Minister for Health Robyn Lambley and her interstate colleagues have set new organ donation targets, during a national Health Ministers meeting in Brisbane today.

Mrs Lambley said last year the national organ donation rate was 10% higher than in 2012, with 391 organ donors compared with 354 in 2012.

“This represents a 59% increase since 2009 when the DonateLife Network was established,” Mrs Lambley said.

“Health Ministers today agreed to set the new national target for 2014 at 434 organ donors.

“It is very encouraging to see the Northern Territory already has the highest rate per capita of organ donors in the nation.

“In 2013 there were 7 donors from the NT, saving or transforming the lives of 23 transplant recipients in Australia.

“I encourage Territorians to get in touch with DonateLife NT to find out more about organ donation.”

Health Ministers at today’s meeting also agreed that a review of medical intern training is required.

“This review aims to ensure that the medical workforce is equipped to meet the changing health needs of the Australian population,” Mrs Lambley said.

The review has been allocated $680,000 and will look at all aspects of the current system.

“The review is timely given the first group of Territory trained interns from the NT Medical program will start working in our health system in 2015,” Mrs Lambley said.

“I want to ensure that our locally-trained students get access and preference in the NT health system, and that NT medical program graduates also get access to intern placements across Australia.”

The Federal Health Minister Peter Dutton also told Health Ministers the Commonwealth would look at changing the current exemptions under the scheme that links vaccination with family tax benefits.

“We support the move to examine the current exemptions, which allow conscientious objectors to still receive welfare payments despite not immunising their children,” Mrs Lambley said.

“The NT is already achieving higher rates of immunisation among Indigenous children than the national average, in every age group.”
“Our challenge is to ensure adults are fully up to date on their immunisations, including the required second lot of measles vaccinations, with a greater focus on newer Territorians from interstate and overseas.”

For more information on organ donations visit www.donatelife.gov.au or DonateLife NT on 0459 068 305.

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