

Inquiry into the inclusion of donor details on the register of births before the Committee on Law and Safety

Thursday 1 March 2012

Mr Jai Rowell to the Registrar, Registry of Births, Deaths & Marriages

QUESTION

If there were significant changes made to the recording of information on birth certificates would there be a need for additional staff? Do you see that as an issue?

ANSWER

Additional resources would be required if the Registry were to record donor information on the register. Based on available estimates, it is anticipated that some 200 – 300 registrations would be submitted per year, both in person and by mail. The Registry does not charge a fee for a birth registration, and these registrations would be processed in the usual way.

The increase in costs would arise mainly from the number of additional registrations received. Births arising from an accredited artificial reproduction technology organisation would be likely to be easier to manage since, for example, verified identity details should be readily available. Private arrangements are likely to require more work to verify parentage and donor details. As Registrar, I am required by legislation to ensure the integrity of the register.

Based on our experience in registering adoptions, we estimate up to four additional staff would be required, at an approximate cost of some \$230,000 per year.

Depending on how this measure was introduced, one additional employee may be required (at around \$63,000) may be required in the first year, to deal with preparation and dissemination of information, amendments, disputes and search requests.

There would be an initial cost in modifying the Registry's computer systems to enable these changes to be implemented. While it is difficult to estimate this cost in the absence of more details, we expect these costs to be in order of \$100,000.

Mr G D Barilaro (Chair) to the Registrar, Registry of Births, Deaths & Marriages

QUESTION

We asked this question earlier to the Attorney General's Department but I think it is more important that we ask you. The Registry of Births, Deaths & Marriages operates on a cost-recovery model whereby fees are paid for customer-funded services. However, the New South Wales Government submission notes that this practice may discourage donors from placing themselves on a voluntary register kept by the Registry as the Ministry of Health waives fees under the current system. Can you comment on this point?

ANSWER

In addition to my answer given to the Committee in session, I can advise that fees for searching the donor register would be based on the fee for searching for adoption information. Currently this fee is \$50. A fee would also be charged for the issue of a birth certificate (\$46.00) if that were required.