

This document has been prepared by Anna McKie and volunteers connected with Surrogacy Australia. Within the community there was a previous document known as the 100 Questions.

Please **share** this document with any surrogacy teams, especially in preparation for teams before they go to their Mandatory Counselling prior to pregnancy. The intention is that teams revisit this document along their journey - leading up to pregnancy attempts, during pregnancy, nearing birth and planning for the 4th trimester (the 3 months after birth).

[Surrogacy Australia](#) runs regular **webinars** to help educate the community about surrogacy. They are free, one hour in length, and alternate between having a surrogate and IP (Intended Parent) focus. We encourage you to attend one to understand more about surrogacy in Australia and to hear more about [SASS](#) (Surrogacy Australia's Support Service). It is a great opportunity to ask questions of others who have gone through the process as well. The webinar recordings can be found on our **podcast** series on [Spotify](#) and [Apple](#), as well as on [YouTube](#). You'll hear episodes from surrogates, gay dads and mums, as well as [psychologists](#), [doctors](#), [lawyers](#), themed episodes from [partners of surrogates](#), [mothers of surrogates](#), [children of surrogates](#), [inducing lactation](#), and education episodes about How much does surrogacy cost ([episode 3](#)) and How long does surrogacy take ([episode 6](#)).

The [Surrogacy Process Chart](#) is a step-by-step guide of an expected timeline and estimated cost breakdown of Australian surrogacy, created by Tyson Culhane-Smith.

Join us for an informal, monthly [Zoom Catch Up](#) to meet fellow IPs and surrogates at all stages of their journeys. Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [TikTok](#).

Surrogacy Australia's Support Service ([SASS](#)) is a professional service based on best practice models. It is designed to support both surrogates and intended parents to form well-suited teams and also to support those teams over their surrogacy journeys with pre-paid counselling, mentoring and expense management support. Teams are welcome to join at any point in their journey.

For more information about SASS or to give feedback on this Discussion Topics document, please contact Anna McKie sass@surrogacyaustralia.org

Anna is a part time high school senior Math teacher, a single mum with two children in Adelaide, and birthed as a surrogate in September 2020 for two Dads. She has been involved in the surrogacy community since 2016, is responsible for the day-to-day administration of SASS, hosts the webinar and podcast series, and coordinates the monthly Zooms.

Section A - Building the Surroship

1. Why have the IPs decided on surrogacy as their path?
2. Why does the surrogate want to be a surrogate?
3. What type of IPs was the surrogate looking for?
4. Who knows about the surrogacy plans (surrogate and IPs)?
5. When will any children involved be told, and what language will be used?
6. What reactions have people experienced from family/friends?
7. Who will be told about the different stages (pregnancy attempts etc) and when?
8. What if some friends/family cut you off? Sometimes more common for the surrogate.
9. Meeting friends, family, egg donor. Aiming to meet before pregnancy?
10. Support networks outside of the surrogacy team - emotional, physical, logistical.
11. What fears/concerns does each person have about this journey?
12. What communication methods and frequency do we prefer?
13. How will difficult conversations be raised? Make a time to discuss in person/FaceTime?
14. What happens if someone needs emotional or communication space?
15. Will decisions be put in writing? Group document for the answers to these questions?
16. Who helps mediate when conflict arises? Surrogacy specific counsellors, peers?
17. Peer support from the surrogacy community - other surrogates/IPs, [SASS Mentors](#), [Australian Surrogacy and Donation Facebook](#) (ASD), [Zoom monthly catch ups](#).
18. Are people comfortable with surrogate/IP only support groups? How much to share?
Starting blogs, creating facebook groups for family/friends to follow the journey?
19. How do we define respect when opinions differ?
20. How often will we revisit these questions over the course of the journey?
21. Have the IPs/surrogate had a previous surrogacy? Do they still have a good relationship? Lessons learnt?
22. Intended Mothers - there is often grief about not carrying a baby. Discussing history.
23. Love Languages - all team members to do [online test](#). How do you each handle stress?
24. How transparent will the IPs be with finances?
25. Roughly how much can they afford? What happens if they face hardship?
26. When do financial obligations end? 6 - 12 months post birth?
27. Interests, main people in your lives, relationship history, previous mental health issues.

Section B - Pregnancy Planning and Embryo Transfers

1. Private Health insurance, waiting periods, gap payment Obstetrics. How long post birth?
2. Life/disability insurance (TPD), updated Wills (cost covered by IPs).
3. Removal of birth control. Birth control plans before/during pregnancy attempts.
4. Surrogates who are single - views on dating, finding a new partner?
5. Birth control for hetero IPs - there have been cases where the IM (Intended Mother) has fallen pregnant. Challenging for the surrogate as changes support/plan.
6. Which counsellor will be used? Timeframe?
7. Which lawyers will be used? Timeframe?
8. The legal agreements are not enforceable - except for the surrogacy related costs.
9. Is there a timeframe on when the journey might start/end due to other commitments?
10. What IVF clinic and doctor will be used? Willing to change? What circumstances?
11. Embryos - how many? Option to make more? Genetically tested? Donor eggs/sperm?
12. Natural or medicated cycle for embryo transfers? Invasive tests? Surrogates are fertile.
13. IVF tests for surrogate, her partner, IPs e.g. STDs - everyone comfortable? Results?
14. How are failed embryo transfers, miscarriages handled emotionally? Past IP attempts?
15. What is the embryo split = twins? Selective reduction? Managing a high risk pregnancy.
16. How many pregnancy attempts before a break?
17. When to seek individual / group counselling if pregnancy attempts are not working.
18. Home pregnancy tests - before blood test? Test and tell or not? IPs to cover cost.
19. Travel for embryo transfers - surrogate to the IPs with/out child(ren)? Where to stay?
20. Timing of transfers to avoid birthing around Christmas, summer, particular stage?
21. The surrogate will be contacted by the IVF clinic first with any results - everyone ok?
22. Attending appointments - embryo transfers, blood tests, scans. IPs present at all/some?
23. Plans to set up a debit card for the surrogate linked to the IPs account (not reimbursed)
24. Care model - Midwifery group, Obstetrician, doula, private/student midwife, GP?
25. Spending time together socially, not only surrogacy related appointments.
26. Which IP will be the main project manager, paperwork, research?
27. Will the surrogate schedule appointments around her schedule first?
28. Traditional surrogacy - home inseminations or clinic? How often to try each month?
Whose house? Discussing the genetic connection with the surrogate and her child(ren).

Section C - Pregnancy

[Surrogacy Australia's Support Service](#) (SASS) members have access to an Expenses Calculator to help with a list of expenses, as well as averages and ranges.

Wellbeing

1. Birthing classes - as a team? Hypnobirthing?
2. Massages - how often? What if this plan needs to change?
3. Physio, chiro, osteo - how often? Acupuncture - pre embryo transfer, during pregnancy?
4. Waxing, pedicure, pampering sessions, alternative therapies. Frequency?
5. Gestational diabetes and the time taken to do the glucose test.
6. Medication costs - vitamins, pain relief, laxatives, indigestion, stretch marks.
7. Clothing - including bras, shoes (feet can change size), SRC shorts, belly band, PJs, an outfit(s) for special occasions, formal for work, bathers, coat, change of seasons.
8. Underwear - extra if using progesterone supplements, panty liners, pads.
9. Comfort - pillow for sleeping. Pelvic instability - what support is needed?

Support

10. Extra take away food when too ill/tired to cook. Weekly? Frequency?
11. Pregnancy cravings - could IPs buy ahead of time?
12. Meal prep? Batch cook? Consider fussy eater, lunch box snacks.
13. Extra after school care, vacation care, paid babysitter for a rest/attend appointments.
14. Paying for fuel/vehicle running costs - ATO recommends \$0.88/km (2026)
15. Parking, ubers, taxis.
16. Meals while at/travelling to appointments, surrogate and her children.
17. Asking for help balanced with IPs anticipating and offering.
18. Yard work, cleaning the house, changing sheets on the beds, gardening.
19. Paying for a cleaner? When would that start/end? Frequency? Or IPs to help?
20. Dog walking, tending to animals, boarding of animals while visiting IPs.

Questions to consider

21. Amount of exercise - lifting weights, what did the surrogate do previously, currently?
22. Drinking alcohol/smoking - How much is a little bit? How often? Previous pregnancies?
23. Consuming high sugars/fats - what did the surrogate do in her own pregnancies?
24. Soft cheeses, deli meats, coffee, soft serve, fake tan, hair dye, cat litter, current meds?
25. Physical risks - surrogate's job, motorbikes, travel, planes, weeks gestation?
26. Paying for items - debit card attached to the IPs bank? EFT for Medicare rebates?
27. How much communication is required when she uses this card?

Section C - Pregnancy

Medical

28. Attending appointments - together / Facetime? Blood tests, scans, midwife/Obstetrician. Allowing time after the appointment to catch up socially.
29. Long distant teams - which appointments/scans will the IPs attend? How long will they stay in town for? Where will they stay?
30. Can a surrogate attend appointments on her own if she wishes?
31. Covering wages for attending appointments. Technically leave without pay. Covering partner's lost wages. Net? Superannuation?
32. If extended bed rest/hospitalisation - income, physical supports, logistics of children.
33. Bodily autonomy - what medical information will the IPs receive? What remains private?
34. How are medical decisions made if opinions differ?
35. What prenatal testing will be done? Harmony/NIPT, amniocentesis?
36. Finding out gender - all/none knowing? Surrogate revealing gender first to IPs? Party?
37. Termination of a pregnancy - Down? Incompatibility with life? Surrogate's health at risk?
38. If the IPs wish to terminate but the surrogate refuses - plan for care of the child?
39. What support during/after a termination?
40. Carrying a baby with no expectation of survival if the IPs wanted this?
41. Strep B test, Anti-D injection, Gestational Diabetes - diet changes, insulin.
42. How are mental health needs monitored? Psychologists recommend counselling booked in/prepaid at least every trimester solo (surrogate and IPs) and as a team.
43. Vaccinations for the surrogate and IPs, also whooping cough for family members

Surroship

44. Making time for social catch ups outside of pregnancy appointments.
45. Maternity photo shoot - including the surrogates family/children?
46. Baby shower - travel costs for the surrogate to attend, and her child(ren).
47. IPs spending time with the surrogate's child(ren) - spending time without the surrogate.
48. Updates - daily, weekly? Face to face? Ok to ask for a break? For how long?

Post birth plans to consider

49. Do your employers support surrogacy? Maternity/paternity leave?
50. Paid Parental Leave - both the surrogate and primary carer IP are entitled to this.
51. How long will the surrogate have off - recommend 3 - 4 months post birth. IPs to cover the gap in any wages for maternity leave, also partner's wage around time of birth.

Section D - Birth

1. Preferred place of birth - hospital, home (any limits for a home birth, breech?).
2. Travel to hospital - when, which cars, different times of day logistics.
3. Birth photographer - strongly recommend. The photos are the 'emotional payment'.
4. Pain relief options - pressure points, gas, rebozo, TENS, epidural.
5. Where is everyone positioned at the time of birth?
6. Skin-to-skin - will the surrogate hold baby while birthing the placenta?
7. Delayed cord clamping, cutting the cord.
8. Colostrum, direct breastfeeding, bottles, stopping milk production.
9. Placenta - encapsulation, taking home?
10. Hand over moment - how will this be handled emotionally? Who is taking photos?
11. C-section - who is in the room? Handover during recovery when surrogate is sitting up?
12. Shared room? Rooms next door? Visiting each other during the stay - open door policy?
13. Visitors - surrogate's family, IPs family. Any limits?
14. Extra snacks for hospital, or extra meals if food restrictions/dislike of hospital food.
15. When to leave hospital - what if the baby is unwell but not the surrogate, or vice versa?
16. Birth announcement, social media, tagging.

17. Who is caring for the surrogate's child(ren) around the time of birth? Meals, school runs? Animal care, boarding? Are the IP's family/friends able to help?
18. When will the surrogate communicate to the IPs/birth team that she is in labour?
19. How will the surrogate be supported emotionally post birth?
20. What will in person catch ups be like immediately post birth? Location?
21. Involving the surrogate's child(ren) post birth, cuddles, questions, time together/alone?
22. What counselling will be available post birth? Is it pre-booked?

23. How long do the IPs stay near the surrogate post birth, when do they arrive?
Recommendation is for at least 2 weeks post birth and ideally 2 weeks before.
24. If baby is born early/late, will these 2 weeks before/after stay the same?
25. If in the same city, will IPs get an Airbnb nearby for the first 1 - 2 weeks?

26. Maternity pads, breast pads, blood thinners, pain relief, haemorrhoids.
27. Gifts = gifts versus gifts = payment.
28. Showing appreciation for the surrogate, her partner and her child(ren).

[Surrogate Emotional Needs - Post Birth Guide for Intended Parents](#)

Section E - After birth and the 4th trimester

Breastmilk

1. Will breastmilk be provided, for how long? Direct feeding?
2. Pump hire / purchase, steriliser for bottles, milk bags, freezer storage if large supply.
3. Transporting milk locally/long distance.
4. Breast considerations - breast pads, bras (may be sometime until back to regular size).
5. Clothing - breast pads, SRC recovery shorts. Clothes that are not maternity, but larger than the size she was pre-pregnancy.
6. Newborn photo shoots - including the surrogate/her family?

Support

7. Extra take aways in those early weeks as the normal cooking routines will change. Consider pre-paid vouchers (hello fresh, uber) so the surrogate does not feel guilty every time she uses the debit card to feed her family.
8. Maternity leave - how much is given through work? How many weeks before birth, and what if this changes? IPs to cover the gap? How many weeks after birth? What if this needs to be extended for physical/psychological reasons?
9. Wage for the surrogate's partner for time off to care for children, especially if she had a C-section. Logistics of school drop offs, child(ren)'s activities, grocery shopping.
10. How do we prevent the surrogate from feeling abandoned? Catch ups booked in.
11. Ongoing counselling - can the surrogate book in sessions, invoice sent to the IPs?
12. IPs managing their emotions post birth, parenting challenges, professional support.
13. Relinquishment counselling, team sessions 6 weeks post birth and end of 4th trimester.

Physical needs

14. Regular contact/cuddles with surrogate and baby. Every day for the first week, every 2nd day for the second week, then as the team decides. Whose house?
15. Ongoing visits - frequency? Houses, cafes, playgrounds, including the other child(ren).
16. One-on-one time with the surrogate and baby - a sort of farewell.
17. Travel costs for the surrogate during this time - IPs to cover. How often? For how long?
18. Reinserting birth control.
19. Ongoing medical issues - physio, back/pelvic pain, varicose veins, prolapse
20. How long will the cost of medical issues be covered? 6 - 12 months?
21. New medical issues arise which are connected to the surrogate pregnancy/birth?
22. Vaccinations - when? Which ones? Who is present?
23. Sharing of photographs, social media, tagging. Can the surrogate share photos?
24. Birth certificate paperwork - surrogate and partner named as parents on the first cert.
25. Parentage order - together in court? Lunch after? How to mark milestone? Travel costs.

Section F - The future

1. When will access to the debit card end? 6 - 12 months?
2. How long can the surrogate access counselling? 6 - 12 months? Will the psychologist send the IPs the bill? Consider milestones - return to work, stop pumping milk, Mother's/Father's Day, 9 months in/9 months out, 1st birthday.
3. Media - sharing the story as a team (or individually) if approached by the media.
4. Language - Aunty, Tummy Mummy, Birth Mother?
5. What role will the surrogate have in the child's life?
6. How will the child's origins be explained as they grow?
7. Future contact - what format (text, facetimes, group chat), what frequency?
8. How to address if the amount of contact is not what the other needs?
9. How often will visits occur? Who will travel to who?
10. How to include surrogate's child(ren) when they have questions, want to see the baby.
11. Ongoing recognition - surro bub's birthday, Mother/Father's Day?
12. First birthday planning - a date that works for all?
13. If conflict arises after the Parentage Order, will we seek counselling as a team?
14. What would cause regret for each person after the journey?
15. How do we ensure we're proud of this journey and maintain ongoing contact?
16. What is the 'reward' or 'goal' for everyone? IPs having a baby. Surrogate = ? Is it ongoing contact? Watching the parents be parents over time? What does fulfillment look like?

Section G - What If...

1. We run out of embryos? Can the IPs create more? How long will this take?
2. Donor eggs/sperm need to be considered?
3. The IPs separate during pregnancy? Or the surrogate and her partner?
4. The surrogate is/becomes single and then finds a partner?
5. The surrogate needs to pause/stop the journey due to personal/family reasons.
6. IPs die during pregnancy - who is the Executor of their Wills, contact details?
7. The surrogate's income increases from the beginning plans?
8. IPs are faced with financial hardship? Would they disclose? Back up plans?
9. The surrogate (and/or her partner) is not feeling supported, appreciated.
10. Your views don't align, is this ok? Think climate change, politics, refugees.
11. Parenting styles differ - babies cries, self settling, discipline. Is it an issue?
12. Religious or cultural practices differ - circumcision, Father Christmas. Is it an issue?
13. You don't return a phone call or reply to a message once it has been seen?
14. The Surroship becomes strained - how to navigate? Group messages, meeting in person as a team, group counselling session?
15. The team breaks up post birth - how will contact be maintained?

Resources

Some psychologists recommend 100 in person hours to really "know" someone

Narelle Dickinson - Psychologist

[Issues to consider prior to commencing a surrogacy](#)

Katrina Hale - Psychologist

[Surrogate Emotional Needs - Post Birth Guide for Intended Parents](#)