

Subject: Submission to Inquiry into Allowing Surrogacy in Australia
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Robin Turner

I find it hard to comprehend that my Federal Government would even be considering this to be allowed in our country when 3 State Governments have investigated the issue and have decided against allowing it.

So lets start at the beginning.

Before you have a surrogate you need an egg donor or a sperm donor, or perhaps you need both!

So we are going to have a donor conceived child. (DC)

Sperm donation is a fairly easy process, but harvesting eggs from a female is not an easy process and also not without risk.

At a recent conference on adoption it was mentioned that some women have developed severe health problems linked to egg donation, including cancer.

Who will be the egg donor, or is the client going to buy eggs from an unregulated county? (Thereby exploiting poor women from 3rd world countries).

I assume that the commissioning client would require the egg be of the same ethnicity as themselves. (if they are white would they want an Asian or an African black egg, or prefer as an example a Romanian egg as they look more like us and therefore the child will become invisible within the clients social/living circle).

Will government have a registry of donors if you only allow Australian egg and sperm donors?

(You may not think it would be necessary to have a registry until you look at the possibility of more than one egg coming from a single donor and what could happen down the track with possibility of many more children being born from one sperm donor).

If you fail to have a registry you risk half brothers and sisters becoming romantically involved in the future and if they have children then the children will be at higher risk of having a disability.

What happens to the child if there is an unforeseen genetic problem with the egg donor or the sperm donor and the commissioning clients reject the child?

Who is going to pay for all the medical tests required?

Will DNA and other medical testing that may be required prior to egg harvesting and sperm donation be allowed under Medicare?

Will those on New Start or other welfare programs see this as a way to earn some money. Will government allow them to be part of this? If yes, then will the commissioning client have to pay full support for these people from day 1 whether the 1st implantation works or not. Many times it takes several months and many medical procedures before an embryo takes.

I must mention here that in the "forced adoption" era that 45% of women who lost their

first child to this heinous practice never married or gave birth to another child. Please, if you decide to go ahead with surrogacy you legislate that it can only be women who already have children can be a surrogate.

Recent studies show that surrogates go through a "honeymoon" period where they feel good about what they have part of, then they suffer a sense of grief and loss of their child. Much like "the mothers of loss", which is the new name for those women who lost their child to the adoption industry. (Formally known as a birth mother.)

We in Australia already have a problem with the DC children, who are now adults, in Victoria. They have been on ABC TV questioning their identity and in many cases the clinic destroyed records because they guaranteed the sperm donors absolute anonymity because it appears most were young unmarried Doctors and they got paid \$10 for each donation and they wanted guarantees that the children conceived using their sperm would not come back and claim inheritance or support from them.

Will the information on who these people are appear on the child's Birth Certificate? Australia is a signatory to Hague Convention on the Rights of the Child. This states that the child has the right to know its biological parents.

It has been strongly advised that all parties undergo counselling prior to donation, the donors, the carrier or surrogate and the client who wants a baby of course. Who will pay for this? Are you going to put out a "special medicare allowance" so this is paid for by the government? And do we actually have people qualified in Australia to do this counselling as it has not actually been allowed legally before? If the egg is purchased from overseas then who knows if any counselling took place or if it was purely a monetary transaction.

Now let us take a look at the commissioning clients. Are they an infertile heterosexual couple, or are they a single sex couple (is this a hidden agenda in the gay marriage debate) or just one single male or female who feel they have an entitlement to a child, or simply a couple where the female has a career and does not have the time to carry a child as it would be and inconvenience.

A child that they will own, bought and paid for.

I have a big problem about people owning other people. It used to be called slavery. People bought for money.

So we finally have everyone counselled, where possible, we have an egg and sperm - enter the IVF specialists, and we are on our way.

The IVF industry ALWAYS implants multiple embryos because the chances of success, even with technology today, are limited.

So you have a client who wishes to have 1 child using a surrogate, gestational carrier, or an outsourced reproduction supplier. Also known as Artificial Reproductive Technology. (ART)

The said surrogate is implanted with 2 or 3 embryos. All 3 take, but the client only wants one child. The surrogate then is asked by the client to abort 2. Perhaps the surrogate is not willing to agree to aborting 2, and which 2 are to be chosen? Does the client want a boy or a girl? What if all the babies being carried are of the same sex and that is not the sex of the child the client wants? And don't forget that abortion still comes with some risks to the carriers health.

You could be forgiven for thinking that this situation would never come about, except that there is a case in the Californian Courts right now where a surrogate is carrying 3 children and the client wants 1 to be aborted because he/she only is willing to take 2 of the children. So what is to happen to the 3rd? Does this child then become your responsibility, after all you are the government who allowed this to happen in the first place!
We have already seen our government become responsible for 1 rejected child, baby Gammy. How many more are out there that the public have not been made aware of?

So what checks and balances do you intend to put into place for donors and commissioning clients?

Will the use of Australian surrogates be limited to Australian citizens who are residing in Australia?

I can see the Americans would see this as a great opportunity for their multi billion dollar adoption and surrogate industry in child trafficking, which of course is all about fulfilling the wants and needs of adults and nothing about the best interest of the child.

Many people consider this as a form of slavery. I agree with those people. It took 200 years and a war to stop slavery, so what is it going to take to stop this.

As evidenced in the past commissioning clients tend not to want the "mother" or surrogate around because they live in fear of the child's natural bond with her.

That is the reason why these people have wanted to use overseas surrogates in the past, and why I think overseas people would want to use Australian women in the future if this is allowed here.

Country after country are closing this practice.

When you as legislators see this do you think why?

Is it because these other countries now recognise that this is not a benign practice.

As I sit here today writing the 1st part of my submission (1/2/16), news has just come through that yet another celebrity has a new baby using a surrogate. This time it is Tyra Banks.

So lets look at the Australian celebrities who have used this method.

Lets start with Nicole Kidman and Cate Blanchett. Both are well over the age limit to adopt children in NSW.

Nicole has admitted to using a "gestational surrogate" and has, without being challenged, bought that child into NSW, a state where all surrogacy is illegal. How can this be? What is the point in having laws if they are not enforced?

Then of course we have Debra Lee Furness and her husband Hugh Jackman. The sight of those two being filmed during Oscars birth and Hugh cutting the cord is permanently imprinted in my brain. Of course the mother of Oscar killed herself when DLF and Hugh failed to uphold the contract they signed with his poor mother and her right of access and to know her child with an open adoption contract in place.

These very wealthy people do not raise these children. Instead they employ nannies to do so.

Unfortunately in the celebrity circle the adopted or surrogate child has become the new trend in fashion, and those who follow fashion feel that they also should have the same entitlement, after all they have the money to pay for it.

But I digress, please forgive me.

Now back to our imaginary baby born by an Australian surrogate for an Australian couple or single.

They have jumped through all the hoops and met all the qualifications. (Oh do we have an age limit? Can we expect Jerry Hall and Rupert Murdoch to be the first couple?)

The IVF people have done their stuff and we have a pregnant women carrying a child that

has no relation to her.

Or does it have a hidden relationship with her, she is carrying it, her body is feeding it, it is her heartbeat that the baby hears, it is her voice that it knows, the baby knows her choice in foods and music.

What power do the commissioning clients have over her life style? Perhaps they are vegans and don't want her to eat meat. Perhaps the doctors attending her say she needs to eat meat for the benefit of the baby.

There is so much to be considered here. How do you legislate and police this?

Does the mother, oh sorry slip of the keyboard, surrogate use the local hospital for her monthly, then fortnightly, then weekly check ups using her Medicare card? Or will surrogate babies only be born in private hospitals? Oh no that can't happen because if the child is unwell the private hospitals don't have the same equipment that the big public hospitals have, so I guess they will need to be born in public hospitals after all, just in case. Well I guess all parties are Australian citizens and therefore entitled to use public hospitals.

Does the commissioning adults Private Health Fund cover all these costs, after all the surrogate name is unlikely to be on their private health insurance cover.

So we have sorted all the medical stuff out and we now have a brand new Australian citizen.

This poor little person I assume will immediately be removed from the only person it knows.

As studies from the past have shown it will immediately go into trauma and shock.

It will take one of 2 forms. It will cry incessantly or be almost totally quiet.

Medical professionals and hospitals now recognise this, and that is why they encourage the parents of premature babies who are placed in incubators to spend as much time with them as possible to reduce their stress response.

Now it is time to register the birth. We will need space on the Birth Certificate for 2 mothers and possibly 2 fathers.

If you fail to do this then when the child reaches maturity it will have identity issues.

Please do not dismiss this point it is very important to the child to know how it came into being.

I strongly suggest you speak to adopted people within Australia who are now adults. There are no shortage of them as somewhere between 250,000 to 350,000 babies were taken in the past. If you have trouble finding any, please let me know and I will put you in contact with as many as you need.

So the commissioning client takes the baby home to the brand new, no expenses spared nursery

It is bewildered and in shock.

The hopefully "experienced and qualified" counselor or mental health professional has told the client that they must at the earliest opportunity explain to the child how it came into being.

So the parents tell the child as it grows a lovely bedtime story of how a "good person" gave them an egg or sperm, and how a clever Doctor put the two together then a wonderful lady carried him/her until they were born and came home to them and how "special" the child is.

The child starts school and tells other children in the class about how "special" they are and the bullying starts. The other kids don't see it as "special" they see it as the child being "different".

The commissioning client goes to the school and complains because the child is being picked on by the other children because it is different. The school says, sorry but what can we do, kids will be kids.

So the commissioning client decides to move the child to another school and "strongly suggests" that the child not tell the other children at the new school how "special" it is.

And the secrecy begins that undermines every area of the child's life.

Alas it is to no avail because the new school is still in the same area and word has spread throughout their community, so the bullying continues at the new school. Meanwhile the child learns nothing at school because its self esteem is destroyed.

This continues into high school and the child fails to obtain scholastic excellence, which the commissioning client then perhaps blames this on the "bad blood" of the egg donor or the sperm donor or even the surrogate in front of the child.

Of course their parenting skills could not possibly be the problem, they have given the child everything that money can buy.

These children will have identity issues and mental health issues.

I predict that they will continue to feel a sense of rejection as do other adopted people, and possibly search out the women who carried them looking for answers to questions that cannot be answered.

As a government you claim you have learnt the lessons from the past, as a person affected I can assure you that you haven't if you even consider allowing this.

At the end of the day we are mammals.

Mother Nature prepares a woman to become a mother with the release of hormones to enable her to love and do the best by her child. The commissioning client will not have the same relationship with the child. So we come to the age old argument nature versus nurture, or blood versus bread.

I have been in the unfortunate position of hearing adopted people say that they would have preferred to have been aborted than to have to suffer the adoption stigma and all the problems related to being an adopted person.

Now back on point. This child will have a maximum of one natural parent. So the child will need to be adopted by one or both parents.

From reading sites on the internet I can tell you people don't like having to adopt their own children.

So will you insist as a government that the adoption process will be followed for the protection of the child? This of course extends them the surety of inheritance.

I ask that the committee google baby M. It is an account from the USA on surrogacy and will advise you on issues that you would not even think about.

If you are sitting in parliament with the best interests of Australians in your heart, present and future, you will not allow surrogacy in any form in our country.

Although those who push for it are adults you must consider the children, who will have no say in the process.

Please learn the lessons from the past, from the donor conceived children and the forced adoption mothers and their children, all of these are now adults and I am sure they would not support this for a variety of reasons that I have not touched on here.

It would appear to me that science has outstripped humanity.

Thank you for your time.

