

Supplementary Submission to Criteria (f)
The impacts of the transfer of the donor registers
from the Infertility Treatment Authority to
the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages;

The enactment of the Assisted Reproductive Treatment Act on 1st January 2010 fragmented and ultimately degraded the quality of public services for donor conceived people, donors and their families. *The ITA (now VARTA) should be reinstated as the Authority managing and providing services for the donor registers.*

- i. Previously all services relating to the donor registers, counselling and education were contained within one organisation, the Infertility Treatment Authority (ITA).
- ii. The government made a presumption that people were feeling stigmatised by dealing with the Infertility Treatment Authority and would feel more 'normal' dealing with Births Deaths Marriages (BDM). This presumption was not based on consultation with donor conceived people as there was no grass roots discontent with the previous service model. In fact, the ITA was recognised as providing world's best practise.
- iii. Now donor registers are managed by BDM, but services relating to these registers are managed by the Adoption and Family Records Service (AFRS). The services previously offered by ITA (e.g. counselling to all) have not been replicated by AFRS. Furthermore, public education and matters such as importing egg/sperm from overseas is under the jurisdiction of the Victorian Assisted Reproductive Treatment Authority (VARTA).
- iv. The splintering of different areas of responsibility under three different organisations makes it more difficult for people to know where they should be seeking information, and means some people will be shunted between organisations
- v. Several parents who wrote submissions to the federal enquiry into donor conception (committee of legal and constitutional affairs) have expressed their dismay that the ITA has been disbanded, and wrote they find the new system more difficult to navigate and less supportive.
- vi. Under the previous arrangements the ITA were responsible for both donor registers and education and were able to combine these roles with a public education campaign advertising the existence of the registers, and encouraging parents to be honest with their children. To date I have seen no evidence of any public information campaign run by BDM informing people of the existence of the donor registers.
- vii. Donor conceived people applying for information on the central donor register at BDM must now pay a ~\$65 fee whereas previously applications for information to the ITA were free. It is demeaning and stigmatising to be asked to pay a fee to access information about your biological parents and family, further commercialising the relationship.
- viii. I have put my details on the voluntary register. Despite the changes to the arrangements of who is the authority in charge of this register, EIGHT months after these changes occurred I have STILL not received any correspondence from Births Deaths and Marriages informing me of this change, or the fact that I must now contact BDM if I wish to update my details. Such a lengthy delay in even informing people of this change reflects either disorganisation or contempt for the importance of the role of authority of the donor registers.