



Media release

Legal and Social Issues Committee

Victoria encouraged to introduce organ and tissue donor registration on driver's licences

The Victorian Government should consider reintroducing the option to register for organ and tissue donation when applying for or renewing a driver's licence, a report tabled in the Legislative Assembly today has recommended.

The Legislative Assembly Legal and Social Issues Committee's report, *Register and talk about it*, makes 74 findings and 41 recommendations, including to encourage more registrations through improved accessibility and awareness of the Australian Organ Donor Register (AODR) and better promotion of family discussion about donation.

"It's so important that people both register and have a conversation with their family about their donation wishes. We know that will significantly increase the likelihood that a family will consent to a donation going ahead," said Committee Chair Ella George.

The Committee received almost 50 submissions, held seven days of hearings and heard from local, interstate and international experts, as well as representatives of diverse communities and donor families who bravely shared their personal stories.

"It can be incredibly confronting to be asked to consent to a loved one becoming a donor. But we learned that many families find the strength at a time of intense sadness to recognise that they can help others," said Committee Chair Ella George.

Victoria performs well when it comes to rates of donation and transplantation and most people support donation, but only 23% of Victorians are registered to be donors—much lower than the national average of 36%.

The success of driver's licence donor registrations is evidenced by South Australia, the only state where it is still possible to record a donation decision on a driver's licence. South Australia's registration rate, at more than 70%, is significantly higher than Victoria's, and the highest in Australia. While Victorians were able to record interest in becoming a donor on driver's licences for a short period, this has not been possible since the early 2000s.

The rate of registration for young people is particularly low, with just 10% of people aged 16 to 25 having registered a donation decision on the AODR.

The Committee identified building awareness and discussion opportunities about donation among young Victorians as a key opportunity, and makes a series of recommendations to encourage this cohort to register and share their donation wishes with family.

"Educating young people is vital. We need to increase awareness so more young people register to become a donor and share their donation wishes with family, making Victorians better prepared should they ever be asked to provide consent to donation for a loved one," said Committee Chair Ella George.

The Committee also considered living stem cell and living kidney donations, and discovered much more can be done to promote both. Australia imports most of its stem cell donations from overseas: but this reliance would be reduced by encouraging more young people to register on the Australian Bone Marrow Donor Registry.

The report and summary booklet are available on the Committee's website, along with an interactive heatmap of AODR registration rates by Victorian local government area and a timeline of key organ and tissue donation and registration milestones.

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