

Tasmania passes gay, de facto surrogacy bill

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Photo: [Under the surrogacy legislation, the surrogate must be at least 25 years old and it cannot be her first pregnancy. \(Jeremy Brown: \[www.sxc.hu\]\(http://www.sxc.hu\)\)](#)

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Tasmania's Legislative Council has passed laws to enable all couples, including gay and de facto, to use a surrogate to carry their child.

After agonising over the legislation for more than a year, the Upper House passed the government bill late last night, with a raft of amendments.

Under the surrogacy legislation, the surrogate must be at least 25 years old and it cannot be her first pregnancy.

Attorney-General Brian Wightman was in the chamber and says it was an historic moment.

"Families who have been struggling to have children will very much welcome the passing of this bill through the House," he said.

Gay rights campaigner Rodney Croome says it is a good sign for same-sex marriage laws, which will be debated in the Lower House today.

"What the Council has shown is a great deal of maturity," he said.

Surrogacy Australia's Sam Everingham says some Tasmanians had been forced to leave the state to use a surrogate.

"One of the issues is families often find a surrogate in another state and so they have to move to the state that surrogate is in," she said.

"It's been an ongoing issue for lots of families who don't want to go public on the issue, because infertility is an issue they don't want to admit to wider networks, but it's becoming a growing issue in society."

But the Presbyterian Church of Tasmania has slammed the legislation.

Minister Campbell Markham says surrogacy is a grave injustice.

"It will mean that children have been stripped of their basic human right to be raised by their natural parents and to know their natural parents," he said.

"Children have that right currently and they'll be stripped of this right by this surrogacy bill."