




Speech By
Jason Hunt

MEMBER FOR CALOUNDRA

Record of Proceedings, 10 November 2022

LEGAL AFFAIRS AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mr HUNT** (Caloundra—ALP) (3.11 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution and report on the inquiry into matters relating to donor conception information. As always, I would like to thank the committee members: the chair, Peter Russo, the member for Toohey; the deputy chair, Laura Gerber, the member for Currumbin; Sandy Bolton, the member for Noosa; Jonty Bush, the member for Cooper; and Jon Krause, the member for Scenic Rim. I offer a special note of thanks to the secretariat whose support of this committee is consistently excellent.

Mr Power: It's a powerhouse committee.

Mr Healy interjected.

Mr HUNT: It is quite the committee. I will take all of those interjections. Much of this address will be devoted to the recommendations of the committee. They are as lengthy as they are crucial, but before I outline the recommendations I will briefly capture the time lines around the consultative process. On 3 March 2022 the committee invited stakeholders and subscribers to make written submissions on the inquiry, and 71 submissions were received. The committee held a public hearing on 13 May 2022.

The purpose of these consultative mechanisms was directed to a number of objectives: the rights of donor-conceived persons to know their genetic origins; the extent to which identifying information about donors should be given to donor-conceived persons, taking into consideration the right to privacy of donors; access to historical clinical records and implications of retrospectivity; access to support and counselling for donor-conceived persons and donors; whether a register should be established; and the benefits, risks and implications on donor conception practices arising from any recommendations. To that end, after the process was completed the committee handed down six key recommendations. The committee recommends that all donor-conceived persons be legislatively provided with the right to know the identity of their donor when they reach the age of 18, regardless of when they were born.

The committee recommends: identifying information about donors, including their medical history, be made available on request to all donor-conceived persons when they reach the age of 18; information about the gender and year of birth of donor-conceived persons born from their donation be made available on request to all donors; information about the gender and year of birth of donor-conceived siblings be made available on request to donor-conceived persons; requests from donors for contact with donor-conceived persons be facilitated subject to the consent of the donor-conceived person; requests from donor-conceived persons for contact with their donor be facilitated subject to the consent of the donor; and requests from donor-conceived persons for contact with their donor siblings be facilitated subject to the consent of both parties.

The committee recommends that the Queensland government introduces legislation to: prohibit the deliberate destruction of historical donor records; require clinics involved now and historically with donor conception to retrieve, check and submit all donor information to a central register within a

reasonable time frame; provide that birth certificates of donor-conceived persons be annotated to note the fact of donor conception; and provide that birth certificates of donor-conceived persons already born be amended to note the fact of donor conception. The committee further recommended that: the Queensland government considers funding counselling and support services for donor-conceived persons, recipient parents and donors to facilitate positive outcomes from recommendations in the report, utilising services with relevant and lived experience; and such counselling and support services should be independent of the fertility industry.

The committee recommended that: a central donor conception register be established within the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages; this register be mandatory in relation to donor conception achieved within a fertility clinic; the register be available voluntarily to those who have pursued donor conception in private arrangements; the Queensland government undertake an investigation to determine how to (a) encourage participants in private donor conception arrangements to lodge donor conception information on the central donor conception register and (b) ensure the information is accurate; the staff who operate this register to actively contact previously anonymous donors about relevant changes to the law and available support services, and permit them to lodge contact preferences; and the Queensland government work with states and territories to investigate the linking of donor conception registers across jurisdictions and any potential implications. I look forward to continued progress in this space and I thank all concerned for their efforts.