

# Information for people applying to the Central or Voluntary Registers

## What is an information and support session?

February 2017

Victorian legislation enables all donor-conceived people, parents and donors to apply for identifying information through the Donor Conception Register Services at the Victorian Assisted Reproductive Treatment Authority (VARTA). Prior to identifying information being released, applicants need to attend an information and support session with a counsellor at VARTA.

## What is an information and support session?

The purpose of the session is to assist you to explore the implications for you and those close to you of making an application to the donor conception registers. The session encourages you to think about what impact your application could have on the person you would like information about and for the people they are close to.

**The information and support session is not an assessment, unless a person is younger than 18 years of age. In this case, a VARTA counsellor is required to assess the maturity of the applicant.**

**VARTA counsellors have considerable experience connecting people linked by donor treatment. They will maintain your privacy and be respectful of your opinions and choices.**

**Appointments to have information and support sessions are made once you have submitted a formal application to VARTA for information held on the Central or Voluntary Registers. There is no cost for appointments.**

In the session we will discuss:

- what has led you to make an application
- what you hope to achieve by applying
- the implications for all parties in relation to making contact including relatives, partners etc.
- emotions you may experience
- the importance of establishing realistic boundaries to ensure contact is more likely to be positive
- potential difficulties you may experience (e.g. if records are incomplete or the other party cannot be located).
- donor linking services provided by VARTA
- any matter required to be discussed by the *Assisted Reproductive Treatment Act 2008 (Vic)*.

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## Statement of reasons

During the session, the counsellor will help you complete a **Statement of reasons** form if appropriate. This form gives you the opportunity to write - in your own words - a brief description of your motivations for applying and what you would like to happen in the short and long term (see **Writing your Statement of reasons**). The **Statement of reasons** is then forwarded to the other party to help them understand why you are seeking their information and/or contact.

It may help you to write down ideas about what you would like to say before you come in to the VARTA office. The VARTA staff can help you write something which conveys your voice and how you feel, helping the other person form a greater understanding of you as a person.

## How long is an information and support session?

The duration of the information and support session will largely be determined by you and your circumstances, but an appointment usually lasts about one hour. Some people may wish to complete their **Statement of reasons** in the session. Others may like to take the document home to complete in their own time.

It is best to give yourself plenty of time on the day of the appointment to ensure you do not feel rushed. Every attempt is made to help you to feel comfortable during this process. People have reported feeling excited or daunted at this time, for many it is a combination of both.

## Where are the sessions held?

Usually the information and support sessions are held during office hours at the VARTA Office:

**Victorian Assisted Reproductive Treatment Authority**  
Level 30, 570 Bourke Street, Melbourne.

However, if there is a pressing reason why you cannot come to the office, please inform VARTA staff on (03) 8601 5250. It may be possible have the session via Skype or telephone although face-to-face is preferable.

*For further information:*

**Victorian Assisted Reproductive Treatment Authority**

Phone: (03) 8601 5250

Email: [dcrs@varta.org.au](mailto:dcrs@varta.org.au)

Web: [www.varta.org.au](http://www.varta.org.au)