

## Inquiry into donor conception in Australia

I have recently become pregnant through the assistance of IVF and the use of donor sperm. The intention of my partner and myself is to be honest with our child/ren about their conception from the moment they start to understand, which we imagine will be at quite a young age. I think that something like donor conception creates amazing opportunities but it must be conducted with the greatest regard for the children born of this process, and by that I mean they must be informed from a young age about their conception and be permitted to have information about the donor who contributed to their birth. I believe that these children should have access to information that will allow them to answer questions they may have and fulfill their curiosity if they hold this about their conception and biological origins.

My experience of accessing donated sperm and IVF in Victoria in 2010 takes this decision out of my hands in some ways as the law requires that the donor be known to child when they turn 18 years of age or earlier where the donor has agreed and the child desires it. I am very comfortable with this process as I think it is important that children born with the use of donated gametes should have rights that extend beyond what their parents may want or feel comfortable with as ultimately, it is not the parents right to control or withhold such significant information from their children as seems to have been the case at times in the past.

At one stage my partner and I traveled to an IVF clinic interstate where donated sperm can be imported from the USA. What struck me about the donor profiles we looked at there was that most of the men were in their early twenties and said that they donated to help contribute to their college fees as it appears they are paid a significant sum to donate in the USA. This was in stark contrast to the profiles of Australian men that we saw interstate and in Victoria, who were not paid, were usually older than early twenties in age and generally had what I considered to be very altruistic reasons for donating, whether because of having children of their own and wanting others to share that kind of joy to having known a sister or friend who had accessed assisted reproductive technologies and used donated gametes. It seems important to me that anyone who donates gametes should not be paid as being offered a financial incentive may influence people to donate gametes at a time when they are financially vulnerable. This may result in regret on their parts but I also imagine, gives a child born of this arrangement a different context in which to understand the process than those born of

arrangements where no payment was ever made.