

## AUSTRALIAN ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION AND TRANSPLANTATION AUTHORITY BILL 2008

### Second Reading

[Mr ROBERT](#) (Fadden) (4.26 p.m.)—I thank the member for Blaxland for his insightful comments with respect to the bill. In 2009 the 17th World Transplant Games will be held on the Gold Coast in Australia, on 22 to 30 August next year, in Broadbeach, in the seat of the member for Moncrieff. For over 20 years the World Transplant Games Federation has been staging international sporting events for transplant athletes in order to demonstrate the physical success of transplant surgery and to raise awareness of the need to increase organ donation. These games are expected to attract up to 3,000 participants from over 70 countries and are the largest organ and tissue donor awareness event in the world.

Sports to be included in the 2009 games include athletics, swimming, tennis, tenpin bowling, cycling, badminton, lawn bowls, rowing, table tennis, volleyball, golf and squash. Apparently archery is a demonstration sport. All competitors taking part in the games have received a life-saving organ transplant, including heart, lung, liver, bone marrow and kidney transplants. Without these transplants competitors would have died or, in the case of kidney recipients, may have only survived as a result of intensive renal support in the form of dialysis. Also competing will be people on dialysis and others waiting for a transplant. The world games next year on the Gold Coast will demonstrate to local and international audiences the tangible benefits of donation—the living proof, as it were, that donation works, that it is valuable, that it should be supported and highly esteemed within our community. I think there is no better way of showing the benefit of transplant than looking at the achievements of the actual lives saved.

The transplant games are more than a celebration of lives saved through transplant; they are one of the most important public health campaigns Australians can engage in. Every extra donor can save or greatly improve the lives of up to 10 people. The transplant games, staged by charity Transplant Australia, demonstrate that people who were once terribly ill can be given a second chance to go on and achieve a high quality of life. As the member for a Gold Coast seat, the seat to the north of Moncrieff, where the games will be held, I applaud the games and those who participate. They remind us all of the indomitable human spirit that overcomes adversity. They allow our spirits to soar as we join all participants to celebrate their victory not only in the games but in life. They remind us all of the value of organ donation. Thus I speak in support of the [Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority Bill 2008](#), which establishes the authority to lead a new approach to increasing the number of lives saved through organ donation.

There are over 1,800 people in Australia on organ transplant waiting lists at any given time. The tragedy is that some of them will die waiting. Since the Australian Organ Donor Register was established in 2000, over one million Australians have registered. Currently, there are 1,160,816 people on the register. I say to those great Australians: thank you for considering helping others should a tragedy in your own life occur. I encourage all Australians to register, noting that it is voluntary and that you can nominate which organs you wish to donate. I encourage all Australians to sit down and talk to their wives, husbands, partners, children and grandchildren—those close to them—about the need for organ donation in their lives.

I commend the previous Governor-General, Major General Michael Jeffrey, and his wife, Marlena, and their four children—I served in the military with some of the children and I was also with some of them at Duntroon—as they expressed to the nation that, as a family, they had sat down and talked about organ donation and had decided that they would go on the organ donor list. Major General Jeffrey and his wife and family have set

a great example for all Australians. Major General Jeffrey has set a great example not only during his five years as Governor-General but during his entire military career.

For people with serious or life-threatening illnesses, organ or tissue transplantation can mean a second chance at life. More than 30,000 Australians have received transplants in the last 60 years. Improved survival rates now mean that most organ or tissue recipients enjoy many years of high-quality life after their transplant. Organs that continue to be in demand include hearts, lungs, livers, kidneys and pancreases. Tissue in demand includes heart valves, bone tissue, skin tissue, eye tissue and pancreas tissue.

According to the International Registry of Organ Donation and Transplantation, Australia is, unfortunately, ranked 17th in the world. From 2002-07 there have been fluctuations in the donor rates within each state of Australia. More often than not there is a correlating event in the state that highlights the need for organs, causing a spike in organ donation rates. Such events might include the donation of organs by the family of a well-known person, publicity surrounding the Australian Transplant Games or, indeed, the magnanimous gesture by the previous Governor-General, his wife and family.

Advances in medical technology have meant an increase in the functioning longevity of transplanted organs. It is these advances that allow many recipients to return to their normal lives, empowered by the knowledge that receiving an organ will provide not only a great quality of life but a more sustainable, long-term healthy future. Currently, in Australia, there are some transplant recipients who have had their transplanted organs longer than their native organs. Receiving an organ transplant is not a short-term fix; it is a long-term solution.

Australia has one of the most successful transplantation rates in the world, with the average patient survival rate one year after receiving a transplant at 90 percent. Even in Spain, which has the highest organ donation rate in the world, there are only 35.1 actual donors per million people, and there are hundreds of patients on their waiting list. Over the last 10 years, organ donation rates in Australia have fluctuated at around 200 donors per year. Australia is internationally recognised for its strong record of successful organ transplantations; however, it also has one of the world's lowest rates of organ donations, with the consequence that a substantial number of people suffer and perish while waiting for suitable organs to become available. At any given time, almost 1,800 Australians are waiting for an organ transplant. They are waiting right now. As at January this year, 176 Queenslanders were waiting. But donation rates are failing to meet this demand.

To give you an idea of what the waiting list looks like, I note that the national organ-matching system, which is an Australian government funded project, lists the following waiting list numbers as of 1 July this year: 1,357 Australians waiting for a kidney, 67 for a heart, 194 for a liver, 140 for a lung and 35 for a pancreas. That makes 1,793 Australians who are waiting today. On average, patients on the transplant list wait just over four years for a kidney, just over one year for a heart or lung, eight months for a liver and two years for a pancreas.

Only 21 per cent of the Queenslanders who are legally able to register their consent to donate do so. I call on my fellow Queenslanders and say: put yourselves on the donation register. Speak to partners, family, friends, wives, husbands, children and those who matter in your life about what you want done in the unlikely event of your death.

I support the bill and I know that many Australians support the bill. I urge all Australians to register for organ donation so that, in the very sad event of their passing, they may have the opportunity to pass on life. I support the slogan 'Don't take your organs to Heaven; Heaven knows we need them here'.