



31 October 2016

Committee Secretary  
Senate Community Affairs References Committee  
PO Box 6100 Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

### **Senate Inquiry into Lyme Disease - Submission**

#### The Threat to Tissue Transplantation in Australia due to Undiagnosed Symptoms Consistent With Lyme Disease

The transmission of vector borne diseases is a risk in tissue transplantation. This risk can be higher for recipients of tissue grafts than for recipients of blood transfusions. Infectious organisms tend to clear from the blood shortly after cessation of the acute phase but may persist within other body fluids and tissues for greatly extended periods.

To this end potential tissue donors have traditionally been asked and continue to be asked about having lived and travelled overseas and having been diagnosed with or had symptoms consistent with a vector borne disease. Due to the increasing prevalence of vector borne diseases within Australia, travel within Australia has recently been included in donor screening procedures and exclusion criteria.

To date the Australian tissue transplantation sector can boast having 'a clean record' regarding disease transmission via tissue transplant. To facilitate our sector's ability to maintain our clean record the following are required;

- The establishment of accredited testing and diagnostic methods for Lyme disease,
- Rigorous reporting and recording of all cases of symptoms consistent with a vector borne disease including confirmed Lyme disease, symptoms suggestive of Lyme disease and other persistent unexplained symptoms. This could be included in the National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System.

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