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## Australians urged to consider organ donation after 2020 fall

Organ donor numbers in Australia dropped last year as hospitals were forced to scale back operations and flights fell as a result of COVID-19 induced lockdowns and border closures.

With 1,270 patients receiving an organ from 463 deceased donors, the number of transplants fell 12% from 2019, while the number of donors decreased by 16%. Most significantly, 18% fewer kidney patients received the transplants they needed, according to research from the Australian Government<sup>1</sup>.

Marie Brownell, National Manager of Estate Planning, Equity Trustees, today urged Australians who wished to become donors to ensure their registration is up to date.

“A common misconception is that Australians are registered for donation through their driver’s licence. In fact, state-based registries no longer exist,” she said.

“South Australian residents can record their donation decision when applying for or renewing a licence and this information is then directly transferred to the national register. If you live in another state, you will need to join the Australian Organ Donor Register. Signing up online takes less than a minute but could one day make a huge difference to a sick person in need.”

There are a few other ways you can ensure your wishes are clear:

### 1. Inform your Executor

Legally, when a person dies, their Executor has responsibility for dealing with the body. There is only a small window of opportunity to transplant the organs of a deceased person, so waiting for the will to be read may be too late. Make sure your Executor is clear about your wishes.

### 2. Talk to your family

In Australia family members must consent to organ donation before it can proceed. Yet Transplant Australia data<sup>2</sup> shows that each year, around 40% of families decline donation. This is largely due to the family being unaware of their loved one’s wishes. Of the 51% of Australians who do know the donation decisions of their family member, 94% would uphold the decision.

### 3. Take action today

While Australia is a world leader for successful organ and tissue transplants, with only one in three Australians registered as donors and 1650 waitlisted for a transplant, now more than ever there is a need for Australians to say ‘yes’ to organ donation.

“While it can be hard to think about what will happen to your body after you die, registering to become a donor is a generous decision that is well worth making,” Ms Brownell concluded.

To register to become an organ donor, visit <https://donatelife.gov.au/register-donor-today>.

Read a longer article on this topic [here](#), or find out more about Equity Trustees’ wills and estate planning services are available on our [website](#).

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Government Organ and Tissue Authority



## **MEDIA INQUIRIES**

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Equity Trustees was established in 1888 for the purpose of providing independent and impartial Trustee and Executor services to help families throughout Australia protect their wealth. As Australia's leading specialist trustee company, we offer a diverse range of services to individuals, families and corporate clients including asset management, estate planning, philanthropic services and Responsible Entity (RE) services for external Fund Managers.

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