

**Submission  
No 18**

**INQUIRY INTO INCLUSION OF DONOR DETAILS ON  
THE REGISTER OF BIRTHS**

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I am a 29 year old donor conceived person residing in Melbourne. I believe that all donor conceived people should have knowledge of their true birth origins, and that this information should absolutely be recorded on the birth register via Births, Deaths & Marriages and on birth certificates.

You can learn more about my story here: <http://t5sdaughter.blogspot.com/>

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to this inquiry.

Regards,

Narelle Grace Grech

## Submission to the Inquiry into Whether There Should Be Provision for the Inclusion of Donor Details on the Register of Births Maintained by the Registrar of Births, Deaths & Marriages

I was conceived via anonymous donor sperm and born in 1982, in Melbourne, as a result of sperm being donated to Prince Henry's Hospital. My birth certificate states that my biological father is my dad who raised me. When I was 15 years old my parents shared with my older sister and I that I had been conceived via anonymous donor sperm; my dad had become infertile after my parents had my sister. Before this time I was unaware of my donor conceived (DC) status. I had no reason to question my parentage and believed that my birth certificate reflected the true nature of my conception. I feel that I was fortunate that my parents chose to be honest with me and share this information with me, given that they could have kept this a secret from me forever.

It is argued that many Australians are unaware of their true parentage (particularly regarding fatherhood) as there are many circumstances in which children are conceived as a result of an affair or worse still via rape. In these circumstances some people are led to believe that their father is some one else, or that they are "unknown". In the case of donor conception a person is conceived and born as a result of a medical procedure, which is sanctioned by law. It is therefore my belief that these conceptions should reflect the true nature of that person's family history and identity. It is not good enough to argue that not all people know their true parentage and therefore DC people should simply be satisfied with their circumstances. It is the responsibility of the Australian policy makers to set a good and right example. In the case of donor conception I believe that medical professionals and law makers in each state need to be held accountable for ensuring DC people never have to question their family history or identity as I and many others have had to. It is disempowering, hurtful and frustrating to be denied such vital information.

Agreements made by consenting adults in the past failed to recognise the DC person's inherent right to a true identity, as is now enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights Of the Child (UN CROC). Australia is a signatory to this, yet it has failed to ensure these same rights are upheld for all DC people.

The UN CROC states:

*Article 7*

*That children have as far as possible the right to know and be cared for by his or her parents, and;*

*Article 8*

***The right of the child to preserve his or her identity, including nationality, name and family relations as recognized by law without unlawful interference should be paramount.***

Earlier this year I was diagnosed with stage 4 bowel cancer, at the age of 28. I have been advised by numerous doctors that it is likely a connection to genetic factors. My mother has no family history of bowel cancer in her family and so it is likely that I have inherited this disease from my biological father (sperm donor). Had I been aware of this information at an earlier time I could have been screened and perhaps have a better chance at the cancer being cured. As it stands, I have been told that my illness is incurable and that I have approximately 5 years to live. I have recently been advised that I will need to undergo indefinite chemotherapy, after having just completed 12 rounds, following life saving emergency surgery to remove my primary tumour. This diagnosis has obviously had an enormous impact on my life and I am very concerned that my 8 half siblings, who were conceived via the same sperm donor, may be at risk of this terminal illness as well. I have no way of contacting them to warn them and they have no way of knowing they are donor conceived and more importantly at risk of bowel cancer. I have been advised that my half siblings should be screened for bowel cancer every 5 years from the age of 25. I am saddened to think that they have no way of ever knowing to be aware of this fact. The implications of falsifying birth certificates not only effects the DC person, but their entire family and generations of people yet to come.

I would like to see birth certificates reflecting the truth about a DC person's conception, and I strongly believe that this is the responsibility of law makers to ensure. It is not good enough to hope that parents will be honest with their children about the nature of their conception. It is every person's right to know who they are and not to have to question their primary identification document; their birth certificate. The DC status should be noted with the Register of Births by the clinic who arranges for the treatment of donor conception to occur.

Each DC person's birth certificate should reflect that they were conceived via donor

conception; there should be a place on the certificate for this to be recorded and each DC person should be made aware of their status at the age of 18, if their parents have not already done so.

I would like to thank the New South Wales Government for this opportunity to make a submission to this inquiry. I am available to speak via phone or publicly if necessary.