STATEMENT: Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) and Eye Tissue Recovery

Due to the recent outbreak of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in West Africa over the past few months, members of the Eye Bank Association of Australia and New Zealand (EBAANZ) have commenced collaboration and sharing of regional responses on the EVD - in relation to ocular tissue donation – to ensure national preparedness.

As response plans may vary across the country, EBAANZ therefore advise all Eye Bank Managers and Medical Directors to liaise with their local state authority to ascertain local/regional exclusion and deferral criteria for EVD, and implement immediate EVD awareness amongst their donor coordinator and within their organizations policy.

Key Points about EVD

- A person can remain infectious for up to 7 weeks as long as their blood and secretions contain the virus
- Symptoms include; sudden onset fever, intense weakness, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, rash, impaired kidney and liver function and sometimes internal and external bleeding
- There is a higher concentration of the EVD within the blood, organs and tissues during the immediate death and recovery phase as the body excretes live and infective viruses
- Laboratory findings include low white blood and platelet count and elevated liver enzymes

Recommendations (Regional variations):

Immediate exclusion from donation

- All persons known/diagnosed with EVD are excluded from all donation

Deferred Donation

- Asymptomatic travellers or residents returning from an EVD affected area should be deferred from donation of cells, tissues and organs for 60 days after return, provided they have reported no EVD symptoms (e.g. undiagnosed febrile illness)
- Anyone with a confirmed EVD exposure (e.g. contact with infected person), cannot donate within 60 days of exposure or if being monitored for exposure, within 60 days of the commencement of the monitoring period
- While the long term effects of Ebola survivors are unclear, donation coordinators are advised to consider a 12 month deferral period following exposure.

For further information, please contact Heather Machin at EBAANZ,

Via: heather.machin@unimelb.edu.au