

The Senate Community Affairs Committee  
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***Submission regarding the Lockhart Recommendations***

The Research Involving Embryos Act 2002 and the Prohibition of Human Cloning Act 2002 have both been reviewed by the Lockhart Committee, and recommendations made to the Government by that Committee are a cause of great concern to me and all who value human life from conception to natural death.

For example, Recommendation No 14 of the Lockhart Committee review states: "Use of excess Assisted Reproductive Technologies (ART) embryos in research should continue to be permitted, under licence, as under current legislation."

Recommendation No 15: "Research involving fertilisation of human eggs by human sperm up to, but not including, the first cell division, should be permitted for research, training and improvements in clinical practice of ART."

Recommendation No 17: "Certain inter-species fertilisation and development up to, but not including, the first cell division, should be permitted for testing gamete viability to assist ART training and practice."

Recommendation No 22: "Fresh ART embryos that are diagnosed by pre-implantation genetic diagnosis (according to the ART guidelines) as being unsuitable for implantation should be permitted to be used, under licence, for research, training and improvements in clinical practice."

Recommendation No 24: "In order to reduce the need for human oocytes (eggs), transfer of human somatic cell nuclei into animal oocytes should be allowed, under licence, for the creation and use of human embryo clones for research, training and clinical application, including the production of human embryonic stem cells, as long as the activity satisfies all the criteria outlined in the amended Act and these embryos are not implanted into the body of a woman or allowed to develop for more than fourteen days."

Back in 2002, Industry Minister Ian Macfarlane reportedly advised an AusBiotech forum to accept a ban on therapeutic cloning "as a tactical measure" and accept a limited access to 'surplus' IVF embryos. This tactic, he argued, would "give them a foot in the door on embryo stem cell research".

Now that they have the "foot in the door", those who are intent on destructive embryo research are determined, not only to consolidate their position, but to push the boundaries further by wanting 'therapeutic' cloning and the use of animal eggs to compensate for the shortage of human eggs.

Human beings are not commodities to be used, even for an apparent 'good' purpose. The Vatican document, **Donum Vitae**, (Instruction on Respect for Human Life in its Origin and on the Dignity of Procreation) sounded a warning to protect man "against the excesses of his own power". Donum Vitae reminds us that a human embryo "would never be made human if it were not human already" and asks "how could a human individual not be a human person?" Donum Vitae 1(1). "Human embryos obtained in vitro are human beings and subjects with rights: their dignity and right to life must be respected from the first moment of their existence. It is immoral to produce human embryos destined to be exploited as disposable 'biological material'. DV 1. (5) The child has the right to be conceived, carried in the womb, brought into the world and brought up within marriage: it is through the secure and recognised relationship to his own parents that the child can discover his own identity and

achieve his own proper human development. (DV A1) From the moral point of view procreation is deprived of its proper perfection when it is not desired as the fruit of the conjugal act, which is to say of the specific act of the spouses' union. (DVB4) Despite all the hype surrounding embryonic stem cell research, and the financial rewards associated with it, not a single successful treatment has resulted. On the other hand, the use of adult stem cells has achieved remarkable success without any of the ethical problems associated with destroying embryos. Brain Cancer, Ovarian Cancer, Lymphoma, Hodgkin's Lymphoma, Multiple Sclerosis, Crohn's Disease, Rheumatoid Arthritis, Systemic Lupus, Stroke, Parkinson's Disease and Limb Gangrene, are just a few of the list of over seventy successful treatments using adult stem cells.

Your Senate Committee has been set up to receive public submissions regarding the submissions regarding the Lockhart recommendations. I submit that you review the Lockhart Recommendations very seriously in light of the two Appendix following. I reject the recommendations and trust Australia will not 'travel down this slippery road' to our nation's eventual destruction.

Let us, you and I, advance our Australia fair.

Yours sincerely  
(Br) Chris Pritchard

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Appendix 1:

Subject: CLONING BILL USES HUMAN-ANIMAL HYBRID EMBRYOS - Boswell Media  
14.9.06

Date: Thursday 14 September 2006 6:12 pm

From: "Leven, Paul \\\(Sen R. Boswell\)" <[Paul.Leven@aph.gov.au](mailto:Paul.Leven@aph.gov.au)>

CLONING BILL USES HUMAN-ANIMAL HYBRID EMBRYOS

"Senator Stott Despoja's cloning Bill legalises the mix of human and animal genetic material in the same embryo," said The Nationals' Leader in the Senate, Senator Ron Boswell.

"In doing so, Senator Stott Despoja has ignored the specific scientific advice of the nation's chief scientist, Jim Peacock, who says that the use of animal eggs as part of therapeutic cloning should be banned, as reported in today's Australian.

"That is one bad mark against the Lockhart Report already, because it specifically called for human-animal embryo clones. Who knows what other key issues they got wrong, relying as they did on the Korean cloning research later exposed as fraudulent.

"Senator Stott Despoja has rushed to get her Bill into the Senate before Senator Patterson, with the result that we have a very flawed Bill that directly contradicts the advice of the chief scientist." Research shows the persistence of mitochondrial DNA from the egg in cloned animal embryos. That means that under Senator Stott Despoja's proposal, animal genetic material would be mixed with human with unknown results. "Research has found for example that "The use of nuclear transfer can result in both donor cell and recipient oocyte mitochondrial DNA persisting through to blastocyst and being transmitted to the offspring. The degree of donor mitochondrial DNA transmission appears to be random and currently no evidence exists to explain this phenomenon"; and "Offspring produced by nuclear transfer (NT) have identical nuclear DNA (nDNA). However, mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) inheritance could vary considerably".

"Senator Stott Despoja originally raised the prospect of animal-human cross entities at the Second Australian Stem Cell Centre Annual Scientific Conference in 2004.

"This is a radical agenda, unsupported by proof of principle research. When the topic is so sensitive, there should be plenty of evidence to support going down this path. That evidence doesn't exist. No expert can even tell us how many eggs and how many embryos will be needed."

ENDS

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1 "hybrid, n. 1. the offspring of two animals... 2. a half-breed; a mongrel.  
3. anything derived from heterogeneous sources, or composed of elements of different or incongruous kind..." quoted in The Macquarie Dictionary, 1985, Macquarie Library, Sydney, p.854  
2 Genetics, Vol. 172, 2515-2527, April 2006, doi:10.1534/genetics.105.055145  
Aberrant Nucleo-cytoplasmic Cross-Talk Results in Donor Cell mtDNA Persistence in Cloned Embryos Rhiannon E. Lloyd, Joon-Hee Lee, Ramiro Alberio, Emma J. Bowles, João Ramalho-Santos, Keith H. S. Campbell and Justin C. St. John  
3 Genetics, Vol. 167, 897-905, June 2004, doi:10.1534/genetics.103.025049  
Paternal Mitochondrial DNA Transmission During Nonhuman Primate Nuclear Transfer Justin C. St. John and Gerald Schatten

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Appendix 2:

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Nations Begin to Debate Ethics of Sale and Donation of Human Ova By Samantha Singson

(NEW YORK - C-FAM) The UN General Assembly passed a political declaration last year calling on Member States to avoid all forms of human cloning. The declaration was nonbinding and not unanimous but a number of nations are actively debating the issue of allowing the sale and use of the human ova for both reproductive and research purposes. Australia, the United Kingdom, Spain and several Eastern European countries are just some of the countries which are currently consulting on the matter.

Increasingly, reports are surfacing that women are coming under pressure to have their eggs frozen for future IVF treatment or to donate them for research. Until recently in the United Kingdom, scientists were not allowed to offer financial incentives to women to donate their eggs. For the first time last July, however, the British Human Fertilization and Embryology Authority (HFEA) granted permission to an English fertility centre to pay women undergoing IVF treatment to donate their eggs for research cloning.

The extraction of human eggs is an invasive, high-risk procedure with potentially grave consequences to the life and health of women. Women have been reported to die as a result of egg donation. Studies are currently being conducted on the link between cancer and the drugs given to women to help hyper-stimulate ovulation for egg harvesting. The long-term effects of egg donation on women are still unknown and many groups from both left and right are coming out against egg donation. Katrina George, a member of the group "Hands Off Our Ovaries," explained that cloning embryos to obtain stem cells requires a large supply of ova and that the methods used to harvest them posed grave risks to women's health. George

argued, "Cloning always amounts to the co modification of women's bodies. Politicians and scientists must not use women as guinea pigs in a technology that has no proven benefits."

There are mounting concerns that monetary incentives might induce poor women to undergo the procedure without fully being informed of the potential health risks. In August, the European Commission launched an investigation into a Spanish fertility clinic as members of the European

Parliament suspected the clinic was targeting poor women immigrants. While Spanish law does not permit payment for egg donation, the clinic had been offering \$600 - \$1200 to pay for the "discomforts" suffered by women during the process of egg donation.

During negotiations for the UN Declaration on Human Cloning, it was clear that there was a North-South divide. While the majority of industrialized, Western countries fought against any restrictions on cloning for research purposes, many developing nations expressed their concerns regarding the potential exploitation of women. Nigeria warned that "developing countries, particularly in Africa, are most likely to be at risk as easy source[s] of millions of eggs required for the so-called therapeutic

cloning" because "poverty and ignorance" will expose women to "exploitation by the emerging 'academic entrepreneurs'." Australia is currently debating whether to renew its ban on all forms of

human cloning. Australian deputy health minister John Anderson asked, "As cloning embryos for their stem cells depends on a sufficient supply of ova, who's going to supply the eggs?" He continued, "I venture to say it won't be ordinary, comfortably-off, middle-class Australian women who'll be doing it."

HFEA's public consultations on egg donation will continue through November and a ruling is expected early next year.