

# Life.

GIVE BLOOD. GIVE LIFE.



**NEW**

# Be a good egg

Give blood at Easter



As many regular donors will be on holiday around Easter, Australia needs generous bunnies like you to give blood between Thursday 2 and Thursday 9 April.

**So, please get cracking! Please book your Easter appointment today.**

AUTUMN 2015

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# WEATHERING THE STORM: SAFE BLOOD IN A CHANGING CLIMATE



“  
Blood Service Research and Development is looking ahead to make sure Australia has one of the safest blood supplies in the world, no matter what the weather.  
”

Neither rain nor snow nor gloom of night can stop the US postal service. The Australian Red Cross Blood Service (Blood Service) also needs to beat the weather to supply safe blood all around Australia, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. You probably know that the winter cold and flu season decreases the number of healthy blood donors in Australia (by about 1,000 donors per week), but changes in the weather can also alter the blood supply in other ways.

#### Putting the heat on haemoglobin

The most common reason for a donor being turned away from a donor centre is low levels of haemoglobin, the oxygen-carrying component of blood. Researchers in the Netherlands have found that about twice as many donors have low haemoglobin on hot days (>25°C) than cold days. Blood Service researchers are planning a study that aims to predict a donor's haemoglobin levels prior to their next visit, based on their history and seasonal temperatures. A delayed donation could then be suggested if they're likely to have low haemoglobin at their next visit.

#### Flooding rains

In recent years, floods in Australia have been more widespread and frequent. Australia's blood supply and distribution network is designed to adapt if localised flooding disables any region. The design and locations of Australia's four blood processing centres in Perth, Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane help to minimise the threat as a result of bad weather. Each processing centre can operate for four days without external water, gas, electricity or sewerage. Flood mitigation has been included in our building designs, and it has already been tested in the Sydney facility. A month after the building's commissioning,

the area was swamped with torrential rain, causing flash flooding. Business was able to continue as usual because the facility is raised above ground level by four metres and includes a levee to protect the basement car park.

#### Diseases like dengue

Researchers at the Blood Service are keeping a watchful eye on emerging diseases that could threaten our blood supply. Dr Helen Faddy and her group in Research and Development, are actively monitoring the potential risk from blood-borne diseases, and testing methods to ensure the blood supply remains safe in the future. Dengue fever is one such disease. It is caused by a virus carried by mosquitos, and causes fever, muscle and joint pains and in severe cases, can be fatal. If a whole blood donation were collected from a person who had unknowingly been infected with dengue virus, the disease could be passed on to the recipient.

“Dengue outbreaks occur regularly in northern Australia, and because there is no screening test for dengue virus approved in Australia, the Blood Service manages this risk by not collecting whole blood from areas where the virus is active,” said Dr Faddy. “With a changing future climate, mosquito breeding may evolve. This could increase outbreak frequency, and we may even see outbreaks in new areas. This could impact the blood supply by reducing the number of areas where whole blood donations can be collected. For the future, we are exploring technologies for processing blood, which could inactivate dengue and other viruses, and are developing new screening methods to test donations.”

Blood Service Research and Development is looking ahead to make sure Australia has one of the safest blood supplies in the world, no matter what the weather.

⊕ **Emerging diseases:** The Blood Service is keeping a watchful eye on emerging diseases that could threaten our blood supply.

# FACES

# OF THE PHONES



**Most of us have spoken to them, but few people know what goes on behind the scenes of the Blood Service's National Contact Centre (NCC).**

The Adelaide-based NCC is responsible for making half of the country's required donor appointments. Collectively they spend 3,300 hours per week calling donors and making over 8,000,000 donor contacts a year.

Sarah Stewart is part of the NCC's team of 185 agents. Sarah is a Consultant and Skills Coach and is responsible for calling and taking calls from donors, scheduling appointments and answering questions, as well as training her colleagues.

Consultants are supported with a state-of-the-art system that gives them the information required to help over 15,000 donors a day.

Despite each talking to hundreds of donors a day, Sarah insisted that they don't tire of their interactions with donors. "I think it's really important to treat every interaction that we have as a new, fresh one and remember the 'why' behind what we do," said Sarah. "Our work saves people's lives. If we don't have blood coming in, we don't get to help people. It's a privilege to do what we do."

She is touched every day by the calls she receives.

"We get so many beautiful calls from donors

and sometimes they make your day. I love the long-time donors. They'll tell you about how they've been donating since they were 16 and used to rock up in the back of a truck. They're so generous and giving. They give you that little pep, which is awesome.

“**The people who work here are genuinely excited about what we do and it's so much more than sitting on a phone to us.**”

The duties of the contact centre extend well beyond calls to managing donor feedback, coordinating donor invitation letters, special calling for particular blood components, SMS responses and social media monitoring.

Cristina Nicoli and Ryan Levia are part of the NCC Donor Feedback team.

They are responsible for ensuring donor questions, feedback and suggestions are addressed. All feedback – positive, negative or constructive – is logged and responses are provided where required.

"Every issue is different," Ryan explained. "We deal with feedback about everything from someone burning their mouth on a pie! Every donor's feedback is an opportunity. It's an opportunity for us to improve and to re-examine our process. Donors need to

know that they're being heard and that they're getting the service they deserve."

Cristina started as a consultant at the NCC before transitioning into her current role. She has also been involved in SMS campaigns and other mini-projects, and is thrilled with the variety in her role and that her work contributes to the community.

"There are a lot of exciting opportunities here, which is fantastic," she said.

Sarah, Ryan and Cristina's drive to help donors is obvious and is instilled in staff by members of the leadership team, including Team Leader, Helga Spaans.

Helga is responsible for leading a team of 15 agents and is incredibly committed to providing excellent service for our donors.

"Our donors are highly important. Everything we do is focused on their experience," she said. "Our well-trained agents are there to meet donor needs. There's a difference between saying something from the mouth and saying something from the heart and that's what I try to instil in my agents.

"I know people use the word all the time, but I really am passionate about what I do, I really do care about getting up in the morning and being part of the NCC. What we do is an amazing thing. We all love what we do."

“**Our work saves people's lives. If we don't have blood coming in, we don't get to help people. It's a privilege to do what we do.**”

Ⓢ Donor Feedback team: Cristina Nicoli with Ryan Levia at Adelaide's National Contact Centre.



Ⓢ National Contact Centre agent: Sarah Stewart is one of 185 agents and liaises with donors on a daily basis.

# FACES OF DONATION



🕒 **Recipient:** Emmett required over 30 blood transfusions during his five-year battle with leukaemia.

## RED25

### NEW YEAR, NEW GOAL

Building on a successful 2014 for Club Red, there's change on the horizon with the transformation of the Blood Service's old group donation program into something new: Red25.

Donating blood is already incredibly rewarding, but it can be even more special with a little camaraderie and competition thrown in. That was always the idea behind Club Red, which encouraged organisations, community groups and schools across Australia to track their donations and compete to see who can save the most lives.

In 2014, Club Red donors made 205,051 donations, around 60,000 more donations than the previous year – an achievement worth celebrating.

"It's been an amazing year for Club Red," said Josh McNally, National Community Relations Manager for the Blood Service. "Our members are so dedicated and so enthusiastic, and that's why we're excited to be launching our long-awaited new program, Red25, this year.

“**People who are already donors might not realise that if you're part of a Red25 group, every donation that you make is automatically added to your group's tally even if you're donating by yourself.**”

“Six years on from the launch of Club Red it's time for something new for donors.”

Josh highlights that it's much more than just a name change. Red25 is not solely about competing to win challenges, but instead about uniting to reach a goal: to raise 25 per cent of all blood donations needed by Australia. Currently, Club Red contributors make 16 per cent of all donations.

Why 25 per cent? Because it's just the right amount to ensure a strong, sustainable foundation for Australia's blood supply. And because it's ambitious, but not impossible.



🕒 **Red25:** Let's unite to reach a goal: to raise 25 per cent of all blood donations needed by Australia.

"The idea is that, in today's connected society, when you rally a lot of people together, even if they're actually far apart, you can make an incredible impact," explained Elly McLean, the Blood Service's National Partnerships Manager.

While Red25 will still honour and celebrate member contributions, it's less about running Blood Challenges and more about rallying together. Red25 will be inclusive for groups and organisations of all sizes, from all sectors of the community, whether you're a local footy team or a multinational corporation.

"Of course, we'll still be tracking donations and recognising those organisations that participate – it's how we say thank you for all the hard work our members put in."

Another important difference is that Red25 empowers members to donate in their own time, when it suits them.

Finally, Red25 will make the process of joining, supporting and being recognised for contributions that much easier. As Elly said, "We're working on stripping away some of the form filling and red tape."



🕒 **Milestone donor:** Victor Talbor recently made his 400th donation at Perth Blood Donor Centre on Christmas Eve. He donated alongside his daughter, Judith, who reached her 100th donation!

🕒 **Generous supporters:** South Australian basketball players from the 36ers, recently showed their support at Regent Arcade Blood Donor Centre.

# RED25

## WINNERS ARE GRINNERS AT REWARDING LAUNCH

We all know the real winners are the patients who receive life-changing blood donations – but our Club Red winners come a close second!

The annual Club Red awards events were even more special than usual this year, and not just because of the huge number of donations achieved over 2014. From 9 to 26 February, around 1,000 guests attended nine separate events across the country to celebrate Blood Challenge winners and usher in a new era with the launch of Red25.

“It’s wonderful to see the huge amount of effort people put in and the passion they have for saving lives through donation.”

Among the attendees at the launch events were coordinators and members from some of the most active Club Red groups, as well as a number of special guests, including Mike Hurst (Managing Director of Bendigo and Adelaide Bank), Adam Kendrick (Assistant Commissioner at the Australian Tax Office), Rudi Lammers (Chief Police Officer for the ACT), David Foot (ACT Ambulance Chief Executive) and Executive Director of Donor Services at the Blood Service, Janine Wilson.



Red25: Let's unite to save lives.

“A night like this isn’t just about trophies and winners,” said Matt McManus, Blood Service Community Relations Manager for Victoria and Tasmania, “but about the Blood Service recognising and thanking all our Club Red coordinators and members, and the organisations which support them, for their incredible work throughout the year.”

“It’s wonderful to see the huge amount of effort people put in and the passion they have for saving lives through donation.”

Award winners: See page 8 for 2014’s Club Red award winners.

Generous supporters: Executive Director of Donor Services, Janine Wilson, with Managing Director and CEO of Bendigo and Adelaide Bank, Mike Hurst, at a Red25 launch.



## CORPORATE CHALLENGE

Congratulations to the 140 organisations across Australia that rolled up their sleeves as part of the 2014 Corporate Blood Challenge, contributing over 40,896 donations.

### WINNERS – NUMBER OF DONATIONS

	SMALL	MEDIUM	LARGE	ALL CATEGORIES
NATIONAL	Essential Energy	Bendigo and Adelaide Bank	Australian Taxation Office	Water Corporation
	1,142	1,214	3,685	33.90%
ACT	CEA Technologies/ Murray-Darling Basin Authority	Geoscience Australia	Department of Parliamentary Services	Geoscience Australia
	71	167	208	27.60%
QLD	Cooper Grace Ward	Parmalat	Moreton Bay Regional Council	Moreton Bay Regional Council
	53	90	312	40.26%
NSW	Hunter Water Corporation	nib	Office of State Revenue	Hunter Water Corporation
	181	36	29	53.95%
NT	MGA Whittles	–	Department of Health (NT)	MGA Whittles
	36	–	96	22.50%
SA	Viterra	Accolade Wines	National Pharmacies	Viterra
	153	137	157	76.50%
TAS	Caterpillar Underground Mining	–	–	Caterpillar Underground Mining
	354	–	–	88.50%
VIC	Mars Australia	Yarra Valley Water	City of Ballarat	Yarra Valley Water
	120	238	208	40.48%
WA	City of Albany	Landgate	WorleyParsons	City of Albany
	110	168	142	29.73%

### WINNERS – EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION\*

## SCHOOLS CHALLENGE

9,384 donations were made during the Schools Challenge, which have the potential to save up to 28,152 lives – a truly amazing contribution from Australia’s next generation of blood donors.

### WINNERS – NUMBER OF DONATIONS

### WINNERS – STUDENT PARTICIPATION\*

ACT	Queanbeyan High School	Queanbeyan High School
	112	29%
QLD	Pine Rivers State High School	Siena Catholic College
	265	29.33%
NSW	Koorinal High School	The Riverina Anglican College
	195	52.63%
SA	Sacred Heart College	Hope Christian School
	128	36.36%
TAS	The Hutchins School	Scotch Oakburn College
	125	17.31%
VIC	Catholic College Bendigo	Kings College Warnambool
	118	13.04%
WA	Mazenod College	Mazenod College
	55	30%

\* Percentage of total employees or eligible students who donated at least once during the challenge.



Ⓢ **Red25:** What's better than knowing you're saving three lives? Helping someone else save lives too.



Ⓢ **Recipient:** Georgia receives blood products twice a week to combat her autoimmune disease.

## RALLY YOUR TEAM AND JOIN RED25

Work, school, family, friends, sport. Which groups in your life could you rally to the movement?

As a blood donor, you already know that it's one of the most rewarding things you can ever do. And what's better than knowing you're saving up to three lives? Helping someone else save lives too.

“  
**It takes one person to start a movement but it takes many to make it move.**  
”

Any group or organisation of any size, anywhere in Australia, can register a Red25 group. Once your group is registered, it's all about recruiting members to the cause and watching your donation tally rise. There are plenty of resources available to group coordinators (known as 'Champions') to help them recruit, motivate and recognise members.

Once you've started, you can visit [donateblood.com.au/red25](http://donateblood.com.au/red25) at any time to view your group's tally and compare it to others in your industry, region or even across Australia.

## QUICK QUESTIONS

### What is Red25?

The Blood Service is uniting with groups and organisations across Australia to create a powerful movement. We're on a mission to achieve 25 per cent of all the blood donations needed in Australia.

### Do I need to have a group to join Red25?

Yes – and if you don't have one, start one!

### What if I'm already in a Club Red group?

Your group will automatically be transferred to Red25.

### How do I find out if my work/school/community group is already part of Red25?

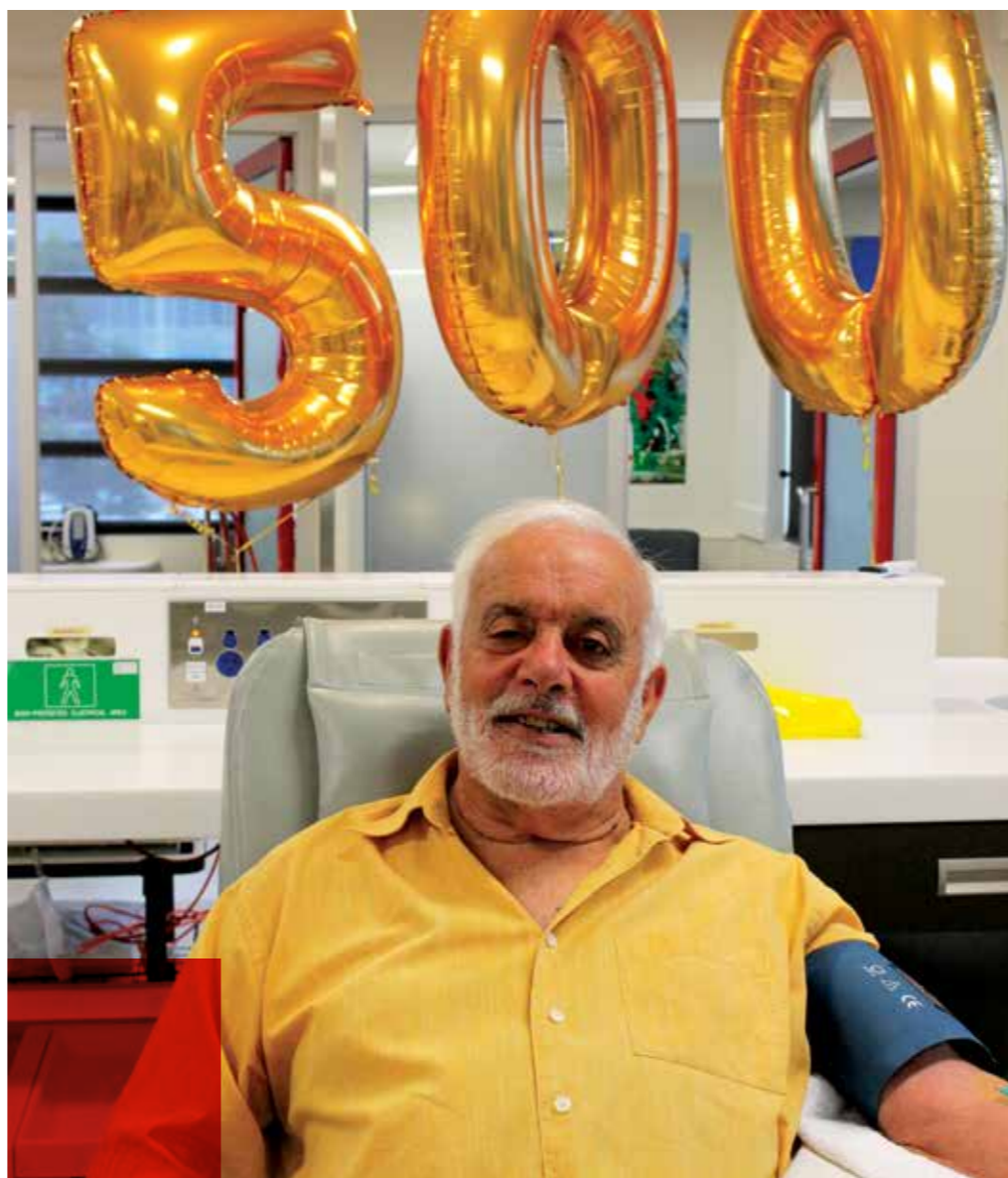
Visit [donateblood.com.au/red25](http://donateblood.com.au/red25) and search by name or location.

### How do I get started?

Become or nominate a Red25 Champion to rally, lead and support your group. The Champion then visits [donateblood.com.au/red25](http://donateblood.com.au/red25) to register a new group and encourages others to join.

To join the movement or learn more, contact your local Blood Service representative.

**CALL:** 1300 886 524  
**VISIT:** [donateblood.com.au/red25](http://donateblood.com.au/red25)



Ⓢ **Milestone donor:** Colin Waterman recently celebrated his 500th donation. He's the first South Australian to achieve this milestone!



# HOW HAVING YOUR SAY CAN HELP - YOU



🕒 **Improving the donor experience:**  
The Blood Service is always looking to improve your donor experience.

**At the Blood Service, we love hearing suggestions from donors on how to make donating blood more enjoyable.**

We value your ideas, and below are just a few of the recent and upcoming changes that have been initiated following feedback from our donors:

**Reducing donor wait times**

Donor wait times are a common donor feedback topic. Time is precious, and we know how important it is to our donors to complete their blood donation in a timely manner.

In the past few years, improving donor wait times has been a key focus in every single

donor centre around the country. In July 2012, the average wait for a donor from the moment they arrived at a donor centre until they started their blood donation was at an all time high of 35 minutes.

As of January 2015, the average wait time has dropped to just over 28 minutes, which means on average, our donors are spending seven minutes less waiting to donate.

**Wi-Fi in a donor centre near you**

With over two-thirds of Australians owning smart phones, we know that browsing the web, catching up on emails or even sharing a donation milestone on Facebook is a common way for our donors to pass the time when they donate.

Free Wi-Fi is just one of the many ways we're working to help make the donor experience more enjoyable, and we were very excited to introduce it to all of our donor centres in late 2014.

**Have a medical question? Our National Contact Centre can help**

Making an appointment to donate blood is a simple process - call 13 14 95, answer a few simple questions and make a date to donate.

For those donors with medical inquiries, the process generally includes a call transfer to a Blood Service nurse. While this system has always worked well, we know some donors find being transferred frustrating.

And we hear you. In June 2014, the Blood Service introduced new software for our contact centre that enables our staff to answer an increased number of medical based queries first time around.

This is great for donors because it means we can answer your questions faster without the need to transfer your call. It also means less waiting time for your call to be answered when you phone in to donate.

**Live appointment booking at mobile donor centres**

From 2015, booking an appointment at a mobile donor centre will be faster, easier and confirmed immediately thanks to the implementation of a live appointment booking system.

Until now, appointments made at mobiles have been recorded manually on a paper-based list, and entered at a later time.

The delay in appointment scheduling has meant that on occasion, appointment times requested by donors are no longer available.

Thanks to the new system, paper-based booking lists will be a thing of the past, and all donors rebooking at mobile donor centres will receive instant confirmation.

It also comes with a bonus. While the live appointment system is installed, each unit will receive an exciting refresh, which means next time you visit your mobile donor centre it will be more modern and have a fresh new look!

So, next time you visit a donor centre, head to [donateblood.com.au](http://donateblood.com.au) or call 13 14 95 and don't forget to leave your feedback.



# STEM CELL DONATION GIVES THE GIFT OF LIFE

It took 60 blood transfusions, an agonising search for a donor and the ultimate gift of a stem cell transplant to save Bernadette's Du Rietz's life.

In August 2012, 49-year-old Bernadette was diagnosed with a blood disorder called Myelodysplastic Syndrome (MDS). Sometimes referred to as a pre-leukaemic disorder, about 30 per cent of people with MDS progress to a form of cancer called Acute Myeloid Leukaemia (AML). Unfortunately, Bernadette's MDS became aggressive and she rapidly deteriorated, later being diagnosed with AML.

Bernadette required multiple blood transfusions during her treatment, but ultimately, it was a stem cell transplant from a donor that was required to save her life. Her two sisters were tested and sadly, were not a match. The Australian Bone Marrow Donor Registry (ABMDR) searched the Australian and overseas registries to try and find the match that Bernadette so desperately needed. Possible matches were found in the US and Germany, but after further testing, both were not suitable.

For most people, this would have been a devastating setback, but Bernadette remained positive that a donor would be found. She continued her treatment, but even after 60 blood transfusions, her condition further deteriorated. Bernadette was diagnosed as terminal and given just two months to find a donor.

Bernadette's optimism and positivity throughout her journey was remarkable, and a few weeks later the ABMDR delivered the news that she had been waiting for – they had found a donor in Melbourne that was a match. Within a month of finding the donor,

Bernadette was in hospital having a procedure that saved her life.

Now in remission, Bernadette wants to express her gratitude to the blood donors that got her through her treatment, and the donor that saved her life. She intends to write to the donor who joined the ABMDR, selflessly donated their stem cells, and gave the gift of life to a complete stranger. She wants to say "thank you for saving my life, I have made it. I want to tell you my whole story".

Having come so close to not finding a donor, Bernadette wishes to encourage as many people as possible to join the ABMDR.

"If you don't have the means to give money, you can give blood or stem cells. Let's help the ABMDR to become the biggest registry in the world."

First established in 1991 with 6,000 donors enrolled, the ABMDR has grown in size and currently has over 175,000 registered donors. Last year, however, the number of new donors decreased on previous years' numbers. It is thought that one of the reasons registration numbers are low, is the misconception that donating is a painful and invasive procedure. The ABMDR wants to dispel this myth and let the community know that donating bone marrow is not the only option any more.

Donors can make a peripheral blood stem cell donation. This donation is somewhat similar to a plasma or platelet donation and is the donation type that saved Bernadette's life.

If you would like to join the ABMDR, simply register when donating blood. You must be aged between 18 and 45 at the time of registration and be an eligible blood donor.



“It is thought that one of the reasons registration numbers are low, is the misconception that donating is a painful and invasive procedure. The Australian Bone Marrow Donor Registry wants to dispel this myth.”

Ⓢ **Stem cell transplant:** Bernadette Du Rietz is grateful for her life-saving gift and is encouraging others to consider joining the Australian Bone Marrow Donor Registry.

# TREE OF LIFE CELEBRATES DONOR GENEROSITY

The Donor Tissue Bank of Victoria (DTBV)'s Tree of Life is a colourful artwork commissioned as a tribute to the generosity of tissue donors.

Each leaf on the tree bears the first name of a tissue donor. Leaves are placed on the tree at the end of each month and twelve months later, the tree is full of leaves – in vivid shades of green, yellow and red, reflecting the seasons of life, grief, and the unique contribution made by tissue donors in helping others.

Family and friends are invited to reflect on their loved one's gift at an annual Leaf Day ceremony, where they are offered sincere thanks from those whose lives have been changed by tissue donation.

The DTBV offers recently bereaved families the opportunity to donate cornea, heart valves, skin, tendons and bone. Every day surgeons use the donated tissue to carry out life-saving and life-enhancing operations, from treating severe burns to conditions caused by disease and injury.

The need for donor tissue is always greater than the ability to provide tissue. Australia needs more organ and tissue donations and

the DTBV encourages everyone to discuss their wishes with their family now. The final decision to donate is made at one of the most difficult times in a family's life and knowing the donor's wishes can help families with their decision. Choosing to donate can give donor families some measure of comfort knowing that their relative has helped another person in need.

Father, husband, and heart valve recipient, Anthony, is one of those giving thanks.

"No words can convey the gratitude you feel when someone gives you a second chance at life," he said. "A chance to see my daughter grow up and grow old with my wife are gifts too great to describe.

**“The selfless decision of my donor family will never be lost on me as I am truly humbled that the passing of their loved one means my life can go on.”**

For more information on how to register your wishes for tissue donation, visit [donatelif.gov.au](http://donatelif.gov.au) and follow the links. And most importantly, tell your family and friends what your wishes are regarding donation.



## RECIPE



## PEANUT BUTTER CHOCOLATE BITES

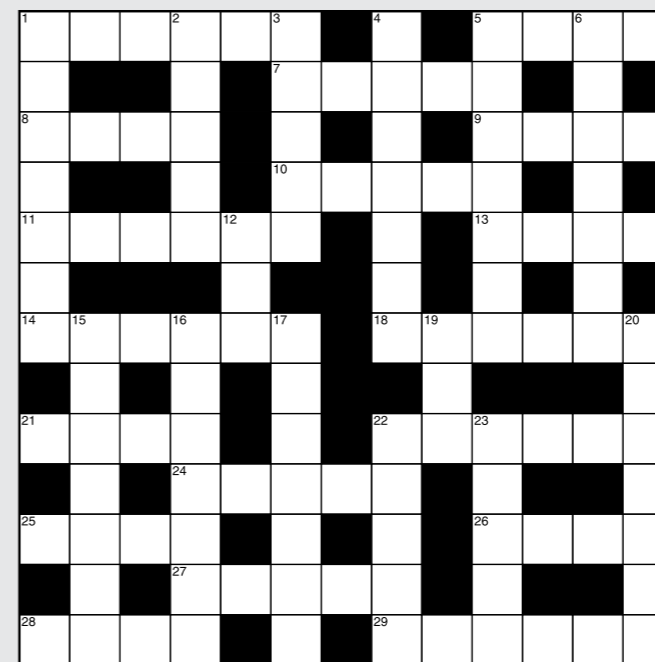
### INGREDIENTS

- 110g (1/2 cup) unsalted butter, melted
- 140g (1/2 cup) peanut butter
- 1/2 cup crushed rice bubbles or cornflakes
- 1/2 cup rolled oats, finely ground in the food processor
- 1 cup icing sugar (powdered sugar)
- 2/3 cup chocolate chips
- 2 tbsps peanut butter

### METHOD

- 1 Crush your cereal (you will need about 1 and a 1/2 cups) in a food processor. Once it's crushed, measure out 1/2 cup.
- 2 In a large bowl, combine the melted butter and peanut butter. Add the crushed cereal, oats and icing sugar, and stir well to combine.
- 3 Press about a teaspoon of mixture into the bases of a 24-hole non-stick mini muffin pan.
- 4 Place chocolate chips and peanut butter in a bowl and microwave in 30 second bursts, until melted and combined, stirring between each burst.
- 5 Pipe or spoon the chocolate mixture over each little peanut butter bite.
- 6 Refrigerate for at least two hours before inverting the pan and enjoying.

## CROSSWORD



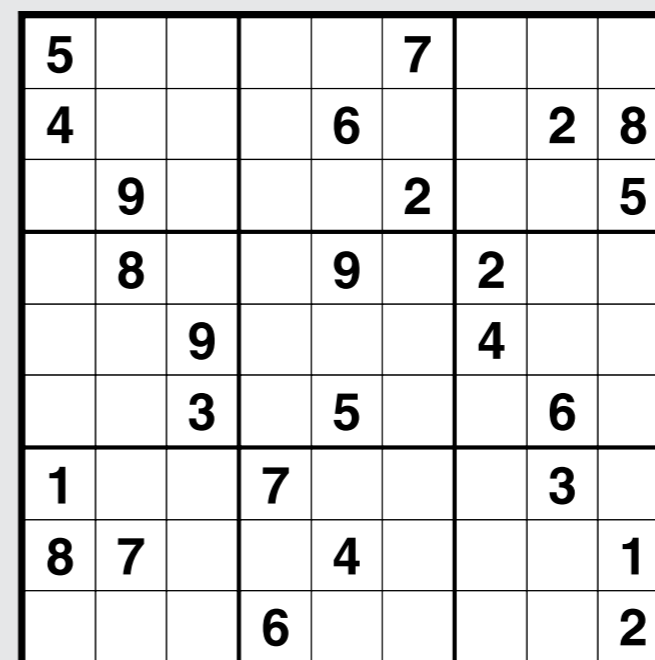
### ACROSS

- 1 Wily
- 5 Pen tips
- 7 Lead-in
- 8 Brave man
- 9 On an occasion
- 10 Lazed
- 11 Have effect (on)
- 13 Scalp parasites
- 14 Oversee
- 18 Dress ribbons
- 21 Tropical tree
- 22 More profound
- 24 Irritating to the skin
- 25 Terrace level
- 26 Cattle prod
- 27 Run off to marry
- 28 Old
- 29 Becomes faster, ... up

### DOWN

- 1 Religious non-belief
- 2 Local vegetation
- 3 Extent
- 4 Sloping typeface
- 5 Asian food items
- 6 Tour de France vehicle
- 12 Wheel tooth
- 15 Astounding
- 16 Respected
- 17 Pilot safety aid, ... seat
- 19 Beer
- 20 Long steps
- 22 Dutch sea walls
- 23 Golfer's two under par

## SUDOKU



### METHOD

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9.

### SOLUTIONS



Thanks to Lovatts Crosswords & Puzzles for supplying these puzzles.

**Tree of Life:** The Donor Tissue Bank of Victoria's Tree of Life is a colourful artwork commissioned as a tribute to the generosity of tissue donors.

# RECIPIENT STORIES



## IVY'S STORY

Little Ivy has an immune deficiency disorder which means her body can't fight common infections. Ivy received immunoglobulin every three weeks.



### TELL US WHAT YOU THINK.

Send your feedback, ideas and suggestions to [life@redcrossblood.org.au](mailto:life@redcrossblood.org.au)

[/redcrossbloodau](#) | [@redcrossbloodau](#) | [/redcrossbloodau](#)

VISIT: [donateblood.com.au](http://donateblood.com.au)