



June 27, 2023

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Subject: Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority
Amendment (Disclosure of Information) Bill 2023

Dear Secretary,

Transplant Australia, the national charity for organ and tissue donation and transplantation, welcomes clarification and certainty regarding the disclosure of the identity and information regarding donors through the amendment to the above legislation.

Transplant Australia has a long history of working with donor families to promote the benefits of organ and tissue donation to the Australian public. Donor families, the ones who support donation through agreeing to donation, or supporting their loved one's decision to be a donor, are crucial in the equation to improve organ and tissue donation outcomes in Australia.

It is important the privacy of donors is respected and that relevant authorities gain consent from family members when revealing the identity of donors. These stories can be powerful and persuasive in contributing to a greater understanding of the motivation behind donation and the benefits experienced by not only recipients but the families of those donors.

Recently Transplant Australia staged the World Transplant Games in Perth and by far the most outstanding personal story told was that of Rowena Alexander, a mother who lost her daughter, Macaiah, five years ago. Macaiah's kidneys and lungs went on to save the lives of three different people.

Rowena is a proud Indigenous Australian and wants to ensure that more Australians from her communities' support donation so that more Indigenous Australians are afforded a life-saving transplant.

Clearly, Rowena has a right to share her story and giving donor families additional certainty is supported by Transplant Australia.

It is also our hope that this national legislation leads to uniformity in legislation concerning the disclosure of donors' identities across Australia.





Transplant Australia however does not support the disclosure of donor information for the purposes of connecting donor families and recipients together. There will be times when this may naturally occur and usually after some years have passed. However Transplant Australia supports the anonymous nature of donation. Transplant recipients face significant adjustment and hurdles in recovery and a transplant is not a cure but part of an ongoing journey. Quite simply they do not need the additional pressure of potentially needing to live up to the expectations of a donor family.

We support anonymous letter writing and encouraging all recipients to acknowledge their generous gift through letters via DonateLife agencies.

We commend the Government for clarifying this matter and giving donor families peace of mind in sharing their story for the benefit of all concerned.

Chris Thomas
CEO
Transplant Australia

