

24 September 2008

# AUSTRALIAN ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION AND TRANSPLANTATION AUTHORITY BILL 2008

## Second Reading

**Mr BRADBURY (Lindsay) (5.59 p.m.)** — I rise to speak in support of the Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority Bill 2008. At any one time there are 1,800 Australians on waiting lists for an organ donation. This is despite the fact that more than 90 per cent of Australians support the idea of organ donation. Last year there were just 198 deceased organ donors in Australia. This resulted in 657 transplants. This met one-third of the demand. The International Registry of Organ Donation reports that in Australia there were just 9.8 donors for every one million people in 2006. Despite an increase of one million donor registrations from 2002 to six million, there has been no increase in the number of lives being saved through transplants.

In light of these figures, one may well ask oneself why there is such a mismatch between the overwhelmingly strong support within the Australian community for organ donation and the relatively low numbers of registered organ donors. One explanation is that we are currently failing at our emergency wards and intensive care units. Currently we do not have dedicated staff trained to assist families at a difficult time when there is a chance that the family may consent to organ donation. There is also a lack of dedicated hospital resources to properly manage the clinical procedures that are required for an organ or tissue transplant to occur.

I have also observed in many of the discussions that I have had with friends and family that one of the common barriers to organ donation is the misconception that mere election that one would like to be an organ donor on one's licence is sufficient to ultimately deliver that result. I think that a lot of work has been done in recent times to publicise the measures that need to be undertaken for an individual to really ensure that their organs will be available for donation if they pass away in circumstances where that is possible.

The objective of the bill is essentially to bring Australia into line with world's best practice in organ and tissue donation for transplantation. The government has committed \$151.1 million towards this objective, including \$136.4 million in new funds. The national plan that is outlined in this bill involves five key steps. Firstly, as part of this plan the Australian Organ Donation and Transplantation Authority will be established. This will create an independent national authority that will be responsible for achieving a coordinated and consistent approach. This will come at a cost of \$46 million. Secondly, a further \$67 million will be spent to employ trained specialists and other staff dedicated to organ donation. They will work with the emergency departments and intensive care units in selected private and public hospitals across the country. Thirdly, \$17 million of new funding will be provided for hospitals to meet the additional staffing, bed and infrastructure costs that arise out of organ donation. Fourthly, and importantly, \$13.3 million will go towards raising awareness within our community of the organ donation and transplantation system. Finally, a further \$1.9 million will be provided for counsellors to support donor families.

The Organ Donation and Transplantation Authority will coordinate and train clinicians and other hospital staff dedicated to organ and tissue donation in our hospitals. The authority will oversee a new national network of state and territory organ and tissue donation agencies. It will introduce and manage a new national data and reporting system. The authority will lead programs to improve community awareness about organ and tissue transplantation, and will work with clinical and professional organisations to develop clinical practice protocols and standards. All of the states and territories have signed up to the national best practice plan. Work is on track to have the national authority established by 1 January 2009.

I would like to turn to a related matter and engage in some discussion in relation to a series of events and games that I have only recently become aware of, and that is the Australian Transplant Games. Recently I had the opportunity to speak in this House about some of the fine achievements of local Olympians and Paralympians within my community. I felt that this was a good opportunity to acknowledge the efforts of some Transplant Games participants that live in my local community.

For those of you who are not aware of the Australian Transplant Games—and, as I indicated, I only recently became aware of them as a result of an article in the Penrith Press—the games are essentially designed to achieve two purposes: firstly, to showcase the great demonstration of life that can be lived by those transplant recipients; and, secondly, it is an opportunity to raise greater awareness about the issue of organ donation.

The games are held every two years, and this year from 4 October to 11 October the 11th games will be conducted. They will consist of various sporting and recreational activities and will be held in Perth, hosted by the City of Belmont. I am told that the activities that are involved range from chess and backgammon through to high-level sports including tennis, squash, athletics and swimming. So there is a fair array of events on display.

In terms of who can participate, I understand that the athletes can be recipients, those on dialysis, the donor families, living donors and supporters. All athletes need to be members of Transplant Australia. The athletes are expected to come not only from every state; a large number of competitors will also come from overseas.

I would like to acknowledge a couple of local residents from my community that will be participants in the upcoming games. A local resident, Lyndon Olsson, underwent a kidney transplant 24 years ago. He is the father of two and he won nine medals at the 2006 Australian Transplant Games, including three gold. That was a fantastic effort and I am sure that Lyndon will be able to achieve similar success in the upcoming games. To add to this, Lyndon also competed at the Winter Transplant Games in Finland in March this year. So he is not only a kidney transplant recipient but also a man of all seasons and a great athlete throughout those seasons as well.

I would also like to acknowledge Anthony Edwards, an 18-year-old from Glenmore Park in my local area. Anthony underwent a heart valve transplant in 1998. He has won a total of 20 medals across the last two Transplant Games in athletics, swimming, tenpin bowling, archery and rowing. Clearly, there is no holding Anthony back. Twenty medals is quite an outstanding achievement and I wish to have that acknowledged in the House today.

In conclusion I would like to indicate some of the things that I now intend to do in my local community to continue to take up the Prime Minister's challenge. The Prime Minister in his second reading speech called on all members of the House to consider donating or registering for donation of their organs. I must say that after a discussion with my wife on this matter I will be entering the register shortly. Above and beyond that, I really do want to use my position as a member of parliament to try to publicise this issue within my local community. There are a number of options that I will be pursuing, but I certainly see this as being something that needs to be more publicly known throughout the community so that, hopefully, we can make the transition from that broad support for organ and tissue donation through to actually delivering those organs and that tissue for the people that need them when they need them.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge some of the groups that participated and contributed to the development of this national plan that is contained within the bill. I acknowledge the efforts of the Transplantation Society of Australia and New Zealand, the Cognate Committee on Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation, Transplant Australia, Gift of Life, the Zadies Foundation and ShareLife. These are organisations that have played a significant role.

I also wish to acknowledge two other high-profile cases that I have observed as someone perhaps not that familiar with these issues. Obviously there was the death of David Hookes, one of our finest cricketers, and the work that was done by the David Hookes Foundation after David's tragic death. If there was anything good to come out of that death—and rarely is there anything good that comes out of someone's death—then clearly it was the publicity that organ donation received as a result. That was the good that was contributed to the community from that. Also, more recently, there was the very tragic case of Doujon Zammit. I think that, in the great gift of donating his organs, his contribution in life will continue to be felt by those who are now benefiting after his death. It is in that vein that I support the bill.