

To whom it may concern,

At the time of my life I was about 35 with no partner and wanted a child. I am a professional woman who understands children's needs and I know I would be a great mother. I tried in vain at the time to find a professional fertility group who could provide me with some information on how I could obtain the process of a sperm donor fertility programme. I was advised at the time that there was nothing available in my geographical area.

The years went by and I was still keen to attempt to be a single mother via a donor sperm. It was not until I reached the age of 39 that I found the first fertility programme in my city which could and would allow single woman to utilise donor sperm. I went into the programme with lots of great support from the fertility service which set up a single woman's support group.

I was one of the lucky women who managed to fall pregnant via sperm insemination only and on my second attempt! I listened to all of the other woman how hard it was and how invasive it was not only on their bodies but their finances to keep up with the requirements of the IVF as well as the sperm insemination process. Some unfortunately never fell pregnant whilst others did. The group still meets and has a very strong relationship with each other. Our children are now all about 6 years old. Even though we under- went the same service the service used sperm from different universities etc from different states. We compared notes as to where we obtained sperm from and what information we were given. Mostly we were given one page of info.

When I was pregnant I had a translucal test it showed that the foetus had a rare cystic fibroses gene and was a carrier of that gene. I obtained further genetic tests which proved that I was not the carrier of any cystic fibrosis genes and that this came from the donor. I was mortified at the time that there would be something wrong with my baby (he was born well and healthy and thrives to this day with no complications). It was then that I realised how vulnerable I was and how little testing the sperm donor undergo's. I contacted the fertility service and obtained the contact information from where the donor donated which was a university in another state (QLD). I called that agency to advise them of the issue and that I believed that no further sperm of that donor's should be offered as an option. I also wrote to the fertility clinic that processed the sperm and advised them of my issue. I hoped that this sperm donor's sperm had concluded it's use now. I also wrote to the donor and advised him of the issue and that I had thanks to him given birth to a wonderful little boy.

I then inquired to the QLD university as to my letter to the sperm donor and if it would ever get to him. They advised that perhaps if the law allowed for a change that he might see my letter and only so if he updated his details with that service. I felt there was not much hope of anything really coming of this letter and thus not much chance that my child would meet his biological father. I was advised that my child at that stage was the eleventh child to have used this sperm. I wondered if those other children had ever been tested for cystic fibrosis? I wondered about those other children and who they were and where they were. I talked more to the women in my support group and inquired more as to their sperm donors. Some could use the Victorian sperm services as they were assessed as 'infertile' I was only assessed as "socially infertile" and thus could not utilise the Victorian service. Because of this assessment my donor was not able to "register" as a

donor and thus I was not able to access possible information and a possible linkup for my child at a later time.

I am grateful that I could have a boy and utilise a donor conception service. I love my child to bits as does my family and my now long term partner. However there are so many issues that arise for both me and my child these include: the lack of information in regards to the sperm donor identities and medical information; the lack of counselling support services ( I am lucky to have such a great group of friends now from the fertility service I used); the inconsistency between the state laws (which in my case was linked to the subjective assessment of my fertility status and thus the linkage to knowledge about the donor register); the lack of register information (what does that mean anyhow?) if the donor does not update their information then what's the use of as registrar? Then there's the information I want to give to my child about his identity and the lack of information as to how I do this (I have started but it's all enmeshed into his developmental stage) combined this with the community prejudice as well as a lack of identified information and it seems really complicated even for a professional woman who is well versed in the needs of children.

But I need to give it my best for my child, I need to keep up with all new research on donor conceived children and also the changes in the laws which might help to bring about better clarity and identity for all and a consistent practice to all who are involved in this process called "donor conception.

(name withheld)