



Inquiry into organ and tissue donation in Western Australia

Submission to the Public Administration Committee – WA Country Health Service inquiry response

A. The effectiveness of the current model for organ and tissue donation in Western Australia

The effectiveness of the current model is limited for people living in country Western Australia as a result of:

- The geographical nature of WA
- Lack of local support for organ donation in regional centres
- Limited 'service' accessibility for rural patients
- Donations from rural WA limited by time/distance/lack of facilities (ICU)
- The opt in system is impacted by service limitations in country WA. A formal opt out system would increase buy in to organ and tissue donation.

B. Issues impacting organ and tissue donation rates in Western Australia

Geography is a major factor impacting organ and tissue donation rates for country based western Australians. Other factors include:

- Current opt in system for donation has an impact on availability of donors
- Incomplete understanding about organ donation processes and types of donations amongst public and lack of visibility for staff
- Organ donation decision not listed on driver's license
- Limited/ absence of support for regional organ donation
- No dedicated resources to transfer donors (reliance on RFDS) which impacts timely retrieval
- The 3 rural in patient palliative care units (in Bunbury, Albany and Geraldton) do not have a mechanism to return the person after death to a WACHS hospital. This issue applies to planned death at home anywhere in the state.
- Inequity for access for Aboriginal people and other hard to reach groups

C. Opportunities to improve organ and tissue donation rates in Western Australia

Opportunities required to improve organ and tissue donation rates in Western Australia for people living in the country include:

- Public education/awareness campaigns to promote the community benefit of organ and tissue donation
- Implementation of an opt out system rather than an opt in system
- Engagement improvement via mechanisms such as regular donor coordinator visits to regional centres and education for regional health staff
- Development of a clear pathway for identifying potential donors and notifying harvesting teams when such a donor may become available. This becomes more difficult in centres further from Perth and small centres.
- Facilitation of rural donation by keeping patients in the rural centre rather than requiring transfer to the metropolitan sites
- Adequate level of resources required to increase donations and access to the service. This would include dedicated transfer team for retrievals
- Arrangements with WACHS regional resource centres to do post death corneal retrieval for people who die at home / in inpatient palliative care (private) units

D. Any other matters to be considered relevant by the Committee

WACHS asks that the committee considers the following:

- Bunbury has an intensive care unit that provides the opportunity to have an active organ donation role in the South West
- The development of a strategy that addresses access and equity for country Western Australians