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DonateLife Week promoted across South Eastern Sydney Local Health District

Sutherland Shire resident Patricia Scheetz knows first-hand what a difference being an organ and tissue donor can make to so many people. Patricia herself is a double-organ transplant recipient and recently received a bone tissue transplant for a foot reconstruction.

“It’s been seven years now since I was first told I wouldn’t live to see Christmas. Now here I am running my own business and feeling the healthiest I ever have in my life,” said Patricia.

Patricia, now 35 years old, received her life-saving double-organ transplant of a kidney and pancreas in 2011 at the age of 28. Diagnosed with type 1 diabetes as a toddler, Patricia’s kidney failed in her twenties and so began her “terrifying” wait for the news she had compatible donors.

“I can’t even begin to explain how grateful I am for every day I can enjoy my life thanks to those donors and their families, and in fact I also received a tissue donation recently so that I could undergo a foot reconstruction needed due to complications caused by long-term diabetes.”

Each year the lives of thousands of Australians (9,000 in 2017) are transformed through the transplantation of donated tissue – made up of eyes, skin, bones and heart valves.

Jane Trelloggen, Manager of the NSW Tissue Banks, said eye donations for corneal transplants are in high demand across Australia, with up to 18 transplants performed every week in NSW alone.

“For the sixth year running NSW met clinical demand for corneal transplants and in 2017 led the country with 2,628 eye and tissue donations.

“This is thanks to the generosity of NSW residents and their families who decided to save and transform the lives of thousands of people through organ and tissues donation,” Ms Trelloggen said.

“Sign up to be a donor, you can elect exactly what you want to donate, make the decision and let your family know about your decision.”

Thanks to the generosity of organ and tissue donors Patricia now lives a full and happy life, able to pursue and achieve her dream of owning and running her own patisserie *The Sweetest Thing* which will employ other organ transplant recipients to help raise awareness for a cause so close to her heart.

To sign up to be an organ donor please visit www.donatelife.gov.au