffin.

Assistant Minister for Health Senator Fiona Nash said, "Each year the people of Canberra show their support for organ and tissue donation by participating in the DonateLife Walk."

The walk started at Regatta Point at 7am with families, friends and pets walking the bridge-to-bridge circuit around the lake, followed by a BBQ thanks to Lions Club Belconnen.

Organised by the Gift of Life ACT, the DonateLife Walk is one of the many hundreds of community events taking place across Australia during DonateLife Week. The DonateLife Walk is supported through an Organ and Tissue Authority Community Awareness Grant.

Led by the Organ and Tissue Authority, DonateLife Week (Sunday 23 February – Sunday 2 March) is the national awareness week to promote organ and tissue donation. 'Have the chat' events will take place in workplaces and communities across Australia, providing a dedicated time for Australians to learn and talk about organ and tissue donation.

"One organ and tissue donor can transform the lives of 10 or more people. By speaking with your family today, and letting them know your donation decision, you could help save the lives of up to ten people in the future," Minister Nash said.

"This DonateLife Week, I urge all Australians to follow the example of our walkers this morning and have the chat with their loved ones – talk about organ and tissue donation so that you know each other's donation decision."

It is encouraging that three in four Australians have now discussed organ and tissue donation with their family. But only 53% of people know their loved ones' donation decisions. Importantly, the majority of Australians (96%) that are aware of their family members' donation decisions indicate that they would uphold these decisions.

In 2013, 1,122 Australians received a second chance at life because of the generosity of 391 organ donors and their families. The families of organ and tissue donors are to be thanked and commended for upholding the decision of their loved one and giving others the gift of life.

Australia has achieved solid growth in donation outcomes, with 2013 representing a 58% increase in the number of organ donors over 2009, when the DonateLife Network was established. The number of transplant recipients has increased by 39% since 2009.

For more information visit the [DonateLife website](#).

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