

18 February 2016

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Dear Ms Allan

Thank you for your invitation to make a submission to the review of the South Australian Assisted Reproductive Treatment Act 1988. I congratulate you for preparing and distributing the fact sheets and other material.

Complaints have been received by my office from users of assisted treatment services and they do provide a unique perspective of such services.

I am not able to provide you with details as it will infringe on my responsibilities to maintain confidentiality. I can share though, common themes that involve such complaints and advise you that when considering complaints I need to make a judgement as to whether reasonable standards have been met and whether the Charter of Consumer Rights has been breached. I attach a copy of the Charter for your information. When considering reasonable standards I am most likely to engage an independent expert from outside of South Australia.

The office is required to and works hard to assist people who are vulnerable with customised complaint handling arrangements.

Most service providers value feedback through complaints but the office recognises that some people will not complain because they feel ill equipped, embarrassed or fear that the services that they rely on may be diminished.

My major submission to you is to convene a group of service users and the peak body for consumers, the Health Consumers Alliance of SA, I am sure would be able to assist.

Such groups will give their own accounts of their disposition and the impact that assisted reproductive programs have on them. They will no doubt inform you of their anxieties, their hopes and how they are treated and the financial and other costs involved. They will also advise you with how information is provided and received and how they are supported when they are successful or otherwise.

There are ethicists who are much better placed than me to rigorously consider the debates.

I am keen that you gain an accurate perspective of the service user's experience and not lose the stories in the mix of statistics and other quantitative methods you deploy.

I wish you well with your review – it is very important work.

Yours sincerely



Steve Tully  
Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner