

What is an Eye Bank?

Eye banks obtain, evaluate and distribute eyes that are donated by caring individuals for corneal transplantation and valuable medical research.

How can I become a donor?

The most important thing to do to become an eye donor is to discuss your decision to be a donor with your family. They will be part of the donation process and should be aware of your wishes.

It is also important to register your decision to become an organ and tissue donor on the Australian Organ Donor Register.

This can be done in one of the following three ways:

- Online at www.donatelife.gov.au
- By phone on 1800 777 203
- In person by visiting your local Medicare office

About the NSW Tissue Banks

The NSW Tissue Banks incorporating the Lions NSW Eye Bank, NSW Bone Bank and Australian Ocular Biobank holds a TGA (Therapeutic Goods Administration) licence and are state-wide service for the identification and coordination of eye, musculoskeletal, skin, and amnion donors.

The NSW Tissue Banks have a range of highly trained staff including coordinators, retrieval technicians, laboratory staff and a quality team.

They facilitate the retrieval, storage, preparation and distribution of tissue in NSW and the ACT through all donation pathways. The Lions NSW Eye Bank has been supported by the Lions NSW-ACT Save Sight Foundation since 1989.

The Lions NSW Eye Bank provides as many as 700 corneal transplants every year and assists with valuable medical research into various eye diseases in conjunction with the Australian Ocular Biobank.

Australian Ocular Biobank

Under the governance of the NSW Organ and Tissue Donation Service, the Australian Ocular Biobank allows, for the long term storage of a range of ocular tissue for research purposes from living and deceased donors.

The Australian Ocular Biobank plays a significant role in the understanding and treatment of various causes of eye disease and vision impairment in Australia, such as age-related macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy and glaucoma.

A first of its kind in Australia, the Biobank will serve as a resource for researchers in the discovery of new treatments and preventative strategies.



NSW TISSUE BANKS

Level 1 North Block
Sydney Eye Hospital
8 Macquarie Street
GPO Box 1614
Sydney NSW 2001

General Inquiry:

Phone: 02 9382 7855
Fax: 02 9382 7845
Email: nsw-otds-tissue@health.nsw.gov.au

Co-ordination Team and AH Service:

Phone: 02 9382 7288
Fax: 02 9382 7274

Australian Ocular Biobank:

Phone: 02 9382 7855
Fax: 02 9382 7845
Email: seslhd-aob@health.nsw.gov.au



Your Donation Can Save Someone's Sight



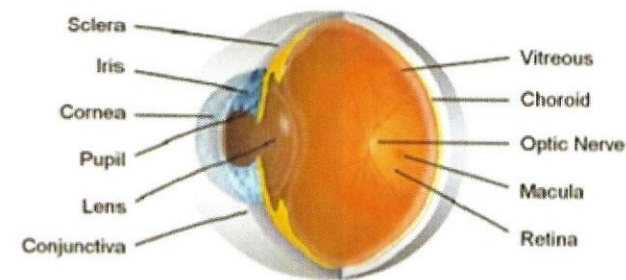
Health
NSW Organ & Tissue
Donation Service

The Gift of Sight

Imagine for a moment what life is like for the thousands of people in NSW/ACT who are blind or severely visually impaired. The sight of many of these people can be restored by an operation known as corneal transplantation. This can only occur when a suitable cornea is available. It is through the generosity of recently deceased people and their families who chose to donate, that makes this sight-saving operation possible.

What is the Cornea?

The cornea is the clear window at the front of the eye that protects the eye and focuses light. Vision can be severely reduced if the cornea is cloudy or distorted in shape.



Who needs Corneal Transplants?

Corneal blindness occurs when the cornea becomes cloudy or irregular in shape due to injury, disease or infection. People of all ages, from young children to the elderly are currently awaiting corneal transplants. These people depend on donors to restore their sight.

What is a Corneal Transplant?

If the cornea is damaged the only way to restore sight is to replace it with another human cornea. During a corneal transplant, all or part of the damaged cornea is removed and replaced with a healthy donor cornea. This operation can restore vision for more than 90 percent of people with corneal blindness or vision impairment.



Appearance of the eye after a common type of corneal transplant surgery. The stitches are eventually removed.

Who can become an Eye Donor?

Almost anyone can become an eye donor. As long as the cornea is healthy, it can be used to restore sight. Cataracts, poor eyesight, age and most forms of cancer do not prevent you from becoming an eye donor but there are certain medical conditions that can prevent donation.

What does Eye Donation involve?

Eye donation involves the removal of the whole eye. The procedure is performed by skilled paramedical personnel within 24 hours of death. The eyes are replaced with prostheses and the procedure does not alter the appearance of the donor.

Funeral arrangements, including viewing if desired, can still occur after donation. There is no cost involved for the donor family.

How will the eyes be used?

Donated eyes are treated with the utmost respect. The corneas are assessed, prepared and stored at the eye bank. The NSW Tissue Banks incorporating the Lions NSW Eye Bank operates two different storage methods, which allow the tissue to be stored up to 28 days. During this time further testing is carried out to ensure the safety of the tissue to be transplanted.

Patients needing a transplant are given an operation/surgery date by their surgeon in consultation with the Eye Bank in anticipation of a suitable cornea being available. Those in urgent need are provided a transplant as soon as possible.

The donation of eye tissue is a very valuable gift. Both the cornea (the clear window at the front of the eye) and the sclera (the white of the eye) can be used for transplant. Many people can be helped by a single eye tissue donor.

With family consent the eyes may also be used for valuable medical research into eye disease and blindness, in conjunction with the Australian Ocular Biobank.