

Consultation on the import and export of gametes and embryos

Notes of meeting with Marewa Glover

5 June 2013

Present

Dr Marewa Glover, Senior Research Fellow, Social and Community Health, School of Population Health, Auckland University

Dr John Angus, Chair, ACART

In attendance

Betty-Ann Kelly, ACART Secretariat

Stella Li, ACART Secretariat

Protection of women

- The principle of protection is very important – protecting women from exploitation.
- New Zealanders as a whole would not want to condone the exploitation of women in other countries. Egg donors in developing countries are unlikely to be giving empowered and informed consent.
- New Zealand should not facilitate involvement in practices that are contrary to the principles in this country e.g. the commercial procurement of eggs.
- While there is no one Māori point of view, the Māori perspective generally would not condone exploitation.
- The Human Assisted Reproductive Technology Act can be seen as protective and therefore as a tikanga. Removing any of the requirements and protections would be a very big step.
- Māori recognise that people have the right to make personal choices.

Protection of children

- The principle of protection also extends to children.
- Knowledge of whakapapa is important for both children and whānau.
- Other cultures –e.g. indigenous peoples - are likely to have similar beliefs about the importance of whakapapa. Children born from anonymous donors are stripped of their right to knowledge about their ethnicity.
- A child is a person, not a commodity.
- The treatment of children as a commodity is an outcome of globalisation. But trade in people is inconsistent with human rights.
- Views about the status of embryos will vary by iwi, and are socially constructed.

Protection of culture

- Māori culture is unique to New Zealand, and therefore needs to be protected.
- If New Zealand upholds its own principles and standards, this may have an impact on practices in the global community.
- Many New Zealanders do not understand the power and privilege they have. Power and the exercise of privilege can be used to protect or abuse.
- Perspectives on pathways to parenthood tend to be limited, with a focus on having one's own child. Policies affecting families have an impact on the options people know about and are able to access in regard to becoming a parent.