

ORGAN DONATION

**609. Mr P.W. ANDREWS to the Minister for Health:**

Will the minister advise the House of the situation regarding organ donation in Western Australia?

**Mr R.C. KUCERA replied:**

I thank the member for Southern River for his question. I know that this is a vitally important issue for him personally. The support he gives to DonateWest is quite outstanding and over and above what one would expect, so I thank him for that. DonateWest was established in 1999 to support the donations of organs generally, and the registration rate in Western Australia has increased dramatically to more than 618 000 people. I understand that our State now has the largest percentage of population registered on the Australian Organ Donor Register.

Another pleasing fact is that Australia now has the best post-operative survival rates in the world, which is evidenced by our fine stamp of a member from Southern River. However, our real challenge as a community is to turn this high rate of registration into a high rate of donation. Unfortunately, due to the unpleasant publicity surrounding some of the issues that arose from organ donations in the eastern States last year, we need to improve our communication and education strategies both in the community and within our hospitals. We need to urge people who register for donations to please talk to their families about the issue of registration generally and to ensure that when their families are unfortunately faced with tragic situations, they are well aware of the wishes of the donor. We need to educate our wonderful staff about traumatic situations. Quite rightly and appropriately, much emphasis is put on keeping people alive and ensuring that we give them the very best health support. Often the issue of organ donation is lost during those traumatic situations. We need to bring together the loved ones of the donor and the capacity of our hospitals to deal with the issue in the midst of trauma. However, it also requires a constant focus on the new and emerging programs and processes for organ donation generally. Currently, 142 people are on renal dialysis in this city alone, and that does not take into account the people right across this State. Unfortunately, many more people, because of their lifestyle, are queuing up to join that list. In the short term we can ensure that loved ones are well aware of the wishes of donors in times of absolute trauma. I thank the member for Southern River for his efforts on this behalf and I also thank DonateWest for running a great program.