Proposal to Lower Age of Blood Donors

The Health Minister Peter Toyne has introduced a Bill to Parliament that allows a reduction in the age at which Territorians can give blood.

The Human Tissue Transplant Amendment Bill 2006 allows for 16 and 17 year old Territorians to give blood.

“Over the past few years HIV awareness, concerns over Mad Cow disease and the need to raise the level of donor haemoglobin have impacted on the number of people eligible to give blood,” Dr Toyne said.

“This has resulted in national supply shortages. Dropping the age requirement to 16 in the Territory will expand the pool of donors and increase the sustainability of the blood supply.”

Australian Red Cross Blood Service spokeswoman Karen Finn has welcomed the proposal.

“It’s a sobering statistic that 1 in every 3 Australians will need blood in some point in their life, yet only 1 in 30 gives blood,” she said.

“Donating blood allows young people to feel connected to the community, with every donation helping to improve or save the lives of up to three people. And since young people often aren't in a position to make a financial donation, giving blood gives them the chance to still make a real difference.

“The timing of today's announcement could not be better, coinciding with World Blood Donor Day, where we recognise and thank blood donors from all around the globe for their generous gift of life.”

Dr Toyne said all other Australian jurisdictions except Tasmania allow 16 and 17 year olds to donate blood.

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