Q1 – Share your personal story (what worked, what didn't, and why you went overseas)

My partner and I are a same-sex couple. From the very beginning of our relationship, we both knew that becoming parents and building a family was one of our biggest dreams. As a gay couple, we understood that surrogacy would be the pathway we would need to explore to make that dream a reality.

At first, we looked into domestic surrogacy options in Australia, even speaking to family and friends. My sister-in-law was initially keen to help us, which we were so grateful for. However, we always envisioned having two children and wanted both of us to have the opportunity to be biological parents.

When we joined Australian surrogacy Facebook groups, we immediately saw how challenging it would be. These groups were filled with heart-wrenching stories — heterosexual couples who had faced years of infertility, single women who had overcome cancer. We felt that we couldn't — and didn't want to — "compete" for the very limited number of altruistic surrogates in Australia. We simply wanted to become dads, and it didn't feel right to compete against others with such deeply personal and emotional stories.

It quickly became clear that domestic surrogacy wouldn't be a viable pathway for us. We attended a surrogacy seminar, met various clinics and agencies, and ultimately chose to work with Tammuz Family. We chose Tammuz because of their strong reputation, long-standing experience, and their global presence — they offered programs worldwide and had a strong presence here in Australia. We felt safe and supported in what is otherwise a very overwhelming and complex journey.

We decided on Colombia as our destination. Through their program, we could both provide sperm, choose an egg donor, and have two babies.

What worked well for us was having support from someone in Australia who had gone through an international surrogacy journey before. Their guidance, and the support from a wider community of intended parents, helped us immensely.

What didn't work as well were the unknowns — sending large sums of money to a foreign clinic, worrying about being scammed, facing exchange rate fluctuations, delays in communication, and navigating information in a different language.

Q5 – What made domestic surrogacy in Australia feel out of reach for your family?

Domestic surrogacy in Australia felt out of reach because there were so few altruistic surrogates available. We didn't feel comfortable competing for these women's generosity when there were so many heterosexual couples and single women with deeply compelling stories of infertility.

We didn't want to plead for help or feel like we had to prove our worthiness to become parents. We just wanted to build our family in a safe, supportive, and respectful way.

On top of that, we didn't feel comfortable asking someone here in Australia to go through such an enormous journey — physically and emotionally — without being able to compensate them for their time, energy, and the personal risks they were taking on. Everyone else involved in the process — doctors, lawyers, clinics — is paid for their work, yet the most important person, the surrogate, is not allowed to be fairly compensated under Australian law.

This felt fundamentally unfair to us and was another major reason we knew domestic surrogacy wouldn't be the right path for our family.

Q18–19 – What issues did you face getting legal parentage recognised after overseas birth?

Once our babies were born, we faced significant delays in getting legal parentage and citizenship sorted.

After submitting our applications to the immigration department, it took over six to seven weeks for them to be reviewed. We were prepared for this delay, but it didn't make the

process any easier. We felt like we were in limbo, with no updates on progress or clear next steps. It was simply a waiting game.

Once citizenship was approved, obtaining Australian passports at the embassy was straightforward and felt supportive. But the initial legal parentage recognition and citizenship process were emotionally draining, as we were stuck overseas, unable to share our babies' early milestones with family and friends at home.

Additionally, because we were both sperm providers in Colombia, we were issued birth certificates that listed only the biological father for each child. As a result, we now have two different birth certificates — each with one of us named as the parent and the other not included at all.

Under Australian law, this means I am not legally recognised as the parent of my partner's biological child, and he is not legally recognised as the parent of mine. There is currently no clear pathway or avenue in Australia to rectify this and establish legal recognition for both of us as parents to both of our children.

This is deeply troubling, upsetting, and concerning. It creates an ongoing legal and emotional burden for our family and undermines the security and recognition that every child and parent deserves.

Q20–21 – Any delays or challenges getting your child's Australian citizenship, passport, or visa?

Yes. The main challenge was the long wait for citizenship approval. While we knew in advance this would take time, it was still an emotional strain.

We submitted all required documents and heard nothing for weeks. During this period, we missed precious moments at home with our support networks. It felt like we were in a holding pattern, away from everything familiar during what should have been one of the happiest times of our lives.

When we finally received the email that our babies were approved as Australian citizens, it was an overwhelming relief and an incredibly emotional moment — one we remember very clearly.

Q3–4 – Human rights and the information children should have access to about their birth

We are very open with our children about their story. We chose a country where egg donation was anonymous, and while it would be nice for our children to know more about their egg donor, we deeply respect the donor's right to privacy.

If we had to choose between having an anonymous donor and not having an egg donor at all, we would choose the former — because it allowed us to have our family.

We believe it is our responsibility as parents to share as much as we can with our children so they understand their origins and their place in the world. We want them to grow up feeling loved, secure, and proud of how they came to be.

Q22–23 – Confusing or inconsistent laws across states? Would a national system help?

Through my personal experience and my current role supporting many intended parents across Australia, I have seen firsthand how confusing and inconsistent state laws can be.

Intended parents face different regulations around embryo shipment, donor agreements, and surrogacy approvals depending on their state. One of the biggest heartbreaks I've witnessed is when intended parents invest time and money creating embryos in Australia, only to be told they can't export them overseas because of local clinic policies or state regulations.

On top of that, in certain states — specifically New South Wales, Queensland, and the Australian Capital Territory — it is currently a criminal offence for residents to enter into a commercial surrogacy arrangement overseas. This means many intended parents live with the

constant fear that by simply trying to start a family overseas, they could be prosecuted or persecuted by their own state government upon returning home.

All they want to do is build a family, yet they feel forced into secrecy or worry because of these outdated and inconsistent laws.

From my perspective, the number one recommendation coming from this review should be that any Australian intended parent who has gone overseas for international surrogacy is provided a clear pathway through the Australian federal court system to be recognised as legal parents via a parentage order.

Establishing this pathway would ensure families return home with full legal recognition and security, and that children are not left in legal limbo.

The second priority recommendation should be decriminalising international surrogacy arrangements across all Australian states and territories. Removing these criminal prohibitions would provide safety, clarity, and compassion for intended parents, ensuring they are supported rather than punished for wanting to become parents.

Q25 – How public education and understanding of international surrogacy could improve

Public understanding of surrogacy in Australia has improved, but misconceptions persist — especially around commercial versus altruistic surrogacy.

Many people don't understand that commercial surrogacy is not about exploiting women, but about acknowledging their incredible effort and giving them fair choice and compensation. Everyone in the process is paid except the woman doing the most important and demanding part. It is essential to screen and support surrogates carefully, ensuring they are not financially vulnerable and are making this choice freely, with the right support and safeguards.

More balanced education is needed to help the public understand these complexities and the importance of choice, safety, and ethical practices.

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Closing and Position

Since completing our own surrogacy journey, I have become the Australian representative for Tammuz Family, supporting countless intended parents across the country. In this role, I have heard deeply personal stories from people in every state — young couples just starting out, single parents who thought they would never have the chance, people in their 50s still dreaming of becoming parents.

These families all share one thing: a profound, simple wish to build a family and to bring their children home safely and legally.

Yet right now, many intended parents are forced to live in fear — worried that they may be prosecuted by their own state for choosing international surrogacy, or left in legal limbo without a pathway to be recognised as parents to their own children.

The number one change we urgently need is to create a clear federal pathway for all Australian intended parents returning from overseas surrogacy to obtain a parentage order, so they can be fully and legally recognised as parents. This is about protecting children, giving families security, and upholding the basic human right to family.

The second critical change is to decriminalise international surrogacy arrangements across every state and territory in Australia. Parents should never feel like criminals simply for wanting to bring a child into the world and give them a loving home.

Without these changes, we are leaving families — and most importantly, children — vulnerable, unprotected, and uncertain. It is deeply troubling, deeply unfair, and deeply un-Australian.

We have an opportunity to stand up for these families and create a system that is clear, compassionate, and consistent. One that supports people who are doing everything possible to create the families they have dreamed of their entire lives.

It is time for meaningful reform. We owe it to these parents, to their children, and to future generations of Australians who simply want what every family deserves: recognition, safety, and belonging.