

Thank you for the chance to make a submission to the inquiry into Donor Conception.

Two years ago something happened to change my world. I gave birth to the miracle child I never thought I would have. To have my daughter I needed the help of two wonderful people an Egg Donor and a Sperm Donor. I have known I am medically infertile since a young age and that I would need an egg donor and IVF if I ever wanted to have a family. Then when my relationship broke down I was in a position of continuing IVF on my own and using a sperm donor or giving up my dream of having a child. With the help of my Ivf Clinic (Melbourne IVF) and the counselors there a Egg donor and Sperm Donor were found and my journey to parenthood could continue.

After my daughter was born I sent an anonymous thank you letter and pictures to both my donors via my IVF clinic and received letters of congratulations back from them. I then being in and having had my treatment in Victoria was able to go on the voluntary register that was run by the ITA (Infertility Treatment Authority) at the time – Now controlled by Births Deaths and Marriages.

Very quickly on the Register I made a link with my Sperm Donor and another family that had used the same Sperm Donor and had a Son about the same age as my Daughter.

Contact through the voluntary register was at first through a letterbox system where I sent a letter in to ITA and they sent it on to the Donor or linked Donor sibling. This way anonymity could be kept until such time as either or both parties felt secure enough to increase contact.

I have gone on to pursue further contact and I hope to foster and continue this as I feel strongly that it is in the best interest of all involved.

To address the terms of reference.

- (a) There needs to be uniform and consistent regulations for all donor services. Donor conceived child must be able to access information about their donor/s and genetic siblings. These regulations need to be fair and non discriminatory for any parts of the community. Counseling must be done and it made clear for both the donor and recipient on what level of contact will be wanted if and when a child is conceived. There needs to be some option for past

donors recipients to be able to retrospectively access information on their donors or donor conceived children where possible.

(b) (i) Egg, Sperm, Embryo Donation should remain altruistic with out of pocket expenses being the only payment being made to donors (with clear direction on what out of pocket expenses mean).

(b) (ii) (iii) I think Donor conception records should be kept under one central register that is well set up, organized, funded and readily available to all involved with counseling available to all parties when needed

(c) There shouldn't be a number of off spring set but rather a number of families. Setting a number of off spring may lead to situations where a family have embryo's in storage but the donors number of children have been reached and then they are not allowed to complete their family.

So set number of families would be best. A 5 family limit seems reasonable not counting the donors family. I would also like to see a review possible so that number could be extended in exceptional circumstances i.e. if there is already embryo's created and the family felt strongly that they wanted to on donate them instead of seeing them used for research or see them destroyed.

(d)The rights of all parties involved should be paramount in any legislation put in place with the best interests of the child being first and foremost in everyone's minds.

In conclusion having used the Victorian System although not perfect I can high recommend the model initially put in place by the ITA. The availability of the voluntary register, being able to contact my donors and my daughters donor siblings --- anonymously at first and the counseling available has been and continues to be a wonderful and positive part of our family and IVF/Donor journey.

Signed Shelley Sandow