

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Adam and along with my husband, Neil, we are writing to you to urge you to consider the point of view of single men and same-sex male couples when making decisions about the **Human Reproductive Technology and Surrogacy Legislation Amendment Bill 2018**.

Neil and I have been together for 12 years now, and married for 3 years. We are in a loving and committed relationship and consider ourselves to be true soul-mates. We are just normal, everyday people going about our daily lives – we have good jobs, Neil is a Primary School Teacher and I am a Finance Director at an advertising agency. We have loving families and large groups of supportive friends, who would all love to see us realise our dream of becoming Fathers and are appalled that the current legislation in Western Australia does not allow us to do so.

We have always planned on having children. And a few years ago when we discussed starting a family we were both crushed to find that, as a same-sex male couple, we were unable to access surrogacy in Western Australia, whereas other same-sex male couples in other States in Australia are able to access this. We thought about uprooting our lives and moving away from our family and friends to make this happen – but it was too heart-breaking for us to think about. We should be surrounded by those we love when raising a family. Plus we would have had to quit our jobs, sell our house and start over again - something we just couldn't afford to do.

We also looked into adoption of a baby however this is so difficult to achieve with the current rules in place, which is an issue for another day. However we would also love to have a genetic relation to our children.

Through a Surrogacy Law Review consultation meeting we were made aware that the State Government is in breach of the federal anti-discrimination laws and that changes had to be made. We urge you to please consider the feelings and lives of single men and same-sex male couples with regards to access to surrogacy in Western Australia.

You really need to put yourself in the footsteps of people in our community. How is it ok that heterosexual couples, single women and same-sex female couples are entitled to access, while single men and same-sex male couples should be barred from access? Who is to say which person or couple will be able to love and provide for a child any more than someone else? Especially when you are basing this on such generic circumstances such as gender. This almost feels like an attack against Fathers, and I certainly would love to hear from anyone that says that Fathers cannot provide for and raise well-balanced children, just as much as Mothers.

Please also consider that surrogates are not forced into this. They are beautiful, generous and loving people who want to provide the special gift of children to those who cannot have them. They often enjoy being pregnant and they are willing participants in this process. They are not paid for this and are simply reimbursed some costs, but are often out-of-pocket more than they should be.

If you are looking to vote against any amendments to allow single males and same-sex male couples access to surrogacy in Western Australia, I believe you owe it to yourself as an elected politician, to sit down with a surrogate, a single male, and a same-sex male couple interested in access to surrogacy in Western Australia. Hear their stories first-hand. Get to know their faces. And then tell them why they should not be allowed access.

In 2019, we should not be marginalising specific minority groups anymore. Please do the right thing and let's start healing our entire community by bringing us closer together, rather than focusing on how we are different and splitting us apart.

Thank you for reading our story and thoughts. We sincerely hope you have read this with an open mind.

All the best,

Adam and Neil Copple-Smith