



**The Hon Mark Coulton MP
Minister for Regional Services, Decentralisation and Local Government
Assistant Trade and Investment Minister**

Media release

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Living kidney transplants to increase under joint Australian and NZ program

The new Australian and New Zealand Paired Kidney Exchange (ANZKX) Program is a Trans-Tasman partnership that aims to improve the lives of Australians and New Zealanders by increasing access to life-saving kidney transplants.

Bringing the Australian and New Zealand paired kidney exchange programs together, increases the chance of finding matches for people who have a relative or friend who is willing to donate, but unable to do so because their blood or tissue type is not compatible.

Minister for Regional Services, Decentralisation and Local Government, Mark Coulton says the program brings hope to many Australians waiting for a kidney transplant.

“Living donation is an option for people needing a kidney transplant, but not everyone can become a living kidney donor, as around 30 per cent of people willing to donate are not compatible with their relative or friend,” Minister Coulton said.

“Expanding the number of pairs enrolled in the ANZKX Program increases the chance of finding a match with another incompatible pair.”

Minister Coulton said the majority of people enrolled in the ANZKX Program were highly sensitised patients, meaning they are harder to match and have greater difficulties in receiving a kidney transplant from a deceased donor.

“This new partnership will bring hope to people on the waiting list for a lifesaving kidney donation, by increasing the number of donors that could be a potential match,” he said.

Minister Coulton said the first kidney transplants under the new joint program would occur over the next few months with matched patients receiving their much needed kidneys.

“Since the Australian Kidney Exchange Program began in 2010, more than 300 Australians have received a life changing kidney transplant,” Minister Coulton said.

“The collaboration with New Zealand enables further growth of this successful program and more transplant opportunities for Australians and New Zealanders.

“This is a poignant reminder that at any one time there are more than 1,400 Australians on the waitlist for a lifesaving transplant and a further 11,000 people on dialysis, so if you’re not signed up to be an organ donor, get online and do it today – it only takes a minute.”

The new ANZKX Program is occurring with the collaboration and support of many Australian and New Zealand clinicians and transplant hospitals, including the ANZKX team at the Royal Melbourne Hospital.

Additionally, multiple government agencies, airline companies and the ANZKX courier have all played a key role in establishing the necessary transport arrangements.

For more information on the ANZKX, visit donatelife.gov.au.