



**ASSISTED
REPRODUCTIVE
TREATMENT
(POSTHUMOUS USE OF
MATERIAL AND DONOR
CONCEPTION
REGISTER)
AMENDMENT BILL -
THIRD READING**

The Hon. A. PICCOLO (Light) (16:41): I will take the opportunity to speak on the third reading to provide some quick comments on things raised during the committee stage, which I think are very important in terms of this bill. Firstly, I would like to quickly quote from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, because I think it provides a good framework in which, in my opinion, this bill sits. It is also recognition that these rights that we are trying to confer today on donor-conceived people are universally held principles. They are things that have been raised in the second reading and challenged in the committee stage, but I think are worthy of support in this third reading. Article 8 states the following:

1. States Parties undertake to respect the right of the child to preserve his or her

identity, including nationality, name and family relations as recognized by law without unlawful interference.

2. Where a child is illegally deprived of some or all of the elements of his or her identity, States Parties shall provide appropriate assistance and protection, with a view to re-establishing speedily his or her identity.

The key words in this particular clause within the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child relate to issues about identity. The issue of identity is key to this bill in the sense that what we are seeking to do through this bill is to help ensure the identity of those people is known who believe their identity is not fully formed or is

obscure in some way. That is a key element of this bill and it is a principle that is universally agreed to through the convention.

I say that because it was stated during the committee stage that the amendment proposed by the opposition was seeking to provide choice. On the face of it, it looks like a reasonable proposition to provide people with choice. Importantly, though, the conceived child has no choice. They have no choice about how they are conceived and they have no choice about getting that information and forming their identity. What we are now doing is giving those donor-conceived people a choice. It does not make it mandatory to find out. For those people who are comfortable in knowing the extent of their existing identity, that is fine, but for those who do not—and there are many—it gives them a choice to pursue that.

I reaffirm what I said earlier in the second reading, which is that the rights of the child have to be paramount. Importantly, if I have understood the minister correctly—and I am sure he can correct me if I am incorrect—what we have proposed here is consistent with the Adoption Act, in terms of access to information available to people at the age of 18-plus, so why would we give donor-conceived people fewer rights than those people who were adopted? Both, in my view, are seeking to fill in the jigsaw puzzle of their life. With those few comments, I think this bill, as amended by the minister, is worthy of our support.