

To whom it may concern,

16/03/2018

My name is Danny Rhys Steele and my partner, Peter and I are just starting our journey to having a family. Before meeting Peter I always wanted kids but the drive and desire for starting a family never made its way to the forefront of my mind. Since meeting Peter and finding a soul mate, starting a family together has become such a strong desire and something we can't wait for. Finding the right person to share this with completely changed my view and passion for having children of my own. I can't wait for the day that I have kids running around and for someone to say the he has my eyes or she has my blonde hair. The best thing of all is that my partner shares this same willingness to start a family and for us to bring kids into this world.

We are both very career orientated people and have worked really hard in our lines of work. Building our way up in companies to stable roles. We worked hard and saved for a long time to build our own place. Not only creating our own space, but starting the foundation of a family home that we can bring kids home to. What we would call a stable environment. Not only financially but one filled with so much love.

The more we have ventured down the path of gathering information, online research, joining online forums, reading articles, studying legislation/laws/acts and attending seminars the more we realised this is not an easy process.

We soon found we were running a race where the hurdles got bigger and bigger as we found we jumped over the next. To a point where it seems too complex, expensive and unfair to continue.

Looking around our close group of family and friends we are surrounded by four newborn babies. One of my colleagues at work has started her parental leave and welcomed her daughter. My best friend and her finance have welcomed their baby boy to their home. Peter's best friend has just given birth to her beautiful baby boy. Last Peter's sister has just given birth to her third child and beautiful girl.

We often sit and ponder the thought of how lucky most heterosexual couples have it. That they can conceive a child and 9 months later bare a wonderful gift to the world. How different this is to us. That they can have such easy access to a natural process, yet for us. Right now, an illegal process due to our sexuality. This would be my first point in this submission and law that needs to change to reflect the current expectations of society and basic human rights. In a world of political correctness and yet still blatant discrimination due to one's sexual orientation.

We are part of a larger community of gay dads, intended gay dads and also heterosexual couples who are not able to conceive naturally themselves. We are surrounded by so many loving, kind people who would be the best role models. The best father/mother figures for any child. Yet are denied or have a glimmer of access to a right that seems so far to reach.

My best friend and her Fiancé have just given birth to their first son Bailey. He is an adorable baby, was conceived through IVF and one of the mums carried the child. They are currently both noted on the birth certificate and in the eyes of the law, both mums to Bailey. Which seems perfectly normal however we don't have the same rights or access to both intended parents being legal parents from the day on which the baby is born. Instead one party is listed as the parent and the other has to file for legal guardianship. Something that needs to

be updated so that two fathers who are the intended parents can be listed on the birth certificate and noted as parents of the child.

In completing our research and talking to families who have gone through the surrogacy process (needing to go overseas as WA has not supported the journey) we have run through the costs involved in in Surrogacy. With costs ranging from \$95,000 to over \$250,000 to have one child seems crazy to me considering many parents who don't need to go through surrogacy don't have costs over \$5000. The price that comes into creating a baby here for surrogacy is only funds that are taken away from the family and the baby's childhood. We think of it as the cost we need to pay upfront could equate to sending the child to private school, could be a family holiday each year or the difference between creating a financially stable home for the child. The update and amendment of the laws need to create provisions to lower the cost for families to complete surrogacy.

When searching online and using the forums available to try and gather as much info as we could, we started feeling overwhelmed with so much information. Different sources stating different things. Each state in WA having different laws and regulations. Just meant it was hard to find correct facts that actually applied to us. Along with the much needed updates to law and legislation, there needs to be work completed on building a structured system where intended parents are able to obtain current and relevant information on the process. Where surrogates are able to educate themselves on the process. Not only a place to find the right info but also a place where the two can be partner together. Like an agency of sorts where intended parents are able to be partnered/matched with surrogates and build a relationship much like current IVF clinics assist intended parents with donors. A regulated, controlled system that is accessible to the public, offers protection to all parties involved and mostly is cost effective and does not drive up the costs involved.

I hope this submission gives insight to the issues we have come across so far in our journey to starting a family. That it aids in updating the current laws and brings forward change that will make this process so much more accessible not only for Peter and I in the near future but also to all others starting the journey in WA.

Thank you for taking the time to read this submission.

 16/03/2018.

Kind Regards  
Danny Rhys Steele

