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## MEDIA RELEASE

### AUSTRALIAN TRANSPLANT GAMES POSTPONED UNTIL APRIL 2021

***Further to the advice provided to Transplant Australia members in March, Transplant Australia has today formally announced the postponement of the Australian Transplant Games due to COVID-19.***

The Board of Transplant Australia agreed, after receiving advice from specialists, to postpone the Games, to be held in Launceston Tasmania, due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic until 10-17 April 2021.

‘The health and wellbeing of our community is our first priority,’ said Transplant Australia Chief Executive Officer, Chris Thomas.

‘Transplant Australia is committed to staging the Games in Launceston, when it is safe to do so,’ Mr Thomas continued.

***‘We would like to thank Events Tasmania, Launceston City Council and Tourism North Tasmania, for their understanding and flexibility. What this pandemic shows is that we are all in this together. We are very pleased to be working with the Tasmanian Government at this point in time.’***

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. The Games see 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 Transplant Australia Board will continue to monitor the development of the COVID-19 Pandemic and its impact in Australia, and will continue to keep members updated.

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. By comparison, 68 per cent of South Australians are registered yet the national average is just 33 per cent.

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.

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 Royal 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 12 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.’

‘Postponing the Games until 2021 will enable our members to focus on their health and safety within the comfort of their own home environment.’

‘By holding the Games in April next year, we hope they will form a welcome respite from the uncertainty surrounding the Coronavirus in 2020.’

### **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 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.

### **Register to Donate Life**

Register as a donor today: <https://donatelife.gov.au/register-donor-today>

**Contact:** Transplant Australia CEO, Chris Thomas (02) 9922-5400 or 0425 353 893

[www.transplant.org.au](http://www.transplant.org.au)