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Surrogacy big issue

Dana McCauley

FATHERS TURNING TO AMERICA FOR FAMILIES

STUART Gent's daughter Lucy is a typical daddy's girl.

But, unlike most children her age, the five-year-old has two fathers and was born to a surrogate in the United States.

Last week at Albert Park, the Gents were reunited with Dr Daniel Potter, the Californian obstetrician who made their family a reality.

Mr Gent said that as a gay man his parenthood options had been limited.

The IT manager elected to pay \$US160,000, which financed a separate egg donor and surrogate.

"Lucy knows where she's come from, so she's never going to have a surprise," he said.

"She understands that she has a surrogate who

she's going to meet when she's older."

Though single when Lucy was born, Mr Gent met his partner Craig 18 months later.

"Lucy tells everyone she's special because she's got dads," he said.

"We don't consider ourselves to be any different from other families."

Mr Gent said commercial

surrogacy, which is illegal in Victoria, should be available here. "People should have the choice," he said.

"It's not an area that is hurting anybody."

Dr Potter said Australians entering surrogacy arrangements made up a large proportion of his work, with demand from same-sex couples rising.

He said being able to

financially compensate donors and surrogates meant "we have a lot more people willing to do it", and that such women were paid and treated better than in places like India.

"In California we have very strong laws supporting surrogacy, and it's possible for both intended parents to be on the birth certificate."

Dr Potter also ran seminars for potential patients in Melbourne and Sydney last week.

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