



## MEDIA RELEASE

### NEW COMPENSATION REGIME GREAT NEWS FOR ORGAN DONORS

**December 6<sup>th</sup> marks the launch of the Ministry of Health’s new financial regime for compensating live organ donors for lost income – the result of legislation which passed unanimously through Parliament at the end of last year. “This is absolutely great news,” according to Kidney Health New Zealand chief executive Max Reid. “The previous system of financial support, despite its best intentions, in fact served as a barrier to live organ donation.”**

As part of its input to the Health Select Committee’s consideration of the legislation last year, Kidney Health New Zealand surveyed more than a hundred past live kidney donors to see how they had found the previous WINZ-managed regime. The level of financial support was tagged to the sickness benefit, and potential donors had to navigate a complex and often demeaning process. “Almost without exception, those who accessed the previous financial support found it one of the hardest aspects of being an organ donor,” Mr Reid said.

The new compensation regime is now administered – more appropriately in Mr Reid’s view – by the Ministry of Health. “It’s the result of a concerted effort by a number of government departments and health sector representatives that will be so much easier to navigate than its predecessor. It offers full compensation for lost earnings – a far more realistic response to the significant and generous commitment made by a live kidney or liver donor.”

Kidney Health New Zealand has been encouraged by the small but steady increase in both live and deceased organ donation over the past few years. “But even with over 170 kidney transplants successfully completed last year, there are still some 700 kidney patients awaiting transplant.”

“Without wanting to diminish the significance of the new compensation regime for live organ donors, it is disappointing that the Ministry of Health is still to announce how it plans to implement the national Deceased Organ Donation Strategy launched in June,” Mr Reid said. “This is of real concern. That strategy took over eighteen months to develop, and garnered significant commitment from right across the health sector. It needs to be implemented promptly and funded appropriately. Otherwise it will remain no more than another well-intentioned document sitting on some Ministry staffer’s desk. Kidney Health New Zealand is hopeful that the new Minister of Health, Dr David Clark, will ensure that the Deceased Organ Donation Strategy is given as much attention and commitment by the Ministry as the development of the new live organ donation compensation regime has been,” Mr Reid says.

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For further information, questions or comment, please contact:

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*Kidney Health NZ (formally the Kidney Foundation) is a national organisation supporting kidney patients and their families by way of education, advocacy and research across all areas of kidney health - including organ donation and transplant, dialysis, early detection and prevention of chronic kidney disease. For further information or advice, contact the Kidney Health Helpline – 0800 KIDNEYS (543 639)*