

29<sup>th</sup> September, 2006

To the Community Affairs Committee,

*Re: Inquiry into the legislative responses to recommendations of the Lockhart Review*

Last year, I made a submission to the Lockhart Review related to the review of the *Research Involving Human Embryos Act 2002*. I expressed my opposition to the process of Somatic Cell Nuclear Transfer on the basis that no new scientific or medical advances had been developed to warrant any changes to the Act.

The Lockhart review ultimately recommended cloning for research purposes, but was flawed on several fronts.

- The recommendations of the Lockhart Review reflected the well-established support of cloning of at least half the members.
- The supposedly new Korean scientific findings that influenced public debate on cloning at the time have been found to be fraudulent. There are still no medical benefits that have been advanced from embryonic stem cell research in other parts of the world, yet adult stem cells (being produced in new and profitable ways) offer dozens of treatment benefits, including those for: spinal cord injuries, retinal and corneal damage; heart damage; kidney damage; jaw reconstruction; and bone defects.
- The Lockhart Review failed to disclose that over 80% of the submissions it received opposed any change to the prohibition on human cloning. It furthermore ignored the fact that 63% of Australians has been reported as being uncomfortable with scientists using cells created by cloning.
- The Lockhart Review ignored the fact that Parliament had decisively ruled against cloning in 2002 after which no new research could be presented to justify revisiting the matter.
- The Lockhart Review personally invited me to attend a public hearing but with only one day's notice. Interestingly, others with similar viewpoints to mine were also afforded little notification of the hearing. Upon inquiry, I was told that written notice *should* have been received earlier. Were all people or only some invited with just one day to go before the hearing?

I believe that it is wrong to create human embryos solely for research purposes. It is morally reprehensible to develop an embryo with the intent of destroying it at an early stage for the benefit of another human being, especially when alternative processes are available. I would respectfully suggest that ongoing sensitivity to the status of embryos by the many organisations and individuals who consider conception to be the point of commencement of human life warrants extreme caution in regard to the matter of embryonic cloning.

Yours sincerely,

Rob Nyhuis B.Sc. Grad. Dip. Ed., M.A. (cand.)