

**From:** Julie Conway  
**Sent:** Sunday, 6 July 2008 4:57 PM  
**To:** Surrogacy Committee  
**Subject:** FW: Submission to the committee

Dear Committee members,

We are writing to ask that this committee to extend the terms of reference of this inquiry into the lack of human rights for people who have been conceived using donated sperm, egg or embryos.

My concerns for requesting this, is that there are far greater numbers of Donor Conceived people already born in Qld ,who are denied their human rights, than there are people using surrogacy to form a family. Who is concerned for these donor conceived people to treated like any other Australian citizen to know their medical and genetic identities, as well as their half siblings. In the case of donor embryos, they have no access to their full siblings. There is no legislation in Qld that protects these Qld citizens and their human rights .. This discrimination must end..

Of course any children born from donor gametes or surrogacy should have their right to know their truthful medical history and genetic history. There should be a body set up with the infrastructure like the Infertility Treatment Authority in Victoria, a one stop shop in Queensland for people to have counselling, to maintain the records. etc.

Learn from the Victorians who have had their legislation since 1984.

Also Governments must be prepared to show leadership in this area , like in the adoption area. People who adopt can not adopt children if they are not fully prepared to disclose to the child that they have adopted the child. Openness in donor and surrogacy families is imperative to having mentally healthy families in the community.

My husband and I are the parents of three donor children 25, 20 and 18. All of the children have known about their donor conception since they were little children. As we wanted to raise our children in an atmosphere of openness and honesty. Two of our children as a result of our lobbying have made contact with their donors, the other daughter, the clinic lost her records. She would dearly love to know her missing identity. She has written a paper on it called Missing Links by Geraldine Hewitt.

Warren and I knew that there would be other children conceived using the same donor at the same clinic and over the years we have lobbied for information regarding our children's medical and genetic records. After 7 years we discovered that at the Royal Hospital for Women in Paddington where we attended that each of our children had 4 other half siblings.

We were very comfortable with that amount of half siblings to each of our children.

Can you imagine the shock, when we learnt that one of children had another 20 half siblings conceived in South Australia. Our child's donor had donated in both NSW and S.A. and he also had 5 of his own children as well.

As a couple Warren and I faced our infertility issues, and our grief of not having a biologically child together.

However nothing can prepare you for disclosing this information to your child. I hope no other parents have to tell their child this sort of information. We had no control over these issues. and no one in the Federal or State Government seems to want to take control and responsibility for these important social and ethical issues either. NSW have only last year introduced legislation in December after the lobbying of 5 Health Ministers in 15 years.

With all the taxpayer's dollars that are invested in IVF, there is no accountability. No national registers. No state based registers for donor conceived people to access their medical history and truthful identity.

The only state that has a decent register is Victoria and the Victorian Government also fund and promote it .

Who is going to be the advocate for the rights of children who have no voice in this area. This is an appalling lack of human rights. Please don't tell me about the NHMRC guidelines, they are only guidelines and have no teeth to them either if records are lost, misplaced, burnt, not kept.

I am contacted by people who were conceived in Qld clinics wanting to know where do they go to get their information and records?

Can someone from this inquiry please inform me to where do I send these people to? Where is the support for these Australian citizens who's human rights are taken from them before they are even born????

We hope that you will consider our request. We are happy to provide more information if the committee wishes.

Regards,

Warren and Leonie Hewitt.