Australian Law Reform Commission: Adult Feedback

I am making this submission to contribute to the Australian Law Reform Commission's review of Australian surrogacy laws, policies, and practices.

1. I am writing about my experience

- (●) in Australia
- ( ) Overseas

2. I have experience as an

- ( ) Intended parent
- ( ) Egg Donor
- ( ) Parent
- (●) Surrogate

3. What are some good things about your experience of surrogacy?

I have connected to the most incredible group of people throughout Australia. I have gained valuable insight into myself and was able to experience the best gift of bringing a child into the world for a very deserving couple.

4. What were the difficulties you encountered?

As a person without children of my own I could not find intended parents within my own state of Victoria and my options were limited to an interstate journey. With this limitation it comes at a steeper financial cost to the intended parents, and to some point myself, to travel interstate to keep the relationship thriving.

5. Should there be more education about surrogacy? Why?

I was incredibly surprised when hospitals and other care providers were still asking questions about the legality of surrogacy and not having policies or procedures in place for these sort of arrangements. Education is vital to breaking down stigma and barriers and particularly medical and care workers should be better educated.

6. When a child is born through surrogacy, should their parents be legally recognised straight away? Explain why.

Absolutely, at no point in this process have I ever deemed this child "mine", so when a birth certificate is provided in my name is very confronting. With all the paperwork and legal advice leading up to the birth, surely, there should be enough solid information to have the parents legally recognised straight away.

7. What needs to be improved about surrogacy for Australians?

Universal laws. The state by state laws are ridiculous and can often leave vulnerable IPs in situations where they look overseas instead of within their circles in Australia. I agree wholeheartedly that a fertility specialist needs to deem people infertile before being able to access surrogacy, but this should be a more simple process for same sex, male, couples who do not

8. In Australia, surrogates and donors are not allowed to be paid. What do you think of that?

I think it creates an even playing field that surrogates are not paid. In no means should surrogacy be commercialised, however, I think if the intended parents have the means and want to "treat" their surrogate to a weekend away or a gift, that this should not be looked down upon. People show their love and gratitude in many ways and giving and receiving gifts should be allowed. On this thought maybe it can only be once a written

9. Is there anything else you want to share about surrogacy and the rules around it?

It is a sacred community and should not be manipulated for profit by any external sources. The need for independant council is so important. Match-making services should not be allowed and intended parents should be encouraged to reach out within their circles before looking for a stranger on the internet.