



Submission Pertaining to Reports of the Legislative Review Committee on the Prohibition of Human Cloning Act 2002 and the Research Involving Human Embryos Act 2002(the Lockhart Review)

On behalf of the Guild of Saint Luke (Catholic Doctors Queensland) by
Dr Terrence Kent, President

The whole base, the foundation of the Lockhart Report crumbles, when in its opening passages ('Rationale for Recommendations', p xiii), it is claimed that "the broad community support for research aimed at clinical practice at assisting people to have children includes a general acceptance that the process may involve the wastage of some embryos." Deliberate wastage involves the ending of innocent lives. An even greater evil is the production of embryos whether they are cloned or not, to be destroyed. This shows a totally different intent than producing embryos for artificial reproductive technology and then destroying excess ART embryos. It is also stated in this passage that "certain moral values are held in common by all communities, such as commitment to social justice and equity and to the care of vulnerable people." Human embryos are the most vulnerable of people, but are sadly often not recognized as human beings. Where is the equity and social justice in this case?

It is wrong to create human embryos to destroy them and extract stem cells. The ends do not justify the means. Human embryo clones are indeed human embryos. Cloning of embryos can occur by a process known as somatic cell nuclear transfer. This results in the nucleus of an unfertilized ova being substituted by the nucleus of a somatic cell. This does not stop the resultant entity from being an embryo. In the Lockhart Report (p xiii), they state that given the right environment for development, such an embryo would develop into a human being. This is a fallacious argument as a cloned embryos would already be a human being. It is not a "cellular extension of the original subject" (p xiii.) It is not a potential life. It is already a life.

Having animal-human hybrid clones is of great concern. If a human nucleus is inserted into animal ova, the resultant hybrid embryo would retain some DNA from the animal cell. This is a dangerous step to take which could result in grave consequences.

It is hoped by some that therapeutic cloning will be legalized. This is in fact a paradoxical term. Therapeutic cloning results in the destruction of the cloned embryo. Therefore it is never therapeutic to the embryo.

The right for innocent life to exist, no matter how early in its development, is an absolute truth. The means of embryonic destruction, whether naturally conceived or cloned, cannot justify any end.