



Brain Tissue Donation/Brain Bank

Why is brain banking important?

There are many different types of dementia. In life, we can only make a clinical diagnosis of possible/probable dementia after excluding other possible causes. With advances in screening and brain scanning, diagnostic accuracy has drastically improved.

However the true underlying pathology which caused a person's dementia can't be confirmed with 100% accuracy without brain tissue analysis. The risks of brain tissue biopsy in life generally outweighs the benefits and hence the final dementia diagnosis can only be confirmed through a post mortem (after death) brain tissue donation and analysis.

For many families, results from brain bank tissue analysis provide some closure about the cause of the dementia. It can also clarify whether there is any risk that the dementia was genetic and may be passed on to future generations of the family.

Brain banking and brain tissue analysis is also critical to research efforts to identify causes, better tests and treatments and perhaps even strategies for the prevention in the future. For this reason, brain banking is viewed by many donors and their families as their legacy and their fight back against dementia.

How do I register myself or my relative?

Diagnostic clinics are encouraged to discuss brain banking with families in their care as soon as possible after diagnostic feedback is provided.

Potential brain tissue donors and/or their families are advised to register with their local brain bank once their diagnosis is confirmed, in order to maximise the opportunity for the person with dementia to participate in the decision. It is also best not to leave registration until the person with dementia is in end stage disease because this is already often a stressful time for the family.

Family carers, care agencies, treating doctors and your chosen funeral director should be advised that you are registered for brain tissue donation.

For more detailed information about brain tissue donation go to the **Australian Brain Bank Network**: <http://www.austbrainbank.org.au/donors.html>

To find your local brain bank go to: <http://www.austbrainbank.org.au/index.html>