

Senate Inquiry Into Donor Conception in Australia

Submission

I am a single first time expectant mother of a child conceived through an identity release local/Australian sperm donor through a Queensland fertility clinic. I am truly grateful to my donor for his altruism and for the gift of a child, which following several relationships and a failed marriage, had previously escaped me. One of the reasons that I chose a local donor was the fact that they do not receive payment for their donation. I am also blessed that we have an identity release donor and that my child/children will hopefully have the opportunity to meet our donor once they are 18 years of age.

As a member of a community of women choosing to be single mothers by choice (Solo Mothers By Choice-SMC Australia), who have written a very professional, comprehensive submission which also outlines some personal experiences, I have become more informed over time about the issues which are thankfully to be addressed by this Inquiry. As a developed country, I am alarmed by the inconsistency with all processes across the board in Australia with donor conception practices, at the clinic, state and national levels.

So far, my main personal concerns, have been:

- 1) *the lack of consistency between clinics in their practices in keeping in regular contact with their identity release donor.* It never occurred to me that my clinic may lose contact with our donor and that my child may not have the opportunity to make contact with the donor in the future, but after learning of other's experiences I have realised that this could be a potential reality. This was not something that was discussed in the counselling process. There is a sense that the fertility clinics have no great financial incentive in maintaining accurate records and ensuring a regular follow up process of their donors
- 2) *the inequity between clinics and states in the age that children can legally access information to contact their donor (i.e.16 or 18 years of age depending on the state)*
- 3) *the inconsistency of family limits for each donor between clinics and that there are donors who are unscrupulously making multiple private donations increasing the likelihood of donor conceived children having co-sanguine relationships due to lack of record keeping/regulation and*
- 4) *the inequity between clinics and states in facilitating contact between the identity release donor and child before they turn 16 or 18 years of age.* I approached my clinic to see if I could leave a letter on file for the donor about my child giving the donor the option to make contact before they are of age to formally access the donor's information. I was told that I could leave a letter but that it would not be provided to the donor until my child was aged 18 years.

Whereas in Victoria, they have a formal register that helps facilitate early contact if all parties are agreeable.

I appreciate that the Senate is endeavouring to assist with formalising and regulating donor conception processes and I look forward hopefully to a more equitable and consistent national system which will enable donor conceived individuals and their parent/s to have more rights and support and to avoid co-sanguine relationships.