



**PRIME MINISTER
MINISTER FOR HEALTH
PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE
MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AGEING**

Organ donation legislation passes Senate

The passage through the Senate today of the legislation setting up the Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority marks a new era of hope for people needing organ transplants.

The authority, the centrepiece of the Rudd Government's strategy to increase Australia's low rate of donation, will implement and oversee Australia's new organ donation and transplantation system.

The Rudd Government will work with states and territories, clinicians, consumers and the community sector to build a world-leading system to reduce unnecessary suffering for thousands of Australians who are waiting for donated organs.

Now that the legislation has been passed, the Government expects to announce the head of the authority as quickly as possible so that the authority can begin operating early in the new year.

A dedicated team within the Department of Health and Ageing has been working full-time on the new national donation and transplantation system to ensure that implementation can progress as quickly as possible.

The Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority created today is part of a national reform package worth \$151.1 million, including new funding of \$136.4 million over four years.

The key features of the reform package include:

- **\$67 million** to fund dedicated organ donation specialist doctors and other staff in public and private hospitals;
- **\$46 million** to establish the authority, to be set up by 1 January 2009;
- **\$17 million** in new funding for hospitals to meet additional staffing, bed and infrastructure costs associated with organ donation.
- **\$13.4 million** to continue national public awareness and education;
- **\$1.9 million** for counselling for potential donor families; and
- Other significant measures including enhanced professional education programs, consistent clinical protocols, 'clinical trigger' checklists and data collection for organ transplants in hospitals.

The Rudd Government encourages individuals to do two things to help bring the gift of life to the thousands of Australians who need it:

- Talk to your families if you are considering becoming a donor. A decision to donate that is fully understood and supported by your family is the best decision.
- Register your consent for organ donation on the Australian Organ Donation Register, which is administered by Medicare Australia. People can obtain registration forms at the Medicare Australia web site, www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/organ, by calling Medicare on 1800-777-203, or by visiting their local Medicare office.

CANBERRA

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PRESS OFFICE

02 6277 7744

Office of Nicola Roxon

02 6277 7220

Office of Senator Jan McLucas 02 6277 3680