



# Media release

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Transplant man heads back to work**

WA's first lung transplant recipient has completed his recovery and has headed back out into the workforce.

Dunsborough man Gordon Black, aged 61, who had a lung transplant operation at Royal Perth Hospital in November 2004, has recently taken up his tools to work as a gardener.

"Before the transplant surgery I was just busy trying to stay alive and work was far from my mind," he said.

"But being fit enough to do a day's work is absolutely brilliant – you just wouldn't believe the difference the transplant has made.

"I am just a normal person now doing every day things."

He said the job was giving him a lot of personal satisfaction but also making a contribution to the rapidly developing community in Dunsborough.

Mr Black said in June this year he also fulfilled a long-held wish to return to the Kimberley with his wife Rona.

"I worked up there on a station in Beverley Springs for two years and I had long wanted to show it to Rona," he said.

"It is just a special place for me, it's beautiful country."

Mr Black was diagnosed with chronic emphysema about six years ago.

He had to be connected to an oxygen supply 24-hours a day and was forced to quit his job as a tree surgeon.

Mr Black was the first patient to be given a new lung by the WA Heart and Lung Transplant Unit at Royal Perth Hospital.

A team of more than 50 people, led by cardiothoracic surgeon Robert Larbalestier, worked for about 12 hours to perform the transplant.

The WA Heart and Lung Transplant Unit recently completed its 100<sup>th</sup> transplant. So far 85 West Australians have received new hearts and 15 patients have had lung transplants.

Mr Black said he was mindful that while many of these transplant recipients will celebrate Christmas with loved ones this year that for the families of organ donors it may be a difficult time.

“It’s unfortunate those people don’t get to spend Christmas with their families but those donors are never forgotten,” he said.