

Additional comments by Senators Polley, Stephens and Hogg

1. Cloning, whether to create embryos for destruction in research, or for implantation to birth, is still cloning. Neither language nor semantics can disguise this fact.
2. In 2002, both Houses of the Australian parliament unanimously rejected all forms of human cloning (i.e. reproductive and therapeutic) and approved the release of surplus IVF embryos for research and study.
3. However, only 30% of the surplus IVF embryos have been used for obtaining embryonic stem cells for research. The other 70% have been used for training clinicians and for refining infertility treatment.
4. Some scientists are now seeking other sources of embryonic stem cells, namely from cloned human beings or cloned animal/human hybrid embryos, achieved by the process of SCNT.
5. In 2002, the option was available for any Senator or Member of the House of Representatives to move an amendment to allow for therapeutic cloning whilst banning reproductive cloning. No one did.
6. This debate is about crossing an ethical line, i.e. deliberately creating cloned human embryos expressly for destruction to obtain stem cells for a wide range of research.
7. The current debate is not about the efficacy of adult stem cells versus human embryonic stem cells obtained from excess IVF embryos.
8. This quantum leap in research is being advocated well in advance of similar research being done on cloned animal embryos.
9. Some scientists are therefore asking for the freedom to pursue this research on relatively weak grounds purely and simply because they want to go down this path.
10. Bad science cannot justify this freedom, even if it may be regulated by a government authority.

11. We believe that the Patterson Bill and similar Bills should be rejected in their entirety.

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