

Committee Secretary
Legal Affairs and Safety Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

Dear Sir or Madam

I wish to make a submission for the INQUIRY INTO MATTERS RELATING TO DONOR CONCEPTION INFORMATION. I make the submission as a sperm donor. My donations were made as an anonymous donor in Victoria in the 1980s, and resulted in approximately 40 donor children. I have in recent years had a variety of levels of friendly interaction with three of those children. One of those children, [REDACTED], is quite active in the Donor Child Community. I have CC'd this email to her with her permission to be known to you should you wish to make contact.

My submission follows in bold text, within the framework of the matters being considered by the Inquiry. For your convenience I also attach the submission as a separate document. I have had a number of always positive interactions with the Victorian Assisted Reproductive Treatment Authority (VARTA), and refer to them at times in my submission.

That the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee (the committee) inquire into and report to the Legislative Assembly by 31 August 2022 on:

Issues relating to access to donor conception information, including:

Rights of donor-conceived persons, including to know their genetic origins; This is a very important right of the donor-conceived person. One of the children who has initiated contact with me specifically did so at first in relation to health issues that they were having. Knowledge of any family history of specific conditions is a very valuable medical resource. Within the VARTA framework I have been able to lodge a document with VARTA that includes my family medical history. This will enable the donor children, or their offspring, to access the information well into the future.

Extent to which identifying information about donors should be given to donor-conceived persons, taking into consideration the right to privacy of donors; With recent technology advances in consumer DNA testing, anonymity is no longer totally feasible regardless of government legislation. Specifically, one donor child had effectively identified me through DNA matches with multiple people who were happy to share family tree information. But VARTA had recently been established, and they rightly felt it more polite to make an approach through the legislated channel. Some donors may desire privacy, and legislation may rightly allow them to lodge that preference for the information of enquiring donor children. Other donors, like myself, are more than happy to interact with donor children in a friendly and appropriate manner (specifically, I try to be conscious of proper consideration and respect for the raising parents).

Access to historical clinical records and implications of retrospectivity; As mentioned at b), some retrospectivity consideration is already compromised by technology advances.

Access to support and counselling for donor-conceived persons and donors; **VARTA offers such support and counselling, which I find reassuring. Without having had the need to use those services myself so far.**

Whether a register should be established; and **I totally support the establishment of a register**

Benefits, risks and implications on donor conception practices arising from any recommendations. **The rights and needs of the children produced through assisted reproduction should have a very high value in any recommendations. We are not discussing how to more efficiently produce items in a factory, but talking about making people.**

That the committee consider:

Views and experiences of donor-conceived people, donors and industry stakeholders of the current framework; **This submission comes from a formerly anonymous sperm donor. Who has had extensive discussion with one of their donor children about these matters.**

Current governance/regulatory frameworks, including registers established interstate; **I have had a number of positive interactions with VARTA and can recommend it as a possible guide for a Queensland register.**

Options to manage collection, storage, and disclosure of identifying and non-identifying information about donors, donor-conceived persons and relatives; **I encourage implementation of multiple options: 1) facilitation of sharing contact preferences and contact information. 2) storage of identifying (or non identifying) important information about donors such as family medical history. For donor conceived persons, their children, and relatives. Such storage to be maintained for decades in case of future need by persons who are late to find out about their biological ancestry.**

Whether and how to collect and disclose identifying information about donors where a donation was made on the condition of anonymity, including matters relating to consent; **Some anonymity can be maintained if a donor desires it by the legislation implementing an intermediary that conducts communication between them and the donor child. So for example, a donor that prefers privacy may respond to the intermediary that they do not wish to have contact. But they may still agree to provide important information, such as family medical history, to the child via the intermediary.**

Whether any model should include information from private donor arrangements; **I would recommend inclusion of information from all donor arrangements where possible. This would be a benefit for the donor children in having a single reference point to access needed information.**

Costs of any proposal including to establish and maintain any register and options for efficiencies, including a user-pays model; **There have been no user-pays costs that I am aware of, to myself or two donor children, that have used the services of VARTA. I personally would not object to such charges at an appropriate level.**

Whether regulating donor conception practices and assisted reproductive technology should also be considered as part of establishing a donor conception register; and human rights engaged under the *Human Rights Act 2019*. **I have only had interactions with VARTA in**

the context of donor conception. But the name implies it may be a useful reference point for legislation on assisted reproductive technology more generally.

Reference: VARTA Victorian Assisted Reproductive Treatment Authority <https://www.varta.org.au/>

Yours sincerely,

Andrew

Andrew Haines (Personal submission as a past sperm donor.)

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