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Media Release

Australia's most 'inspirational' sporting event destined for Tasmania

The Tasmanian Health Minister, the Hon. Sarah Courtney, today announced Tasmania would host the 2020 Australian Transplant Games.

The Minister was joined by the Mayor of Launceston, Albert Van Zetten, at Launceston's iconic tourist attraction, the Cataract Gorge, for the announcement.

Recognised as one of Australia's most inspirational sporting events, the Australian Transplant Games aims to demonstrate the 'living proof' that organ and tissue donation saves lives. They will be held from September 27 to October 3, 2020 in the City of Launceston.

It sees hundreds of transplant recipients whose lives have been saved by the ultimate gift – the gift of life – participating in a week-long celebration through sport and physical activity.

The Minister recognised the event as part of her Government's ongoing commitment to improving organ and tissue donation in Tasmania.

"One organ donor can save and improve the lives of up to seven people and many more from tissue donation. Many of these recipients will be celebrating their second chance through this exciting and inspiring event. The Tasmanian Government is proud to be the State Government Partner of the Australian Transplant Games," the Minister said.

Transplant Australia says the games will be a celebration of the generosity of Tasmanians to the cause of organ and tissue donation.

In 2018 Tasmania ranked third of all states and territories in organ donation numbers with a rate of 26.5 donors per million head of population. By comparison the national average was 22.5 donors.

And Tasmania has the second highest rate of donor registration – 48 per cent of adults are registered on the Australian Organ Donor Register in Tasmania. Compared to the national average is just 33 per cent.

Transplant Australia CEO, Chris Thomas, said the Games should be seen as a gift to the people of Tasmania for their generosity around donation.

"A key focus will be for every recipient to come to this beautiful state and say 'thank you'. Tasmania has embraced organ donation and it should be seen as a beacon for the rest of the country to follow," Mr Thomas said.

Launceston City Council Mayor, Albert Van Zetten, said Launceston was thrilled to showcase its sporting and cultural facilities and proud history through the Games.

"I have no doubt the people of Launceston will embrace all the competitors and their supporters during the Games and I'm confident Launceston will again shine on the national stage."

The Australian Transplant Games will attract transplant recipients, donor families, living donors and their supporters from all across Australia and up to 10 other countries. Transplant Australia hopes up to 1,000 people will make Launceston their home for the week of the Games.

Including more than 20 sports, the Games range from high exertion sports such as athletics and swimming through to sports such as ten pin bowling and petanque. The Games will be held at various facilities around Launceston including the Northern Tasmania Athletics Centre, Launceston Leisure and Aquatic Centre, Silverdome, Symmons Plains Raceway and City Park.

The Games provide a focal point for raising awareness of organ and tissue donation, illustrating the importance for all Australians to sign onto the register.

Transplant Australia CEO, Chris Thomas, said Transplant Australia was committed to working with the Tasmanian Government and the Organ and Tissue Authority to promote the donation message over the next 11 months leading up to the Games.

“Our number one goal is to give more Australians access to the lifesaving benefits of transplantation,” Mr Thomas said.

“Last year was a record year for donation in Australia. A total of 554 Australians donated their organs, 14 of them were from Tasmania, leading to life-saving transplant for 1,544 Australians.”

About the Australian Transplant Games

The Australian Transplant Games are held every two years and celebrate the success of transplantation and encourage Australian families to discuss organ and tissue donation. They are open to transplant recipients, donor families, living donors, people on dialysis or awaiting a transplant and supporters.

The Australian Government’s Organ and Tissue Authority is the major sponsor of the Australian Transplant Games. The Tasmanian Government is the State Government Partner while the City of Launceston is the Host City.

About Transplant Australia

Transplant Australia is the national community organisation promoting organ and tissue donation and caring for all those touched by transplantation. Its vision is for Australia to lead the world in organ and tissue donation and transplantation - saving lives, improving quality of life and providing much-needed care and support.

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