

Living Kidney Donation: Financial considerations



Living organ donation is one of the most generous and valuable acts which one person can offer to another.

The process from referral through to donation involves many tests and investigations, conversations with various health professionals, outpatient appointments at the hospital, surgery itself and post-surgical care. This process can take many months or even years which can be arduous and emotionally draining.

It is encouraged that all potential live donors attend a live donor seminar presented by Queensland Kidney Transplant Service (QKTS) which is offered 3 times a year. Further information on the live donor seminar is on the QKTS website in the Patient resources section.

Please review the following resources for information on live kidney donation:

- **Queensland Kidney Transplant Service**
www.qld.gov.au/health/services/specialists/kidney-transplant
- **Kidney Health Australia**
www.kidney.org.au
- **The Transplant Network**
www.thetransplantnetwork.com.au
- **Transplant Australia**
www.transplant.org.au
- **Donate Life**
www.donatelife.gov.au/all-about-donation/understanding-living-donation



Living kidney donors are to be made aware of any costs that may be incurred as part of organ donation. Everyday expenses such as food, medications, the organisation of transport and accommodation remain the responsibility of the donor. Donors need to ensure they are resourced to cover these costs. Some medical investigations and tests that are not bulk billed or are completed privately will incur a cost to the donor.



1. Living donors who are permanent residents of Australia donating within Australia

a) Australian Government Support for Living Donors

The Supporting Living Organ Donors Program (the Program) was established in 2014. This program supports people who have donated a kidney or partial liver.

Being a living organ donor means undergoing tests and having major surgery, which comes with certain risks and long recovery times.

This can include extra time off work, dipping into leave entitlements or using leave without pay

The program reimburses the donor's employer up to 342 hours of paid leave at the national minimum wage, so they can support their staff member to donate without financial stress.

Payment to the employer can be to:

- Re-credit the donor's leave if the employee has taken sick or annual leave for donating purposes
- Reimburse the employer if the employee did not have sick or annual leave to take, but the employer still compensated them
- A combination of both.

Live donors are encouraged to have conversations with their employers early about the Program. This is to ensure they are aware of the process and are willing to engage, participate and support.

The Program also provides a reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses associated with donating in relation to travel and accommodation up to \$1 000.

For further information, please check out the website information:

Supporting Living Organ Donors Program | Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care

www.health.gov.au/our-work/supporting-living-organ-donors-program

There is no 'donor' benefit available through Department of Human Services, Centrelink specifically in relation to the living donation process.

b) State Government Support for Living Donors

Surgery Costs

Some of the costs for the donor associated with the donor workup and surgery, will be financed by the State Government healthcare system. Any tests or investigations carried out by private medical services for the purpose of living donation remain the responsibility of the donor.

Transport and Accommodation costs

All State Government hospitals and / or health care facilities have different transport and accommodation subsidy scheme entitlements for potential living donors. Donors are encouraged to contact their closest public hospital or health facility or the recipient's state patient travel scheme for information regarding their eligibility to apply for travel and accommodation costs. Further information can be obtained online under each State or Territory scheme.

QLD: **The Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme (PTSS)**

www.qld.gov.au/health/services/travel/subsidies

NSW: **Isolated Patient Travel and Accommodation Assistance Scheme (IPTAAS)**

www.iptaas.health.nsw.gov.au

ACT: **Interstate Patient Travel Assistance Scheme (IPTAS)**

www.canberrahealthservices.act.gov.au/before,-during-and-after-your-care/staying-at-canberra-hospital/before-you-arrive/getting-here-and-getting-around/travelling-from-outside-canberra

VIC: **Victorian Patient Transport Assistance Scheme (VPTAS)**

www.health.vic.gov.au/rural-health/victorian-patient-transport-assistance-scheme-vptas

TAS: **Patient Travel Assistance Scheme (PTAS)**

www.health.tas.gov.au/patients/health-costs/ptas

SA: **Patient Assistance Transport Scheme (PATS)**

www.pats.sa.gov.au/

WA: **Patient Assisted Travel Scheme (PATS)**

www.wacountry.health.wa.gov.au/Our-patients/Patient-Assisted-Travel-Scheme-PATS

NT: **Patient Assistance Travel Scheme (PATS)**

www.nt.gov.au/wellbeing/health-subsidies-support-and-home-visits/patient-assistance-travel-scheme/apply-for-patient-assistance-travel-scheme

2. Living donors donating overseas

Living Donors who are Australian citizens donating overseas, may be eligible for a similar Federal Government scheme in that country to assist with the cost of flights, accommodation or compensation for loss of earnings after surgery. Donors are advised to contact the recipient's hospital, health service and transplant coordinator to enquire about financial support for live donors.

3. Living donors from overseas or not permanent residents of Australia

Donors who are not permanent residents of Australia or overseas donors donating to Australian permanent residents will have their inpatient costs covered as well as any tests and investigations performed at PAH as part of their donor workup. Donors without a valid Medicare card, will be required to pay any upfront fees for any tests and investigations performed outside of the public hospital system.

Living donors who reside overseas and are not Australian residents and do not have a valid Medicare card are not eligible for any financial assistance from the Australian Federal Supporting Living Organ Donor Program or any other State or Territory subsidies and schemes.

Living donors who experience financial hardship due to travel and accommodation costs are encouraged to contact the QKTS Social Worker for support and assistance.

Contact details:

For more information call **QKTS Social Worker**

Phone: (07) 3176 2610

QKTS Coordinators

Phone: (07) 3176 7769

Phone: (07) 3176 7397

Email: QKTScoordinators@health.qld.gov.au

