

**Submission  
No 19**

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

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### INCLUSION OF DONOR DETAILS ON THE REGISTER OF BIRTHS

My name is Myfanwy Cummerford. I discovered at age 20 that I was conceived via the use of anonymous donated sperm at the Royal Women's Hospital in Melbourne 30 years ago. I was miraculously able to meet and establish a relationship with my biological father in 2001. I know that I have at least three half siblings (one of whom may reside in NSW) who were also conceived using his donated sperm. Meeting my biological father and his three daughters (my other three half siblings) has been an overwhelmingly positive experience. Whilst discovering that I was donor conceived at age 20 was incredibly traumatic, I am nonetheless grateful that I was able to ascertain the truth and consider myself fortunate to have been able to form a whole picture of my own identity and family.

The situation that donor conceived people find themselves in is untenable. It is mind boggling that in 2011 there exists a group of Australian citizens who are lied to by the very document that should tell them the truth. Their birth certificate. Their primary document of identity.

That donor conceived people have no way of independently discovering the truth of their genetic parentage is an inexcusable deception, worse it is facilitated by the state.

The Victorian government initiative of allowing an addendum to indicate donor conceived status on the register of birth is commendable, however it is not enough and does not protect the interests of all donor conceived people.

I recommend that a donor conceived person's birth certificate **must** list their genetic parents as well as the legal parent(s) (if the genetic parents are not also the legal parents).

The birth certificate belongs to the donor conceived person. It is theirs for life and the information contained within is important for their descendants also. If the birth certificate lists the genetic parents then it will be virtually impossible for a person to be deceived as to the mode of their conception. I also recommend the implementation of a system of ART clinics reporting to the registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages information regarding births where donor gametes were used to minimise the possibility of a parent falsely registering their donor conceived child as naturally conceived.

Conceiving a child using donated sperm, eggs or embryos can not be equated with conceiving a child conventionally. The government has a responsibility by virtue of its facilitation and funding of the practice of donor conception to inquire into and ensure the best interests of any person conceived.

Consequentially the question arises - on what basis can the government justify the denial of identifying information pertinent to the donor conceived person and their biological family particularly in light of legislation which provides for adopted people and the recent government apologies to the Stolen Generation and Care Leavers recognising that to be denied knowledge of ones family is damaging and often results in a deep sense of loss.

I hope the Law and Safety committee takes to opportunity to act on this vitally important human rights issue.

I would like to contribute to any public hearings related to this inquiry.

Yours Sincerely

Myfanwy Cummerford