

Information for pre-1998 sperm or egg donors

CR

Contact as a result of a Central Register application
by a parent



September 2019

Thinking it over

Being contacted as a result of an application by a parent to the Central Register under the *Assisted Reproductive Treatment Act 2008 (Vic)* for your identifying information on behalf of their child(ren) may be unexpected. You may not have thought that this would occur, or that it may have only occurred via an application from a donor-conceived person.

You may not have given much thought to the donation you made, but perhaps you have wondered whether children had been born as a result and if so, how many, what age and gender they are. You may have wondered whether they resemble you or if you share personality traits.

While the parent making the application to the Central Register may have considered their application and its consequences for some time, you are likely to need to think through its implications for you and those close to you. It is possible that you have not told your partner, children, or wider family about your donation.

Why do parents apply for information?

Parents may be hoping for more information about the donor to share with their children. Given the recent changes to legislation in this area, some parents are now interested in exploring whether you are open to providing more information about yourself, as the information on your donor profile is likely to be limited. They may like to know more about you in order to share this information with their children. Parents may have recently informed their children that they are donor-conceived or are considering doing so. Some parents may wish to correspond. Some may wish to meet.

VARTA's experience has been that parents are usually respectful of their donor's wishes and sensitive to you and your family's privacy.

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Entitlements

No identifying information is released to a parent without your consent. You can also choose to release some information in the manner that you wish to do so, such as email or via VARTA.

However, you have choices and control over whether you want to share other information and/or have contact.

As a donor, you are also entitled to non-identifying information about your donor-conceived offspring. You may wish to know how many offspring have been born and their gender and year of birth.

You are also entitled to apply to the Central Register for identifying information about your donor-conceived offspring (name, date of birth, and contact details). However, this information will **only be released** with the **consent** of the donor-conceived person.

VARTA has experienced many positive connections made between donors and their offspring who have found it beneficial for them and their family.

The VARTA website has a range of information and films of personal stories of connections. Visit www.varta.org.au to learn more.

The Central Register process

Everyone who applies to the Central Register for information will have an information and support session with a VARTA counsellor before proceeding.

A **Statement of reasons** must be completed following this session to help the other person decide how they want to proceed and inform your decision-making. The form explains why they have applied for information and what their hopes are for information exchange and/or contact.

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You have options and choices

You may wish to consider:

- using a **VARTA counsellor** to discuss options and any concerns
- writing a letter including **non-identifying information** e.g. medical, cultural, hobbies, personality, which will be provided to the applicant by a VARTA counsellor
- **corresponding** via the VARTA letterbox/email service or by a non-identifying email address
- working with a **VARTA counsellor** to begin contact and to perhaps meet
- consenting to **release your identifying details**. This may include your name, date of birth, and any contact details you wish to release
- lodging a **contact preference** form specifying your chosen method of contact between the applicant parent and you and/or any of your children. If you specify no contact, your contact details will not be provided to the applicant. A contact preference is legally binding for five years
- choose **not to consent** to release any information at all.

Your identifying information will not be released unless the applicant provides a written undertaking to comply with your contact preference(s). Penalties may apply for breach of this undertaking.

VARTA is here to support you

VARTA manages the Donor Conception Register Services and can assist you to decide how to respond to an application. VARTA staff are available to help you consider the implications of an application and

to assist you in making the best decision for you. We can also help you talk to your partner and children about donating if you have not already done so.

In addition, VARTA staff can assist with your initial exchange of information or contact with your donor offspring if this is what you decide to do.

VARTA offers a free and confidential service. VARTA staff will remain neutral and respectful of people's choices and opinions at all times. Your partner and relatives are also able to contact VARTA for information and support.

For further information:

Victorian Assisted Reproductive Treatment Authority

Phone: (03) 8601 5250

Email: dcrs@varta.org.au

Web: www.varta.org.au