

## Legislation Committee

---

**From:** Hayley Christidis [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, 3 May 2019 1:36 PM  
**To:** Legislation Committee  
**Subject:** Submission for Human Reproductive Technology and Surrogacy Legislation Amendment Bill 2018

To whom it may concern,

I wish to provide my views on the current review into the Human Reproductive Technology & Surrogacy Legislation for Western Australia. I have played an important role to the surrogacy community of WA over the last 4 years and have followed this review closely. I have been fortunate enough to conceive and carry my own 2 children without complications. In 2015 i started to research altruistic surrogacy within Australia in the hope of being able to provide a couple with the child they were not able to give birth to themselves. I learnt all about the legislation that i would have to abide by and went on to meet intending parent's (IPS) in late 2015.

At the time there was no support group in place for women like myself wanting to be a surrogate. Nor was there a group for IPS trying to learn more about surrogacy. I created a group online that brought these people together and today we have a strong network of 380 people coming together to support others on their journey's through surrogacy. I have watched many couples pursue surrogacy offshore because they have deemed the WA legislation as too difficult. And i have watched countless men pursue surrogacy overseas simply because they're prohibited from doing it here at home.

I was fortunate to have given birth to a healthy baby boy for his parents in 2017 under a surrogacy arrangement. Whilst the process to apply for a surrogacy arrangement was difficult and thorough, i do believe the process is appropriate to protect all parties. However, i find it extremely unfair that not all Western Australian's can access surrogacy. It is discriminatory to gay men to be forced to seek a surrogacy arrangement in an overseas country purely because their home state does not recognise or respect their sexuality and allow them to have their own child/ren. Every other state in Australia (except NT where there is currently no surrogacy legislation) allows gay men to pursue surrogacy. This inflicts further discrimination to the gay men of WA. We should not be forcing these men to pursue surrogacy in countries where their surrogacy practices are less than those of our own in Australia. Furthermore, we should be supporting these men to undertake an altruistic surrogacy arrangement within their own state (or country) which would be seen as best practice. Potentially and ideally, the gay couple would be closely involved with the surrogate during the pregnancy, they would be able to provide the support that she needs during the pregnancy and it allows for the men to form close relationships with their surrogate and her family which will hopefully continue into the future. As a surrogate, it is very important to me and my family to have an ongoing relationship with my IPS and their child. This is also very important to our IPS and they very often share their son's conception and birth story with him so that he doesn't feel ashamed or embarrassed about where he came from. This gives me the reassurance i need to know that what we did for this couple was worthwhile. I also feel that by knowing my surrogate baby is safe, healthy, well and thriving, that my job has been done and it has been a wonderful achievement. It is unfair to think that gay men of WA are robbed of the possibility to form these types of relationships or to be able to maintain them due to distance or language barriers.

I would be more than willing to appear before the Committee as a witness if you wish to talk to me about my views and experience in surrogacy. My views have been well formed by my active involvement within the WA surrogacy community who have pursued surrogacy locally and overseas. I am also actively involved in the national surrogacy community that sees over 2000 members come together to share their stories of hope and fulfillment when they have been able to achieve their dreams of becoming parents. Furthermore, I am involved with a very small group of fellow surrogates (160 members) who support each

other to help others become parents. I see surrogacy from all angles and truly believe we need to allow gay men to be able to become parents here in Western Australia. They're able to adopt and foster so lets allow them to parent their own biological child too and WA will keep in line with what other gay men of Australia are able to do.

Regards,  
Hayley Christidis.

