

**SUBMISSION TO COMMUNITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**  
**ABOUT RECOMMENDATIONS OF**  
**LOCKHART REVIEW AND SEN. STOTT-DESPOJA'S BILL**

The Lockhart Review Committee had some very contentious recommendations. While some research procedures are possible they are not ethical and I believe that this country should decide now if we wish to follow these Recommendations or if we wish to blindly follow where scientists lead us regardless of what we know to be ethically right. Our country has always prided itself on its legislation protecting the rights of the individual but some of these recommendations ignore the rights of embryos who cannot speak for themselves.

I wish to draw your attention to the following Recommendations of the Lockhart Committee:

Recommendation 17 proposes that interspecies fertilisation and development be permitted to assist ART practice and training. This is in spite of Recommendation 6 which proposes banning of the creation of chimeras. It seems that matters change when researchers want to trial some new procedure. Never should we allow interspecies fertilisation for whatever reason.

Recommendation 22 proposes that fresh ART embryos diagnosed as 'unsuitable' for implantation be used for research, training and improvements in clinical practise. These embryos are potential human beings and as such deserve the respect that is applicable to all other humans. We are promoting a Nazi supremacist society where only those who are perfect are allowed to survive – and all others can be used, as scientists wish, for experimentation because they are not deemed 'useful' to society. We are treading on very dangerous ground with this philosophy and need to give careful thought to what is being promoted. What has happened to the rights of the individual regardless of age, race, etc?

Recommendation 23 proposes that therapeutic cloning be permitted for research, training and clinical application, including producing stem cell lines. This is an abhorrent proposal allowing the creation of an embryo, by whatever means, to experiment on it not just for cures of diseases but for training! However the embryo is created, the result is a human embryo with the potential for growth into a baby. The technology has so far had no success and even avid supporters of the technology acknowledge that many years research will be necessary to have any success. Many proponents of ESC research consistently try to promote their views by persuading the community that current diseases will have a rapid cure if only researchers can have access to plentiful ESCs. The scientists know well that this is not true but the media still assists them in this false hope. Even if they are eventually successful there is still the danger of tumour formation and rejection to contend with in the use of these stem cell lines. The important fact is that this controversial technology is not necessary because ethically sound adult stem cells have proven to be successful in over 70 applications and will continue to be used for more and more diseases. Their potential is endless so why promote ESC research? One can only conclude that scientists have an ulterior motive - seemingly the financial benefits of the sale of embryo stem cells as stem cell lines and for drug testing outweighs the realistic cures already achieved by ASCs. The notion that ESCs are totipotent and therefore superior to ASCs becomes less important when it is remembered that the very fact of totipotency inclines the stem cells to formation of tumours.

My very great concern as a woman is that therapeutic cloning research will necessitate the use of large numbers of eggs and I wonder where these will be obtained. Women given hyperstimulation face a risky and sometimes fatal procedure and will be treated as a commodity from which scientists will harvest what they need. Overseas women are being offered money for their eggs and are not given counselling to warn them of the consequences of the procedure of harvesting. Poor women could be manipulated with the promise of financial gain. Recommendation 24 proposes that to overcome this problem human/animal hybrids could be utilised up to first cell division. Senator Stott-Despoja's Bill goes further and proposes creation of chimeras, use of the embryo until 14 days and putting the nucleus of an animal cell into a human egg (which was expressly banned by the Lockhart Review). These proposals are abhorrent and just four years ago during the first debate on the present legislation were soundly defeated because politicians realised that it was morally decadent to promote these technologies. Surely right continues to be right regardless of different times. It is deeply troubling to the constituents that their leaders can back-flip and propose technologies that only a few years ago they acknowledged as 'not morally permissible'.

My proposition is that nothing has changed since 2002. The technological advances in this research have all been achieved by ASCs. The only motive that I can see for the move to change the legislation is for the acquisition of stem cell lines which will make big money for the companies who produce them and for the pharmaceutical companies to have human material on which to test their drugs – again someone will gain financially. The frequently used disease cure argument has not been proved to have any truth so far and will need large quantities of eggs to ever produce any success as a viable option.

We need to draw a line in the sand immediately and inform researchers that they have other options and cannot acquire ESCs for their research. The dignity of every human being should be upheld and we as a country must vow to protect our smallest citizens from manipulation for financial gain.

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