

## **GIFT OF LIFE'S DONATELIFE WALK 2014**

For the eighth year, Gift of Life's DonateLife Walk was held around Lake Burley Griffin in Canberra on Wednesday 26 February, with a simultaneous short walk also held around Commonwealth Park. The objective was to raise wider community understanding and awareness of the need for increased organ and tissue donation and to promote family discussion of each other's donation wishes thereby encouraging a higher consent rate to donation. The theme this year was "Have the chat that saves lives. Discover, Decide, Discuss organ and tissue donation".

It was sponsored by the Government's Organ and Tissue Authority as part of range of activities held around Australia during national DonateLife Week from 23 February- 1 March 2014.

After early morning drizzle, the walk was conducted in clear but cool conditions – and as usual it was a fun occasion with a colourful atmosphere with balloons, bright T shirts and caps which were provided free. Corflute photo images of prominent hospital transplant staff and people involved in the transplant community were displayed to provide context.

The walk was launched by Senator Fiona Nash, the Government's Assistant Minister for Health responsible for organ and tissue donation and Ms Katy Gallagher, ACT Chief Minister and Health Minister. Also attending the ceremony were Peter Dutton, Minister for Health and Ms Catherine King, Shadow Minister for Health. They were introduced by Gift of Life President, David O'Leary.

Others participating in the walk included Mr Mark Dreyfus, Shadow Attorney-General, Ms Gai Brodtmann, Member for Canberra, Ms Yael Cass, CEO of the Organ and Tissue Authority and a range of other MPs and ACT MLAs. The CEO of the ACT Chamber of Commerce and Industry and members of the Brumbies and Raiders rugby teams also participated. Teams of public servants, business people, health staff, school college and university students as well as the general public took part.

Human Services/ Medicare staff handed out show bags with Australian donor register forms. Lions Club Belconnen served a free BBQ breakfast to participants.

The overall numbers who participated this year was over 4,000. The figures in recent years have continued to grow from 1,800 in 2011, 2400 in 2012, and 3,100 in 2013 demonstrating ever growing community understanding and support for organ and tissue donation.

The walk is now a major community event in Canberra and the largest in held Australia during national DonateLife Week. It is now a major event on the annual Canberra calendar.