

The Donor Conception Register: What's Happening?

An amendment to the *Assisted Reproductive Treatment Act 1988* ("the ART Act") passed by the South Australian parliament in 2019 will commence operation on 7 November 2021 to mandate the establishment of the donor-conception register (DCR) under section 15 of the ART Act. This fact sheet provides general information about the DCR.

What is a Donor Conception Register?

A Donor Conception Register (DCR) facilitates donor linking. Donor linking refers to the sharing of information between people connected through donor conception.

Why is the DCR being created?

When donor conception was first practised, donations were made anonymously. However, it is now recognised that donor-conceived people, their parents, and donors often want to learn more about one another and experience has shown that they are often willing to share information about themselves.

The DCR is being established to help donor conceived people and donors learn more about each other and support those connections. People may want to connect for a range of reasons, including finding out more about medical history, personality, appearance, hobbies, and interests. These connections may be made by writing to each other occasionally, or by meeting in person and even developing friendships.

For more information on the historical practices and background relating to donor conception in South Australia, please see Discussion Paper: *Proposed Amendments about the right to obtain information under the Assisted Reproductive Treatment Act 1988*.

DNA testing and ancestral research

As the use of DNA testing is becoming more accessible and affordable, individuals are increasingly using DNA testing with ancestral and genealogy internet searches to find out more about their own background and identity. These DNA tests can assist donor conceived people in identifying their donor, despite the donation having been made anonymously. The DCR will be able to provide professional support to donors and donor-conceived persons when these connections are made.

Who can access the DCR?

It is intended that information on the DCR will be able to be accessed by donors, donor conceived people who are over 18, the parents of a donor-conceived child aged under 18, and descendants of donor-conceived people. For more specific information about accessing the DCR, see Table: *Who can access the DCR*.



What information will be available through the DCR?

Fertility clinics will be required to provide basic demographic information about donors, recipient parents, and donor-conceived people to the DCR. This includes name, gender, and date of birth, place of birth, address, email address, phone number, and an identity document to allow for authentication. The DCR will also collect information confirming when a person is born as a result of donor-conception to ensure records are complete.

Those who participated in donor conception through private arrangements and did not go through a clinic will also be able to voluntarily provide relevant information to the DCR.

Donors and donor-conceived people will also have the opportunity to disclose medical information they wish to share with genetic relatives and to lodge contact preferences through a statement of wishes on the DCR.

The DCR will not collect or hold any clinical information about anyone.

What if I donated anonymously?

Prior to 2004, gametes were donated anonymously. However, records were kept for clinical purposes. It is proposed that information from these records will be made available on the DCR. For more information on the state of donor conception records in South Australia, please see Fact Sheet: *The State of Donor Conception Records in South Australia*.

Consultation and Feedback

We strongly encourage both donor-conceived persons and donors to provide their comments and feedback on these proposed changes during the consultation period.

For more information

Legal and Legislative Policy
healthpolicylegislation@sa.gov.au

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