

Submission in relation to the Independent review of the Human Reproductive Technology Act 1991 and Surrogacy Act 2008

Steve Adams [REDACTED]

Sent: Friday, March 16, 2018 3:59 PM

To: HRTSR

To whom it may concern,

My wife & I have struggled with infertility for many years and I feel that I have some experience to provide comment on the reform of the above mentioned Acts. Our surrogacy journey has been very challenging and is still a long way from being over.

My wife & I have spent about 7-8 years, nearly our entire 30's trying every possible way to realise our dream of becoming parents and have a family. We've worked with two fertility clinics in Perth and had in excess of 15 attempts, both artificial insemination and IVF. Genetic testing was done, results were promising. Numerous operations (laparoscopies and hysteroscopies) and more recently seeking advice from a further specialist who tried some rather radical methods by prescribing Humira and IVIG. We estimate that we would have spent in excess of \$100K trying to achieve our dream. And that's out of pocket. We have had rebates along the way above this. Despite our efforts we have absolutely nothing to show for this. Not one of our specialists have been able to give us a reason for the troubles we have experienced and the infertility we've experienced.

We did have a brief moment of joy falling pregnant at the end of 2016, but my wife miscarried at 8-9 weeks. She had a D&C procedure and testing was done, no abnormalities detected.

My wife took 6 weeks of approved sick leave from her job to deal with things and get herself together. We attended counselling with several counsellors and she eventually changed jobs in an attempt to reduce stress and a scene change.

We've only recently discovered the avenue of Surrogacy but fear that here in Australia we have left this too late because of my age for us to have a child through this process which is genetically linked to both of us.

We believe that the Acts need changing to make them more relevant for the people that need access to reproductive technology.

Some recommendations are outline below;

Community awareness - the community needs to be made aware of common misconceptions. The bad press guides peoples understanding of surrogacy.

Support Surrogates - I don't think that the women who choose to become surrogates are looked after enough, they take on such huge risks with little legal protection.

More surrogates - revise the Acts and supporting policies to encourage more local surrogates to volunteer. WA has a very low volunteer rate and this is a HUGE area that needs addressing.

The government needs to provide support for surrogates, their families and the intending parents, to move through the surrogacy process. At the moment, it's completely up to the surrogate and the intending parents to drive through the difficult process.

Currently the intended mother essentially has no rights at all, even years after the birth until the child is considered to be an adult is just ludicrous. This is probably one of the scariest for the intending families, to have this hanging over them for so long. The birth certificate should have the intending parents names on it without a doubt!

There needs to be more guidance, support and acceptance from our health professionals and specialists. Our fertility specialist in associated with a clinic that doesn't condone surrogacy and hence couldn't/didn't discuss it with us. If this had not been the case, perhaps he would've recommended surrogacy and saved us years and years of heartache.

We need change desperately! It's only a matter of time before the number of people that need access to surrogacy options grows exponentially, especially now that laws are changing for same sex couples. The way that WA and Australia in general approaches surrogacy makes it impossible for a lot of us to access.

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The desire to become a father or mother is too strong, people will try anything to achieve their dream of having a family.

The Acts and supporting policies need to catch up to current needs and continue to move forward with them.

Thank for your time, please take the responsibility seriously and listen to the people who've made submissions, this is a HUGE issue for soo many people.

Regards,
Steve Adams

