



Latest Numbers Shows National Organ Transplant Program Fails Dying and Desperate Australians: Major disparity between States

Australia's organ transplant rate declined in the quarter to June 30, 2011, despite a \$151 million national program to improve access to lifesaving organs and comments by the federal health department officials that organ transplantation is at an all-time "high".

On a state-by-state basis, the declining rates are extremely concerning if you live in Queensland, Tasmania, South Australian, Northern Territory and Western Australian. The only exceptions have been increases in New South Wales and Victoria over the past 3 years. Despite this, NSW still has one of the lowest rates in the country (see chart).

Australia's national organ transplant rate at around 43 per million per year is nowhere near the target of 80-90 transplants per year achieved in other industrialised countries such as Spain and is back to its level in 1989.

Marvin Weinman, chairman of medical reform group ShareLife Australia, said "If you live in Queensland, Tasmania, Western Australian or the Northern Territory and you're waiting for an organ, your chances are much worse than if you live in Victoria. Even NSW, where we've seen an increase, still has the second lowest rate in the country.

"We are meant to have a national strategy and a world class system, instead we have second class states and even those states where there has been improvement, still have some of the worst transplant rates in the industrialised world," he added.

Please see attachment if chart does not display in your email program:

ANNUAL TRANSPLANT RECIPIENTS PER MILLION POPULATION: \$151M Started in Jan. 2009

	2008	2009	2010	June '11	'08 to '11 % Change
QLD	40.4	36.5	34.5	38.9	-3.7%
NSW	28.1	31.2	37.7	35.3	25.5%
ACT	34.5	35.3	55.5	36.1	4.6%
VIC	40.8	37.6	51.6	58.1	42.6%
TAS	48.2	51.7	53.2	37.2	-22.7%
SA	74.9	63.5	54.1	58.0	-22.6%
NT	40.9	31.1	30.5	17.2	-57.9%
WA	43.9	28.2	30.0	35.3	-19.7%
AUSTRALIA	39.6	36.5	41.7	43.2	9.2%

Dr Bruce Pussell, transplant physician and spokesperson for ShareLife. “While there has been some national improvement, people in Queensland, Tasmania, the Northern Territory, Western Australia and New South Wales should be very disappointed with these results and with federal health officials who have suggested that organ transplant rates have gone up significantly.”

Responsibility to fix the transplant system lies with the Australian Organ and Tissue Transplant Authority, which was created more than two years ago when the Federal Government announced a plan to fix the abysmal transplant rates. “Instead of implementing ‘best practices’ they are implementing a blend of modified ‘past practices,’ spending a lot of money and not deploying people effectively,” says Mr. Weinman.

He concludes: “Thousands of Australians are continuing to suffer and die needlessly, as Australians still have only half the access to transplants as the citizens of leading countries.

ShareLife remains confident that Australia’s ultimate goal of 90 transplants per million of population can be achieved if proven leading practices for organ donation and transplantation are fully and effectively implemented.

About ShareLife

ShareLife is an independent group of business and community leaders and medical practitioners, including former Governor General Michael Jeffery. For 18 months, the group studied and catalogued the practices of countries with the highest transplant access, including Spain, Belgium, France and the United States. The proven leading solution was given to the federal government in mid-2008, which the government adopted, resulting in the national reform package being announced shortly after which included a commitment of \$151M. The intention was to establish Australia as the world leader in organ donation and transplantation. Additional information concerning ShareLife can be obtained by visiting www.sharelife.org.au/

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