

**CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE
OF
VICTORIA & WAGGA WAGGA INC.**

**MARY GLOWREY HOUSE
132 NICHOLSON ST.,
FITZROY, VIC 3065**

**AA0017514E
ABN 18 342 098 335**

**Submission on the Inquiry into the Legislative responses to Recommendations of
the Lockhart Review.**

Terms of reference:

- Legislative responses to recommendations of the reports of the Legislation Review Committee on the *Prohibition of Human Cloning Act 2002* and the *Research Involving Human Embryos Act 2002* (the Lockhart Review).
- That in undertaking this inquiry, the committee may consider any relevant bill or draft bill based on the Lockhart review introduced or tabled in the Senate or presented to the President by a Senator when the Senate is not sitting.

This submission is made on behalf of the members of Catholic Women's League of Victoria & Wagga Wagga Inc.

1. **Our members totally reject the recommendations of the Lockhart Review Committee.**
2. **Our members totally reject Senator Kay Patterson's Bill, much of which seems to be based on the recommendations of the Lockhart Review.**
3. **Our members fully support the findings of the report commissioned by the Government in June from mpconsulting which clearly states that nothing has changed since 2002 that would warrant changes to the current laws.**
4. **Our members fully support stem cell research providing they are ADULT STEM CELLS.**

STEM CELL RESEARCH TREATMENTS	
ADULT	EMBRYONIC
72	0

Mrs. Madge Fahy,
General President
Email: mfahy@aapt.net.au

Part 1:

We draw to the attention of the Committee the fact that approximately 80% of the submissions made to the Lockhart Review Committee were opposed to any changes to the 2002 Act. The Review Committee chose to ignore these submissions.

Further we note that one member of the Lockhart Review Committee is in actual fact the ethical advisor to the International Society for Stem Cell Research. This organisation advocates for so-called 'therapeutic' cloning and therefore questions must be asked about this Committee member's potential conflict of interest. It should be noted that the International Society for Stem Cell Research submitted a paper promoting human cloning to the United Nations General Assembly. Thankfully, the United Nations called on member states to prohibit **all forms** of human cloning. Australia supported this decision at the United Nations.

The wording 'all forms' means exactly that - '**all forms**'. So no matter how scientist chose to obfuscate the language in this debate to mask what their real intentions are, a human clone produced by whatever means is a human embryo and as such deserves all the protection afforded to all human beings—that of the right to life.

One of the purportedly significant advances used by the Lockhart Review Committee to justify overturning the current ban on cloning was research undertaken in Korea by Dr Hwang and his team. This research turned out to be a massive fraud.

An American company, Advanced Cell Technology, stated in a recent press release that it had developed two viable embryonic stem cell lines from a total of 16 human embryos which were not 'killed' during the process. The scientists claimed to have only removed 1 cell from each embryo. Further investigation proved that in actual fact the embryos were all killed. The scientists also removed 4-7 cells from each 8-10 cell embryos. This is another case of deceit by those promoting the use of embryonic stem cells (ESCs). While the initial claims did bring ACT instant success with investors, this was short lived once the truth was discovered. Their share price dropped instantly. Investment dollars in America are now directed increasingly towards Adult Stem Cell (ASCs) research which is producing results.

Scientists promoting the use of ESCs sound very much like the 'snake oil' salesmen of yesteryear. One of the most unfortunate aspects of this whole debate is that people suffering from serious illnesses have been literally led down the garden path with promises of cures which scientists know cannot be achieved in the near future or if ever with ESCs. But as one noted scientist stated: '...the public needs a fairy story'.

Currently there are **1175** clinical trials involving Adult Stem Cells and **ZERO** for Embryonic Stem Cells.

It is common knowledge even amongst the so called 'uneducated' that:

- Embryonic Stem Cells are difficult to establish and maintain.
- It is difficult to obtain pure cultures in which to grow the stem cells.
- ESCs are famous for their potential to form tumours and tissue destruction.

Professor Colin Masters, Australia's leading authority on degenerative diseases of the brain has described as 'fairyland' proposals to treat Alzheimers with embryonic stem cells. Nevertheless, scientists still drag well-known personalities who suffer from this dreadful disease into the debate, promising cures that will never eventuate.

Reliance on women's eggs for ESC research purposes easily leads to exploitation, particularly of low-income, needy women who could benefit financially in the short-term. Health risks are also a considerable factor in arguments against the extraction of eggs for ESC research. Two women who have undergone egg extraction in the United Kingdom in the last year have died after developing severe ovarian hyperstimulation syndrome (OHSS), which causes rapid accumulation of fluid in the abdomen, chest, and around the heart. Symptoms include severe pelvic pain, nausea, vomiting, weight gain, ovarian enlargement, respiratory problems, blood clots and liver dysfunction. Not only are women at risk when they take the fertility drugs that cause OHSS, but potentially their children. Studies of mice with OHSS demonstrate significant abnormalities in offspring, including growth retardation, bone development delays, and a rib deformity which is associated with other abnormalities and cancer in humans. Many argue that if egg harvesting is to become widely endorsed for the purposes of ESC research and therapeutic cloning, the number of cases of severe OHSS will rise considerably.

Dr. Hwang used 2061 human eggs, many obtained from his younger staff members, and yet failed to produce a cloned embryo. Currently 35 women's groups are suing the Korean Government on behalf of the women who were harmed in the process of egg extraction. In the United States, the Federal Drug Administration has 6000 complaints, including 25 deaths, awaiting investigation of superovulation drugs.

It should be noted that it would take at least 50 million eggs to treat the 1 million Australians who suffer from conditions for which therapies involving cloned ESCs have been promised. If 10 eggs are harvested per woman of child bearing age, then 5 million Australian women would have to submit to the risks of drugs that induce hyper-ovulation to provide the eggs needed for so-called therapeutic cloning and therapies. ESC research and therapeutic cloning requires a massive number of eggs which can only lead to a despicable commercial exploitation of vulnerable women.

While the members of the Lockhart Review referred my question on this very issue during the Melbourne consultation to a female scientist working in the ESC field, she stated that Australia would not call upon women to donate eggs and certainly would not pay women to donate eggs. Unless scientists supporting ESC research and so-called therapeutic cloning intend to rely solely on animal eggs, where will the necessary eggs come from? Will they extract them from aborted female foetuses? Will they extract them from women's ovaries following a hysterectomy? Will vulnerable women in third world countries or those in cultures that require the subjection of women be targeted for egg harvesting?

Human hybrid cloning and human cloning (therapeutic / SCNT or any other means) has no place in a decent society.

Part 2:

Senator Kay Patterson's Bill

What can one say about this Bill other than it is just more of the Lockhart Review. This whole review and the current Bill have shades of the medical experiments similar to those done during the Nazi era. It will never be possible to have a humanity that is free from all diseases and the handicapped. The Nazis debased the German language so as to make it easier to promote their policies.¹ These experiments were condemned in the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials.

The proposals to change our current laws should be condemned in a similar fashion.

¹ The Diaries of Victor Klemperer.

Rather than expanding the Act to allow scientists to further exploit the vulnerable in society, we believe that the Government should tighten it further by reducing the number of human embryos produced through IVF.

**THE RIGHT TO LIFE IS THE BASIS OF ALL OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS. IT IS NOT
NEGOTIABLE.**

**Mrs Madge Fahy
for Catholic Women's League of Victoria & Wagga Wagga Inc.**