

6 August 2010

Executive Officer
Victorian Parliament Law Reform Committee
Parliament House
Spring Street
East Melbourne VIC 3002

BY EMAIL

Dear Madam/Sir,

ACCESS BY DONOR-CONCEIVED PEOPLE TO INFORMATION ABOUT DONORS

I am the mother of three children who were conceived using donor sperm. My (female) partner and I were patients at Melbourne IVF, and therefore were fortunate enough to have access to an “identity release” donor. All three children (currently aged 3, 5 and 7) have the same donor.

Initially, we thought we wouldn’t be able to get identifying information about the donor until our oldest child turned 18. However, through a combination of a good counsellor and a great donor, we first had contact with the children’s donor when our oldest child was less than a year old. Initially, contact was by a series of emails (which is summarised in the collection [Sperm Wars](#)) but since then, we have met “Donor Dave”, as we call him, on a number of occasions. He has met all our children, and we have met his wife and children.

This has been an entirely positive experience. David’s children clearly understand who we are, and who our children are, and our children are very clear on who Donor Dave is. Meeting David, knowing who he is – and where he is – takes all the mystery out of the experience, and gives our children the certainty of knowing where they come from genetically. It doesn’t confuse them about who their parents are – that’s my partner and me – but it gives us all answers to those completely mundane questions that all kids have about “where they come from”. Those questions cease to be mundane when the answers are unknowable, as is the case for children conceived prior to the changes in the law which required donors to be identifiable.

From our experience, and from listening to other donor-conceived kids tell of their longing to know, I believe very strongly that donor-conceived people should be given access to whatever identifying information there is.

The privacy rights of the donor must give way to the rights of the child born of that donation. There is no obligation – can be no obligation – on the donor to meet the recipient, to provide any information or even respond to a request for information. Not everyone will have the positive experience my kids have. But at least they will know – something. And importantly, opening up the records, however limited, says to donor-conceived people that their desire to know is understandable and reasonable, and that we as a society will do what we can to help them find answers.

Yours sincerely,
Sarah Nichols