



Driver's licence donor plan

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West Australians would be compelled to indicate if they wanted to be an organ donor on their driver's licence under a plan floated by a Labor backbencher.

Bassendean MP Martin Whitely said that under his proposal, soon to be put to MPs, people applying or renewing a driver's licence would need to say if they wanted to be a donor.

Those who said yes would not be automatically registered but their details would be forwarded to the national register and forms sent out.

Mr Whitely said people would have to answer yes, no or "already registered" to get their licence. Drivers aged under 18 would likely be exempt.

Until 2004, West Australians were given the option of stating on their driver's licence renewal if they wanted to be a donor but the scheme was scrapped in favour of people registering with Medicare or with the national register.

The latest move comes two months after Health Minister Kim Hames released a discussion paper aimed at boosting organ donor rates.

In it, senior doctors urged politicians to legislate for an opt-out system that would see a person's organs and tissue used for transplants unless they had specifically said no.

Results from a survey by Painted Dog Research for health insurer HBF and *The West Australian* also show community support for an opt-out system, with 53 per cent

supporting it compared with 39 per cent favouring the current opt-in arrangement.

People aged over 65 and those not signed up as donors were most in favour of staying with the current system.

Other figures released yesterday show WA remains one of the worst-performing States for transplants, with rates falling by 20 per cent in the past three years.

Kate Wingrave, 40, lives on oxygen around-the-clock while waiting for a double lung transplant to treat a rare disease. She has been told it might take up to two years.

"It's my only option because I have to stay alive as long as I can for my two children," she said. "Last November I was normal. The waiting is very stressful."



Stressful wait: Kate Wingrave, who needs a double lung transplant, with her children Bailey and Cassandra. Picture: Mogens Johansen

hbf HEALTH SURVEY

ORGAN DONATION

Which system do you support for consent?

Opt-in (current system): **39%**

Opt-out (where consent is presumed unless people register against): **53%**

Most support for opt-out: parents with children (60%)

Least support for opt-out: seniors (34%)

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