



29/04/2022

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

Dear Committee Secretary,

I am writing this letter to provide a submission for the Inquiry into Matter Relating to Donor Conception. I was donor conceived in Brisbane in 1993 and would like to provide proposals based on my experience of trying to find information about my donor for myself and navigating the system as it currently exists in Queensland.

I found out that I was donor conceived when I was 14 and my parents were in the middle of their divorce, at the time I didn't know what to do with this information and it took me several years before I become comfortable with it and to disclose it with anyone (e.g. friends) or to further discuss it with my parents, however I always I knew that I wanted to have more information about my donor.

10 Years later after discussing the topic with a councillor, I finally plucked up the courage to discuss the topic with my parents and told them I wanted to find out more information about my donor. Subsequently I reached out to the clinic to request any available information. The first response form them was that I needed both of my parents to sign a release form for this information. Which to be quite frank is ridiculous as this is clearly my own medical information as much as it is theirs. However, at the time I didn't think any more about it and was in a position where my parents had accepted my decision, even though they were not enthusiastic about it and would sign the release form. However, after providing the release form, they told me that they didn't have records of my conception or donors' identity. This was also ridiculous that they made me get my parents to fill out this paperwork just to tell me they didn't have any records. However, they would put me in contact with the doctor (whose name my parents provided) that treated my parents, who had retired at this point and he may have this information. I contacted the doctor and he informed me that the records were lost due to water damage. We also had a discussion about the medical checks they did and that generally I should try and just live my life without dwelling on the topic. Finally I did ask the clinic to put me on any database or registry that they have and was informed that no such thing exists.

This didn't keep me satisfied for very long because I pushed on with ordering a DNA kit from 23andme, which didn't show any close matches and then I subsequently ordered a AncestryDNA test which provided me with what appeared to be 5 half sibling matches. After I reached out to contact

them, it turned out that what I thought was a half sibling match was actually my paternal grandfather and he put me in contact with my donor. I was uncertain about contacting my donor because he was promised anonymity, however I was lucky and he was open to contact and meeting me.

While I have laid out my experience relatively matter of factly, this was not an easy journey. There was a lot of doubt, uncertainty, misplaced shame in going through this entire process which was not easy to convey in my story.

Based on my experience I have the following recommendations that I would like to make to the committee.

- 1) A donor conceived person requesting their donor's information should not require the consent of their parents.
 - *This is because obviously it a donor conceived persons own medical information and family relationships can be complicated, not to mention there is always the possibility that parents can pass away before this information becomes known*
- 2) Queensland should establish a donor registry similar to what exists in Victoria and when a donor and donor conceived person are matched a third party can make contact between them to see if the donor is open to further contact, while respecting the anonymity they were originally promised.
- 3) Support should be offered to donor conceived persons on how to navigate this system and approach their donor and/or donor siblings.
 - *At no point in my process did the fertility clinic provide any additional guidance on making use of DNA websites to find information or how to possibly contact a donor or donor sibling. I only had some counselling sessions on an unrelated matter and decided to also discuss this with that councillor in the lead up to making my decision to further investigate my origins.*
- 4) Queensland should establish in legislation that prevents future anonymous donations
 - *Adopted people are currently entitled to find out where they came from and while previous anonymous donations make retroactivity difficult in these circumstance, it should be straightforward to make it clear to future donors there is the possibility of being contacted by any resulting offspring.*

Thank you for reading my submission, please contact me if you require any further information and I look forward seeing the outcomes of this inquiry.

Yours sincerely,

