

Submission from  
Elizabeth Baker

I am writing as a recipient of identity-release donor sperm from an Australian donor, through a Brisbane clinic, which resulted in the birth of my child who is now eight years old. This submission reflects my views, and also some of the views of my daughter, as she explained them to me.

- It is important for many people who were born as a result of donor conception to find out who their unknown biological/genetic parents are and information about them, and for many, to have the opportunity to get to know them personally, although every individual has a different experience and their own wishes. Not being able to do so may cause them distress and suffering. My daughter wishes to meet her biological father.
- That the opportunity to know their donor siblings may be very important to donor-conceived people and a register should specifically allow for donor siblings and their parents (who have a role in supporting these relationships especially while their children are young), to link with each other, and be supported in that process if needed, according to their individual needs. My own child has been in contact with one of her donor siblings since her birth. She values this relationship. It is allowing her to grow up with someone who is like her, both physically and in personality.
- That a Queensland register of donors and donor-conceived people ought to be maintained by a central body. Clinics could close or be sold, and there are risks of information not being available to donor-conceived people if that information remains solely under the control of the clinics. A central register is also better placed to identify when an individual has donated in multiple locations.
- That, as well as a central register, a voluntary register should be provided, so that information can be released earlier than the age specified in guidelines/law when mutually desired. When I asked my daughter what her wishes in regard to connecting with her biological father and unknown donor siblings are, she said she wanted to be able to do that now, while she is eight. It is my view that appropriate counselling should be provided to support individuals and families through this process. Victoria provides a model of this being supported successfully.
- That a Queensland register ought to be linked to registers in other states to identify where Australian donors have donated in multiple locations and overseas donor gametes have been imported to clinics in different states, to discourage that practice and allow donor siblings to know each other.

In my own situation, I had fertility treatment with donor sperm at a clinic in Brisbane. When I was pregnant, a friend and I discovered, through an online register, that our donors had remarkably similar descriptions, to the extent that we believe it was the same person, despite us having treatment at unconnected clinics in different states. This could have resulted in many families being formed, and many donor siblings being born, which may not have been in the best interests of those children. Our respective clinics were not able help us, because neither could share identifying information about our donor/s with each other or with us.