

Fiona Glumac



15th March, 2018

To Whom It May Concern,

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

As someone who has spent the past four years watching one of my best friends battle with the cruel infliction of infertility, I feel that I have the experience to provide comment on the reform of the above mentioned Acts. After witnessing what my friend and her husband have had to endure in the effort to have a baby, I find it heartbreaking that surrogacy, their next alternative to bringing a baby into the world, is such a painstakingly lengthy and complicated process in WA.

Over the past years, my friend has shed countless tears, endured repeated heartbreak, tragically lost pregnancies, and been subjected to countless invasive procedures. She has been through the huge build-up before a cycle and the torturous 'two week wait' time and time again, then to only be hit with the crushing disappointment of a failed cycle. She has had to isolate herself socially in order to protect herself from feeling lower than she already does. Baby showers, babies' birthday parties, Baptisms and any other occasion where there is likely to be children (which, at our current age, is almost every occasion) serve as a cruel reminder of how she is being betrayed by her own body.

It is heartbreaking to watch; I can't even begin to imagine how it must feel to be living this reality day after day. And even though I may not always notice the stilted laughter, the forced smiles, I see it in her eyes. I see the pain and longing when she looks at growing bellies... mums cradling their newborns. That should be her. She would make the most amazing mum, and her husband would be such a doting dad.

My friend tells me that the intention of having the long, drawn-out surrogacy process in WA is for Intended Parents to prove how badly they yearn for a baby by pushing through the mess. Please consider this: Women and partners who have been through years of IVF have struggled and toiled, longed and waited, cried and prayed, endured and planned over and over again. Surely this shows that they will not be careless with their love? In fact, they may possibly be better parents because they know disillusionment and pain. They have been tried by a cruel infliction that many never face, yet given time, have stood tall and prevailed.

In light of this, please consider my following recommendations:

- **Greater support and encouragement for surrogates** – There needs to be a supportive structure in place so that surrogates feel that the option is there for them to be a surrogate. Surrogacy is barely heard of in Australia. I didn't even know it was a possibility until my friend informed me of her plight. Becoming a mother has been my greatest achievement and I would love to give the gift of surrogacy to change the lives of people less fortunate than me in beginning a family. I'm sure there

would be many more women willing to give this precious gift to others if support structures were in place which were made public and promoted in the community.

- **A faster process:** From what my friend has learnt, to do surrogacy in WA, her and her husband are looking at 2 years before the first frozen transfer into their surrogate. This timeframe is appalling. After all they have already been through, this timeframe is unacceptable. I understand that in some countries and states within Australia, you are able to have that first transfer within months, not years.
- **Clearer path on how to go about surrogacy in WA:** I know my friend is at a loss with how to go about surrogacy in WA. I am aware that she feels there is a severe lack of information and support available to take this option as an Intended Parent. After everything her and her husband have been through, shouldn't there be greater support and clearer, more readily available and understandable information on surrogacy in WA?

I would be happy to be contacted to provide further context and detail if considered appropriate.

Yours sincerely,

Fiona Glumac