

Response to the Review of the Human Reproductive Technology Act 1991

Ross Hunter [REDACTED]

Sent: Friday, March 16, 2018 12:50 PM

To: HRTSR

Dear Program Manager,

I write to express my support for the Review of the Human Reproductive Technology Act 1991 and the Surrogacy Act 2008 as I believe that important amendments are necessary to ensure that Donor Conceived (DC) people have the right to access vital information.

I discovered I was donor conceived in 2009 and the implications of this discovery affect my genetic and ancestral identity, as well as the potential trajectory of my physical health. When so much of what you take for granted comes crashing down around you it impacts on your family relationships and mental health.

This review needs to give DC people such as myself the information about where they come from. I am not searching for a father. I had a great dad. I merely want some basic information that most people rightfully take for granted. I want to be able to answer my children when they ask me where mine and their physical features come from. I want them to be aware of the potential risks they may face so that they can live long happy and healthy lives.

I do not wish to invade the privacy of my donor and intrude on his life. I merely want to be treated in the same manner as other Australians my age such as adoptees and wards of the state (Forgotten Australians), as well as younger donor conceived people who enjoy the benefits of more equitable legislation on the matter.

On top of this, the days of anonymity are over- whether a Bill says so or not. The proliferation of DNA testing and social media means that donors cannot stay in the shadows indefinitely. At least potential amendments provide some protection for those who do not want to have any contact with their offspring. Over the years, as I have met more donors, I find that this category is in the minority. We are not a secret that needs to be 'kept' anymore. Society has moved on from this. Continued 'anonymity' perpetuates the idea that we are shameful and need to be secret. This is damaging and demeaning to both parties. Review and reform of these Acts will help remove that stigma, promote openness and equality and help us to get on with our lives.

As for the surrogacy industry, governments must ensure that the very similar issues which future offspring conceived via this method face, are not repeated. Undoubtedly, there are some selfless, giving people involved in the surrogacy process, but the corporatisation of this industry further obfuscates the reality that many offspring will be cut off from their genetic heritage. Repeating the mistakes of the past is not acceptable for another generation after what can be clearly seen from adoption and anonymous donor conception.

As for donor conception, some donors argue that since they were promised anonymity, the government must stand by the commitment they made. There is certainly validity to this argument, however, I believe that a government should do the best they can with the information they have available at the time. In the 1970s and early 80s, this seemed cautious, but prudent. It is no longer an excuse for secrecy. Please be a part of significant change that is going to have a global domino effect on legislation around the world for other donor conceived people who have been denied basic human rights.

Yours Sincerely,

Ross Hunter

