

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Budget Estimates Hearings 2004-2005, supplementary written questions

Question: PM 7

Outcome 1, Output 3.1

Topic: Human Cloning

Direct on Notice

Senator Harradine asked:

- (a) In answer to question EO4-113 the Department referred to a letter from the Prime Minister dated 19 September 2003. Please provide a copy of that letter.**
- (b) Which Minister's other than the Prime Minister were involved in formulating Australia's position at the United Nations? How were they involved?**

Answer:

- (a) A copy of the Prime Minister's letter of 19 September 2003 is attached.
- (b) This question has been answered by the Department of Health and Ageing.



PRIME MINISTER
CANBERRA

The Hon Alexander Downer MP
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

19 SEP 2003

My dear Minister

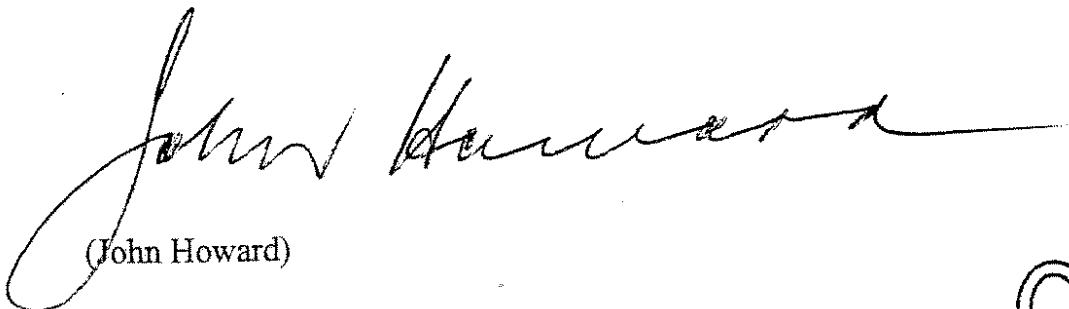
I am writing in relation to the meeting of a working group of the Sixth Committee of the United Nations General Assembly that will consider proposals for a Convention Against the Reproductive Cloning of Human beings from 29 September to 3 October 2003.

In my view, Australia should take the position of supporting immediate development of a convention to ban human reproductive cloning. Proposals to address human cloning with the aim of developing medical treatments (therapeutic cloning), including a possible separate convention banning this, could then be considered separately. This position would be consistent with the Prohibition of Human Cloning Act 2002.

This position would clearly indicate Australia's support for the urgent international prohibition of human reproductive cloning. Given the absence of consensus in respect of therapeutic cloning, a single convention banning all forms of cloning is unlikely to receive unanimous support and may further delay the commencement of negotiations. This position would also allow us to support a separate convention banning therapeutic cloning, while leaving some flexibility as to the exact form of the proposals, allowing us to take account of the review of the Prohibition of Human Cloning Act that will be conducted from December 2004.

I have copied this letter to the Minister for Ageing, for information.

Yours sincerely



(John Howard)

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