

MEDIA RELEASE

Monday 6 June 2022

MURRUMBIDGEE MLA CALLS ATTENTION TO THE EXPERIENCES OF DONOR-CONCEIVED PEOPLE IN THE ACT

Attention should be paid to the experiences of donor-conceived people as we begin to look at the state of current regulation of Assisted Reproductive Technology in the ACT.

Dr Marisa Paterson MLA is seeking to raise awareness of the experiences of donor-conceived people in the ACT by telling their gut-wrenching stories in the chamber of the Assembly.

In 2021, Dr Paterson moved a motion in the Legislative Assembly calling on the ACT Government to review the availability of Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) support services and comparable regulatory arrangements in other jurisdictions. Additionally, the motion asked for the consideration of both establishing a regulatory framework for ART in the ACT and the establishment of a donor register. The ACT Government's response to this motion is expected to be reported to the Assembly in August.

In anticipation of the upcoming ACT Government response, Dr Paterson is bringing attention to the experiences of donor-conceived people under the current regulatory framework in the ACT through a series of adjournment speeches this sitting week.

Dr Paterson will deliver a series of adjournment speeches, each one outlining the powerful experiences of a person who was conceived via a donor in the Canberra community, or a donor recipient.

Dr Paterson said: "Whilst I look forward to the Government response in August, having met with donor-conceived people and listened to their experiences, I believe that this is an important time to call attention to their voices, their stories, and their journeys".

Dr Paterson states: "The time has come in the ACT that the rights of the child who is conceived through a donor be front and centre of any legislative or policy response. The stories that I will read this week are just some of many, many heart-breaking stories outlining the very significant implications of the use of donor material in a largely unregulated environment."

With new regulatory frameworks being investigated and implemented across various jurisdictions in Australia, Dr Paterson is looking forward to the comparative understanding that will be outlined by the Government response and the opportunities it will outline.

Aimee Shackleton, Director of Donor Conceived Australia, an organisation advocating for the perspective of donor-conceived people, outlined that: "Australian donor-conceived people have long advocated for legislative change, and we look forward to the response from the ACT Government and future consultation to create a better future for all donor-conceived people."

Dr Paterson believes that throughout any consideration of current or future regulatory frameworks impacting ART, that the lived experiences of donor-conceived people should be considered as a central concern of any changes considered. Dr Paterson outlined that: "When we look at ART regulation or the consideration of a donor register, we must work to include the concerns, experiences, and rights of the donor-conceived person at every step."

Statement ends

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