

To whom it may concern,

Re: Submission in relation to the Independent Review of the Human Reproductive Technology Act 1991 and Surrogacy Act 2008

My son and daughter-in-law are in their fourth year of trying to create a family. The last two years have been spent going through procedures every month at a fertility clinic.

I have witnessed them both going through the heartbreak of lost pregnancies and failed cycles; the pressure of waiting to hear good, or bad news; the recovery from numerous surgeries; the chaos fertility drugs and medications produce; and the emotional stress of the whole procedure.

The financial burden is an added liability, although I believe they would sell everything they own to enable them to hold their own child in their arms. Having to work full time and juggle appointments, blood tests and procedures is not easy either.

Life is on hold for them, family occasions are stressful, every birth of a baby causes heartache and the endless waiting is a nightmare.

The time it takes to prove infertility before beginning the process of surrogacy, especially for women in their late thirties, lowers the chance dramatically of producing viable and quality eggs for transplant.

From what I have read and heard surrogacy in WA looks extremely complicated and unsupported by government, and the number of babies born via surrogacy is extremely low. Surely in this day and age with the large number of people struggling with infertility and other problems surrogacy should be an alternative that is more readily available and achievable.

To see my loved ones go through the roller coaster of the IVF/ISCI process without success is torture. All they want, and all I wish for them with my whole heart, is for a child of their own to love and cherish.

It should be understood that those contemplating the path of surrogacy are not doing this out of choice. This is a last resort option to create a family. They have suffered enough and waited long enough. Please listen and take into consideration recommendations to review the Acts surrounding surrogacy.

My recommendations:

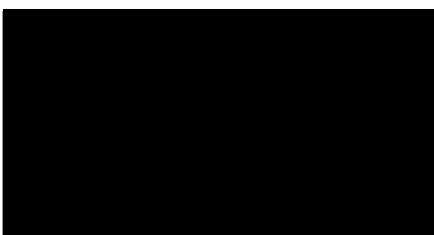
- **Encourage more surrogates:** There needs to be a supportive structure for surrogates to feel protected and assisted in every way to help them help others. Establish legal mechanisms and income protection for surrogates. Set up a database of surrogate volunteers to enable those in need to make contact.
- **Promotion and information:** The availability and easy access online to clear and concise information with step by step processes of how to go about surrogacy in WA is essential. Dispel the misconception in the community that altruistic surrogacy in WA is illegal. This may stop those in need having to go through further complications with surrogacy interstate and overseas. Create an easy read translation of the Acts for the layman to understand.
- **Expedite the process:** Taking 2 years to get to egg transfer stage on top of the years spent in IVF/ISCI would be terrifying for current potential parents. This timeframe is unacceptable. In other countries and other states in Australia it is possible to have that first transfer within months not years. The laws should be changed to be in line with other Australian states.
- **Recognise same sex marriage:** WA surrogacy laws need to reflect the recent progress in our country. Same sex couples should have the same rights so they too can consider surrogacy.

Making key changes to the Acts now will ensure legislation remains relevant and keeps in step with the needs of the broader West Australian community.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Hodson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Gillian Hodson



12 March 2018