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1st Floor, 50 Howard Street
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2nd December 2015

Dear Parliamentarian

Re: ASSISTED REPRODUCTIVE TREATMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2015

VANISH Inc. is the Victorian Adoption Network for Information and Self Help, an organisation that has worked for over quarter of a century with people seeking their true birth identity and wanting information about or contact with their lost relatives. We write today to urge you to support the **Assisted Reproductive Treatment Amendment Bill 2015**.

We daily see the pain of women and men who do not know who their parents or children are and have not met them since birth. We understand what it means to a person who is donor conceived to wonder about or long to know who their donor parent is. This is regardless of whether or not they have known throughout their childhood they were donor conceived. Do they look like them? Do they have the same interests or skills or talents? What is their genetic make-up? Where are their roots? And most importantly what medical history do they share?

These young people who were donor conceived were the unconsenting party to a contract to not to know of their donor father's identity, heritage and other key facts. The basic birth right of full knowledge of one's own identity was stripped from them. Our law makers have come to accept that this was wrong and anonymous donor conception is now illegal. All donor conceived people deserve their birth identity, regardless of their year of conception, and this Bill will make that knowledge available – where records exist.

At VANISH we have experienced a similar process with adoption whereby previous agreements to unfair secrecy were revoked by legislation. We know that when records were opened, nearly 100% of people acted with full respect for their birth parents and adopted

children. Our law has excellent mechanisms for preventing stalking or unwanted contact; laws that have hardly ever needed to be used under these kinds of circumstances.

This Bill has tight provisions in place to protect donor parents who do not want contact with their donor offspring at this time. Their privacy is protected by the Bill. We know many donors have regretted their past anonymity and do want contact, at different levels, according to their wishes and circumstances.

Recently I attended a conference of donor conceived people, donors and experts in this field. The joy of the donor conceived people present who had received accurate information about their identity with the assistance of their donors, was notable and clearly led to a sense of wellbeing for all parties. There was a deep feeling of mutual respect between donors and donor conceived people. This Bill can be implemented respectfully and safely and will result in thousands of young people no longer living with the fractured identity that results from past practices.

Please support this Bill. We have donor conceived people and donors willing to talk with you at any time. Please contact me at **VANISH manager@vanish.org.au or on my mobile 0411 696 601** for any further information you require.

Yours sincerely



Coleen Clare
Manager
VANISH Inc.