

Minutes

Public meeting to discuss ACART's proposed changes to the guidelines for the donation of gametes and embryos and for surrogacy

Date 9 November 2017
Time 7.00 to 8.00 pm
Location CQ Quality Hotel, Wellington
Present Julie Haggie, Rod Hitchmough: members of the public
Kathleen Logan: ACART
Martin Kennedy: ACART Secretariat (scribe)

Welcome

1. Attendees introduced themselves and Kathleen summarised why ACART is doing this work.

Discussion

2. The discussion began with Julie asking for clarification about the reason for having the guidelines. She noted the proposed changes would increase the barriers to access for certain people and increase costs and she asked whether such measures were necessary. Julie observed that it was not clear what the risks are that the guidelines purport to manage.
3. The discussion moved on to a specific example of proposed changes with Kathleen noting that it is not clear why some family gamete donations are regulated by guidelines while others are not.
4. Julie observed that the counselling process would address virtually all matters that need to be dealt with and a more detailed Fertility Services Standard could address matters that need to be carefully managed. She said that ECART's involvement in cases should be limited to an exceptions basis.
5. Julie said that the increased barriers would increase the number of people seeking treatment overseas and add time to a process that is already time consuming. She also noted it would be useful if information about donors was more readily accessible to donor offspring for those who wanted it — but she acknowledged that not all offspring will be interested.
6. Kathleen commented on matters ACART wishes to support, in particular:
 - a. we want donors to go on the donor register and donor offspring to be able to learn about their heritage
 - b. we want women to have their treatment in New Zealand and to have only single embryo transfer.
7. Martin added that the reasons for these policies include ensuring babies have access to suitable neonatal care and to ensure that babies and the intending parents can be

together — babies born to surrogates overseas are not necessarily automatically entitled to New Zealand citizenship or residency.

8. There was a discussion about the proposal to continue the limit to two families for full genetic siblings with Kathleen noting that the primary reason for this provision being for siblings being able to manage their relationships.
9. Julie commented on “part parenting,” having half siblings and step siblings, and how blended families are a common thing.
10. Rod commented that for many people in situations other than being a young, heterosexual couple the options are already much narrower because of biology. For an infertile woman with no male partner, a combination of egg and sperm donors is inevitable, and if she is also a little older, a younger donor (different generation) may be highly desirable. It seems intrinsically unfair to have in place rules which penalise such people unnecessarily. He agrees with the proposal to remove the mandatory biological link.
11. Julie observed that people can have different expectations of the roles of the child and also that children might or might not form attachments to the parents depending on the circumstances.

END.