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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Canberra Electorate: Organ and Tissue Donation

SPEECH

Monday, 27 February 2012

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner
Speaker Brodtmann, Gai, MP

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Ms BRODTMANN (Canberra) (12:06): On Friday I had the pleasure of attending the ACT Chief Minister's Awards for Organ and Tissue Donation. The awards recognise the tireless efforts that people in the ACT community go to in order to promote and raise awareness about this important issue. As we all know, last week was Donate Life Week and the awards were a great way to end what was a very busy week in Canberra. One of the highlights of the week in Canberra was the Donate Life Walk around Lake Burley Griffin that ends with a well-deserved breakfast of egg and bacon, this year cooked by one of the *MasterChef* finalists at Regatta Point. This year, 2,000 people took part in the walk, which goes to show how much support there is for organ and tissue donation in Canberra. The walk has been held for six years—it used to be called the Terry Connolly Walk and now it is the Donate Life Walk—and it just keeps getting bigger and better every year. As usual, this year we had a mass of schools, public servants and businesses turning out for the event. It has always received very strong support from the Canberra community. I do encourage government schools to also attend the event. We have a great representation from the independent and Catholic schools in Canberra but we need greater representation from the broad public sector schools.

While the walk is a chance for everyone to show their support for organ and tissue donation, Friday's awards were all about recognising the unsung heroes in our community. Many have experienced their own heartbreak having members of families who have passed on and having to make the choice about organ and tissue donation. However, they continue to advance the cause because they personally know how important it is.

The awards were presented to seven very worthy recipients on Friday by the ACT Chief Minister Katy Gallagher, who is patron of Gift of Life, which is the leading non-government body in the ACT for organ and tissue donation. This year's recipients included Rick McQualter for the Annette Taylor Award for Community Service; Laurie and Marguerite Wiseman for the Matthew Reynolds Award for Community Service, who are the parents of Ben Wiseman and have been very active in the organ and tissue donation sector for years; Pat Siciliano, who is a board member of Gift of Life—I used to be on the board with him—for the Jenny Deck Award for Community Service; Dhale Brown for the Ben Wiseman Award for Healthcare; Greg Bayliss, well-known media personality in Canberra, for the Angus Fairbairn-Cody Award for Media Support; and David Gough for the Terry Connolly Award for Community Awareness Raising—the first year that that award had been conducted and David had just returned from driving around Australia to raise awareness. His daughter Melody died a number of years ago and she was also an organ and tissue donor.

This year's events in Canberra were highly successful, as usual. I thank all those Canberrans who took part in the awards, particularly those who got out for the walk on Wednesday. It was a great turnout. I look forward to it being even bigger and better next year.