

- Why I Oppose Human Cloning and Embryo Experimentation. -

These are my sincere thoughts, based on my private literature research. I intend no disparaging reflection on other persons involved in this debate.

- Winston warns of stem cell 'hype'. -

My research uncovered an article on the web, concerning stem cell “hype”.

In September 2005, the President of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, Lord Winston, a fertility expert, said that the potential benefits of embryonic stem cell research have probably been oversold to the public.

He said the notion that a host of cures for serious, degenerative disorders are just around the corner is fanciful. (BBC News, Monday, 5 September 2005.)

- Problems with embryo cloning or experimentation. -

I am totally opposed to embryo cloning or experimentation on embryos, regardless of whether it is labelled “therapeutic cloning” or “reproductive cloning” or “somatic cell nuclear transfer” or any other such gobbledegook.

The Lockhart Report, as well as the Patterson Bill and the Stott Despoja/Webber Draft Bill, is all about deliberate manufacture of human embryos (or utilisation of existing embryos) in order to exploit and destroy them in experiments and research.

And thus we are thrown into a debate about human cloning, and no amount of political obfuscation or gobbledegook will hide that fact.

- Lockhart Report -

The Lockhart Report recommends wholly unacceptable changes to the laws of Australia and the states, particularly the wholesale reproduction of human embryos for research purposes – i.e. to exploit and destroy them.

Firstly, the Lockhart Report cites the fraudulent ‘research’ of disgraced Korean scientist, Woo Suk Hwang, who in 2004 deliberately fabricated research findings for financial gain (at least \$US 3 million). I wonder what other false science and fabrication is in store for us in the Lockhart “Brave New World”.

Secondly, the Lockhart Report seeks permission to make human-animal hybrids or chimeras for experimentation and research. I totally oppose this abominable suggestion, which degrades and pollutes our humanity, as though we are mere animals or lab-rats. Who knows what diseases and genetic disorders such activities will unleash ? Will this result in unforeseen damage or alteration of the human genome ?

Thirdly, the Lockhart Report clearly advocates creation of human embryos and human clones for research, training and clinical applications. I totally oppose this suggestion, which would result in the creation of a laboratory sub-class of humans, with no parents and no rights, who are reduced to commodities for experimentation and / or commercial sale.

Fourthly, the Lockhart Report calls for import and export of reproductive material and embryos, so this will clearly lead to commodification and commercial exploitation of humans, be they embryos or full-term babies. I totally oppose this inhuman and degrading exploitation of any human being.

Fifthly, the Lockhart Report seeks to establish a so-called “Licensing Committee” with sweeping powers to interpret any proposed cloning laws, and to give binding rulings on matters not covered in the literal wording of any such laws. This is tantamount to a blank cheque – permission to do whatever seems right at the time, according to the vested interests on such a committee. It violates the responsibility and accountability of parliament, which alone must make decisions on what is acceptable to the community.

I urge you to totally reject the Lockhart Report and its recommendations, particularly those which would in any way change or lessen the current ban on human cloning and exploitation of human embryos.

- Stott Despoja/Webber Draft Bill -

Although I cannot access the actual exposure draft of The Stott Despoja/Webber Bill, I have read Senator Stott Despoja’s speech and other sources. Based on this material, I find this draft bill is objectionable for several reasons.

Firstly, the Senator’s speech betrays a rather naïve grasp of the issues at large in this debate. On 14 September, the Senator referred to the “potentially dazzling benefits of this technology” and so on in that vein. However, as my opening and closing paragraphs show, this is all hype and blue sky. Embryonic stem cells and human cloning have no proven benefits, but a whole lot of harmful effects.

Secondly, the Stott Despoja/Webber Exposure Draft apparently allows for the creation of animal-human chimeras and animal-human hybrids. This potentially degrades and pollutes our humanity, with a high risk of unforeseen damage or alteration of the human genome. I urge you to oppose this suggested activity.

Thirdly, the Stott Despoja/Webber Exposure Draft apparently allows for deliberate creation of human clones i.e. the creation of human life, for the express purpose of exploiting, abusing and destroying them in the interests of others. This diminishes the sanctity of human life and debases our humanity and dignity and worth. I realise that this may not be the Senator's intention, but it is the inevitable result of this sloppy Exposure Draft.

Fourthly, the Senator's speech on 14 September expressed concern for "intellectual property", without any regard for the biological property of the unborn human babies that would be created and violated by this proposed bill. I am frankly disgusted that we should talk about private property rights in this way, while proposing to legalise the stealing of genetic material from an unborn baby, invading it with animal or other genetic pollution and then ultimately destroying it.

I strongly urge you to oppose the Senator Stott Despoja/Senator Webber sponsored "Somatic Cell Nuclear Transfer (SCNT) and Related Research Amendment Bill 2006".

- Patterson Bill -

The Patterson Bill is objectionable for a number of reasons, including its purpose of implementing the quite macabre Lockhart Report, and in its legalising of the production of human life as a sort of sub-human lab rat to be used and destroyed.

Firstly, the Patterson Bill legalises the cloning of humans, i.e. creation of human embryos other than by sperm-ovum fertilisation. I oppose this activity as it is deliberate creation of human life for the purpose of exploiting and abusing it and then destroying it. This activity devalues human life and violates the natural rights of the unborn child to be properly nourished and nurtured and protected by its mother.

Secondly, the Patterson Bill legalises the creation of animal-human hybrids. As I stated above, I oppose such activities because they degrade and pollute our humanity, and risk unforeseen damage or alteration of the human genome.

Thirdly, the Patterson Bill legalises the creation of human embryos from more than two human parents. This also degrades and pollutes our humanity and risks unforeseen damage or alteration of the human genome. It is a

barbaric alteration of the natural design of human life.

Fourthly, the Patterson Bill legalises the creation of human embryos from other embryos or aborted babies (so-called “foetuses”). I oppose this activity, as it is a commodification of the living tissue of unborn babies for the creation of further commodified human life, both of which are then to be experimented on and destroyed. It cheapens human life and devalues the rights of the unborn in a most bizarre and barbaric manner.

I strongly urge you to oppose the Senator Patterson sponsored “Prohibition of Human Cloning for Reproduction and the Regulation of Human Embryo Research Amendment Bill 2006”.

- Adult Stem Cells Research -

Adult stem cells are already used to treat or investigate at least 72 human diseases and conditions, including Cancers and Leukemia, Auto-immune diseases, Cardiovascular diseases, Eyes, Parkinsons, Sickle Cell Anemia, Gangrene, Metabolic disorders and so on.

We do not need to manufacture human embryos for stem cell research. We can use the already available supply of adult stem cells in every person – to treat that person. And we can store and utilise umbilical cord stem cells.

You can check the facts at the following website:

<http://www.stemcellresearch.org/facts/treatments.htm>

Furthermore, embryonic stem cells have never been used for any treatment, because their “totipotency” makes them prone to high risk of generating cancerous tumours.

In contrast, adult stem cells have “multipotency”, which enables them to behave as required by the body tissue in which they are inserted, eg: to become liver cells or blood cells or spinal cord cells. And they are not prone to generating cancer.

You must have heard of the world-renowned Adult Stem Cell research of Prof. Alan Mackay-Sim of Griffith University in Queensland. Following this link to a Courier-Mail article:

<http://www.news.com.au/couriermail/story/0,,20218084-5003419,00.html#>

As Prof. Mackay-Sim states, adult stem cells research is “providing serious alternatives to embryonic stem cells for cell transplantation, for investigation of disease, and drug discovery.”

The research indicates the “very broad developmental potential” and is “far exceeding the expectations of an adult stem cell.” And adult stem cells “can ... be taken from the same patient who needs the repair, obviating immune rejection issues.”

- Summary -

In summary, I urge you to reject the Lockhart Report’s appalling recommendations, and I urge you to reject both the Patterson Bill and the Stott Despoja/Webber Draft Bill.

To quote the words of one Senator: "it is wrong to create human embryos solely for research. It is not morally permissible to develop an embryo with the intent of truncating it at an early stage for the benefit of another human being".

(Senator Patterson, 2002).

Surely you realise that a human embryo is HUMAN from the point where it has a full complement of chromosomes (i.e. HUMAN DNA), regardless of what method

you envisage to create it. Accordingly, I humbly pray to Almighty God that you will uphold and respect the sanctity of all human life from the moment of conception.

Yours sincerely  
Kenneth Higgs