

1st August, 2008

Research Director
Review of Organ and Tissue Donation Procedures Select Committee
Parliament of Queensland
Corner George and Alice Streets
BRISBANE. QLD. 4000

Dear Karen,

Re: Review of Organ and Tissue Donation Procedures

Thank you for the copy of the Review of Organ and Tissue Donation Issues Paper.

I have read the document very carefully.

I still want to register my disgust that the Government is even entertaining a change to make Organ and Tissue Donation compulsory unless people specifically 'opt out' in writing.

Since when does the Government of this State own my body or anyone elses. It is gross arrogance on the part of the Government to think that it has the right to tell us what we can do with our own bodies.

When the hospital system is already in such a bad state how does the Government think that the Doctors and staff would be ready for an influx of organ transplants. Ordinary surgical patients have to wait years for surgery and a lot will die waiting. Are their lives less important than those waiting for organ donors and much more complex and intensive surgery?

I am not exactly sure how the Government can convince people to become organ and tissue donors but making people "opt out" is definitely not the way to go and will only make people more adamant that they will not become donors. It also hopes that people would be too busy or too lazy to 'opt out' in writing.

I understand that even though a lot of people have already become donors their organs are not always used for one reason or another.

I absolutely do not believe that incentives should be offered to potential organ donors as this sets a dangerous precedent. It could then develop into a black market for organs and people could be killed for their organs as happens in some other countries. It could also happen that people desperate for money would be prepared to sell their organs to get money. What happens if someone gives one of their good kidneys for donation and then, at some later stage, their only kidney fails – who is then going to help them to live?

Both my children have previously endorsed their Drivers Licences to become organ donors and, much as I would nearly find it impossible to give consent to such a donation in the event of their death, I would do so as it was their wish. I certainly would not be happy about the matter.

I would bring to your attention that my daughter has said that although she would be happy to donate an organ, she has no interest in any of her organs or tissues being used for experimental purposes. I think the organ donor register should clearly state whether organs and tissues are to be used for donation only or for any other purpose.

Whilst it would be terrible to be someone waiting for an organ donor there are many, many people dying because they can't get ordinary medical care or through botched surgery, because of a shortage of beds and medical staff so, until those concerns are addressed, it is irresponsible for the Government to be looking to increase organ donation. If organ donation was greatly increased it would also give false hope to those awaiting organs – they would feel that their chances of getting an organ would greatly be increased also when that would not be the case for a variety of reasons mostly the non-availability of beds and staff to perform such procedures.

This Government was elected to serve the wishes of the people and NOT to tell us what we can and can't do with our own bodies. I think it is about time that politicians realized that they are there to serve the public and not to dictate what is to happen to our bodies when we die.

When this suggestion of 'opting out' was first suggested I could not believe that a Government would even consider such an action. I was disgusted and horrified and I will be the first to 'opt out' should such a measure be necessary. My body might not be much but it is mine to do with what I please when I die. For a Government to decide what is best for me or my body is a gross invasion of my rights.

Organ donation should be completely voluntary as it presently is and, should the Government decide otherwise, it will lose my vote forever.

Yours faithfully,



Clarice Elford