

The proposal to amend the Prohibition of Human Cloning Act will result in the deliberate creation and destruction of human embryos. I believe that the human cost of this approach to medical research is unacceptable and that all form of human cloning should be prohibited under Australian law.

Human life begins at conception. This is an objective scientific fact which is not denied by the proponents of human cloning. The deliberate creation of human embryos with the intention of later killing them will create a society where the lives of some are held to be expedient before the perceived welfare of others.

The very broad and optimistic claims being made about embryonic stem cell research do not, even if fully realised, justify “the new slavery” that such an undertaking will produce. I do not believe that medical researchers have the right to create a new human life with the intent of ending that life within fourteen days. This does not represent a slippery slope. Rather the passing of the proposed amendments will bring into immediate effect a situation whereby a scientist can create and then destroy a human life. I do not believe this is morally sustainable whatever the proposed benefits.

A number of public figures, including politicians and scientists, have suggested that Australia will be relegated to the sidelines of the international scientific community should human cloning be prohibited. It has also been said that we will deny ourselves significant economic benefits from the patenting of therapeutic techniques based on human cloning and their subsequent trading on the open market. Such statements choose to ignore the vast gains made in therapeutics and medical knowledge to date. All of these achievements are the result of ethical research techniques which have not involved the killing of human embryos. It is unlikely that these ongoing efforts will cease because of a prohibition on human cloning. Equally the real gains already made through adult stem cell research will continue if embryonic stem cell research involving cloning is prohibited.

The application of current scientific achievements to the reduction of human suffering has been limited by placing commercial interests above human interests. The citing of financial motives as an argument for human cloning is both an admission and perpetuation of this view. Once again intellectual property rights will take precedence over human rights.

Human cloning involves the creation and destruction of unique and separate human lives. Human cloning violates the dignity of the human species. It should continue to be prohibited in all circumstances under Australian law.

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