



Date: 19th February, 2018

To whom it may concern

Re: Submission in relation to the Independent review of the Human Reproductive Technology Act 1991 and Surrogacy Act 2008

As someone that lost their ability to carry a child in June 2017 via hysterectomy, I feel that I have the experience to provide comment on the reform of the above mentioned Acts. My husband and I were open to surrogacy however based on what we have found out, we are heartbroken as this is no longer an option for us.

The amount of people travelling abroad to avail of surrogacy is frightening. I am unable to understand why people cannot avail of similar services here in Australia? The risks potential parents and their unborn babies are facing by travelling abroad is unacceptable. Having a baby is one of the, if not the happiest times of a persons life. Yet, out of desperation and because the laws in Western Australia and Australia prohibit certain forms of surrogacy, parents are having to trust agencies and people they have never met or met with briefly with the one of the most precious and sacred events in their lives.

The following are the key changes required to make the Acts more relevant for the people that need to access reproductive technology. It will also ensure that the legislation keeps in step with the needs and desires of the Western Australian community more broadly.

Recommendations:

- Greater number of surrogates – revise the Acts and supporting policies and advocacy to encourage more local surrogates to volunteer for this journey. Western Australia has a very low volunteering rate compared to other States. This is the fundamental issue that the Government should try to resolve
- Community awareness – the government to prepare an appropriate public awareness campaign to combat the community's misconception that altruistic surrogacy is illegal. The bad press often guides the communities understanding of surrogacy
- Support surrogates – government to put in place more comprehensive arrangements to support surrogates, inclusive of income support, life insurances and trained counsellors. These amazing women take on an enormous risk with little legal protections
- Provide a guiding hand – government to provide the support for surrogates, their families and the intending parents, to move through the surrogacy process (or allow other entities to provide that support). Currently it is up to the persistence of the surrogate and her intending family to get through the many steps required
- Communicate more effectively – create a plain English version of the Acts that can help guide the non-lawyers amongst us
- Consideration given to private agencies and commercial surrogacy being allowed

I would be happy to be contacted to provide further context and detail if considered appropriate.

Yours sincerely

Caroline Mansour

