



# Catholic Women's League of Victoria & Wagga Wagga



A Member Organisation  
of CWLA Inc.

*She has put her hands to strong things • Proverbs 31:10-31*

Committee Secretary

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social and Legal Affairs

## **Submission on the Regulatory and Legislative aspects of International and domestic surrogacy arrangements.**

The members of the Catholic Women's League of Victoria & Wagga Wagga Inc offer the following statements with regards to the issue of surrogacy, its effects on women and children produced for commissioning couples and the birth mother's children.

We totally oppose both Commercial and Altruistic surrogacy for the simple reason that it will become a multi –million dollar industry similar to that in the US which has no proper oversight. This is just another form of violence against women.

The cost of IVF treatments used in surrogacy will put a further burden on our Health Care system.

Unless the committee is prepared to carefully research surrogacy's many contra-indications, the well being of all involved, and how it will affect the community at large and the children in later years, then in years to come the end result will be the same as the Stolen Generation and Relinquishing Single Mothers.

One only needs to go back and look at the Embryonic Stem Cell (ESC) push which the community was told that those who suffered disability problems; other diseases etc would be cured using ESC's. These people were deceived. The only cures so far have come from adult stem cells (ASC). Those who were against the use of ESC's were dismissed as moralists.

Yours faithfully,

Madge Fahy,

On behalf of CWL Social Questions Committee

Representing all League Members.

04/02/2016



**Are animals more important than women in this situation?**

**There is no international global law or a convention on surrogacy. Furthermore, it would be impossible to implement one as many nations ban surrogacy in all forms. No global law/ convention can force surrogacy upon Sovereign States as children are NOT A RIGHT. Nor would it be correct for the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) to oversee such a convention as recommended by researchers and lawyers as the committee is not representative of sovereign nations.**

It should be noted that on the 17<sup>th</sup> December 2015 the European Parliament condemned all forms of surrogacy (Para 114 of its report) which stated that “surrogacy undermines the human dignity of a woman since her body and its reproductive functions are used as a commodity. The child produced for surrogate couples is no more than a commodity purchased at a price”.

The terminology used for a surrogate mother in and of its self totally degrading. Terms such as ‘gestational carrier’ (mother); ‘the incubator’; ‘postie delivering mail’; and ‘surrogate uteri’ are totally unacceptable.

Legally, the only party who possesses clear, unarguable and inalienable rights is the child born of a surrogacy agreement.

**Therefore we totally oppose any move to legalise Commercial Surrogacy by the Federal Government. Altruistic surrogacy should also be banned by the Federal Government, States and Territories. Governments do not owe children to people and people do not have the right to demand this of any government.**

Recently a woman from the US died while carrying her third baby for a couple. Two other women who are carrying triplets have been ordered by the commissioning couples to “reduce” their pregnancies down to twins using Multi Foetal Pregnancy Reduction (MFPR) as the couples do not want three children. But both surrogate mothers have rejected this order. This order, without a thought to the surrogate mother or the baby who is selected to be put to death using a Potassium Chloride solution. This solution is injected into the baby’s heart which stops the heart beating. The child dies.

The drugs used in IVF have many contra-indications which can cause huge problems for women. Both Lupron and Synarel are synthetic (man-made) hormones, not approved by the FDA for use in fertility treatment (used off label). Lupron carries a Category X classification which means that if a woman becomes pregnant while taking the drug there will be harm done to the child in the womb.

Research with regards to pregnancy is that a mother and her unborn child have a unique connection, unlike anything else. They have a special bond which has lasting effects long after birth. Furthermore, unborn baby cells stay in the mother’s body after birth. The latest research being carried out is to discover how the baby’s cells can travel through the placenta into the mother’s blood stream and then to her brain, liver and other organs.

Amy Boddy, a postdoctoral fellow at Arizona State University reported that the exchange of cells is a two-way relationship. The mother’s cells also cross the placenta into the baby, including those cells she carries from previous pregnancies and from her own mother. That means we may all be carrying cells of older siblings and grandmothers within us.

Two issues arise out of this research:

1. While the surrogate mother tries not to become attached to the child she is carrying for a surrogate couple, how is she expected to deal with the fact that she continues to carry the child's cells in her body long after giving birth, probably forever.
2. How will the surrogate couples deal with the fact that the birth mother's cells remain in the child they have organised via surrogacy?

Michael from West London and his civil partner Steven have twins, now 17 months old via a surrogate in America. They demanded the following of the egg donor, who was not the surrogate mother.

- Both being white, they wanted a white donor.
- Both being over 6 ft they wanted someone who was between 5ft 5 and five ft 10.
- Didn't want anyone with a BMI over 25.
- The donor had to be a university graduate.
- They needed the medical history of the donor's sisters, parents and grandparents.
- Breast cancer in the family- totally rejected.
- But they were happy for the donor to keep in touch with the children.
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He stated that they were his children and it was the best thing he had ever done. He is now a stay at home dad. How will he deal with this latest research?

***MOTHERS DO MATTER*** and we now know that these children carry cells from the birth mother.

Gary Powell, LGBT activist, public administration campaigner, and original signer of 'Stop Surrogacy Now UK' stated: - "I am very concerned that the LGBT community should not view the availability of surrogacy arrangements as a progression in LGBT equality or rights".

Garry Powell also raised the significant harmful physical and psychological effects caused by surrogacy to some egg donors and surrogate mothers. He stated that far too little consideration of these issues has been given by both advocates and recipients of surrogacy. Additionally, some children brought into the world as a result of surrogacy often manifest psychological harm.

Garry was very strong on the following issues involving surrogacy:-

- The process of surrogacy raises very serious ethical and moral considerations.
- The exploitation of economically disadvantaged women and the commoditisation of women and children by less ethically motivated business people in the field, whose priority of maximising profit may eclipse their consciousness of ethical responsibility.
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An article published by The Center for Bioethics and Culture Network (CBCN) and written by Jennifer Lahl, R.N., M.A. states the following facts:

"American women are being paid to put themselves at significant physical risk every day in this country to produce babies for others. These mostly low income women are injected with powerful hormones and other drugs to maximize chances of pregnancy, virtually without government oversight. Women didn't get this far to be treated like breeding animals. I never thought I'd see the day when women were openly marketed for their uteri".

**Time Magazine lists pregnancy as one of the "Top Ten Chores to Outsource "in America. How sad. What does this say about our society! Pregnancy is never ever a 'chore'.**

The members of Catholic Women's League of Victoria & Wagga Wagga strongly recommends that each committee member reads Kaysa Ekis Ekman book "Being and Being Bought" Prostitution, Surrogacy and the Split Self (Published 2013 and reprinted 2014) along with Dr Peter Cook's book "Mothering Matters" "The sources of love, and how our culture harms infants, women, and society (Published 2009). Steve Biddulph, Psychologist and author of "*Raising Babies*" wrote the Forward in Dr. Cook's book "Mothering Matters" and in the last paragraph stated the following: "I'd like to say read and enjoy, but it's more a case of read and weep. Or better still, read this body of work to find confirmation and a spur to put love back at the top of the list for building a human race that is still here in a century's time; because if we don't learn to love our babies, our earth, and each other, very fast, we will disappear. It has already begun, and there isn't a moment to lose".

Kajsa Ekis Ekman links surrogate motherhood and prostitution by identifying the same components that the woman is neither connected to her own body nor to the child growing in her body. Surrogacy becomes an extended form of prostitution. This assessment is supported by Melissa Farley, PhD who states that if you ever wondered how to respond to those who say there are no victims in prostitution or what to say when someone proposes surrogacy as a solution to childlessness- this book is a must read. ***We totally agree.***

We therefore recommend that the Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs look at all forms of surrogacy not from a "**politically correct**" viewpoint (**my rights to have a child**), but rather as an issue that will have long lasting effects on women, children and our future generations.

**League members totally oppose all forms of surrogacy. We strongly recommend that the Government support the organisation "Stop Surrogacy Now " started by a group of women (and men) who came together following the 2015 Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) Meeting at the UN in New York.**

**In 2008, Anil Malhotra an International Law Expert, states that "exploitation, extortion, and ethical abuses in surrogacy trafficking are rampant, go undeterred and surrogate mothers are often misused with impunity".**

**In 2009 The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) warned that human trafficking for the purpose of surrogacy will eventually develop.**

**IF WE ARE TO PREVENT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN THEN ALL FORMS OF SURROGACY MUST BE ACKNOWLEDGED FOR WHAT IT IS AND BE BANNED BY THE FEDERAL, STATE, AND TERRITORY GOVERNMENTS.**

M. Fahy

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