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Committee Secretary  
Community Affairs Committee  
Department of the Senate

### **Inquiry into the Legislative responses to Recommendations of the Lockhart Review**

If the recommendations of the Lockhart Committee, along with the Bills put forward by Senators Patterson and Stott-Despoja, fail to establish for doubters the reality of the oft-derided moral 'slippery-slope', it is hard to imagine just what it will take to open the eyes of such people.

Those who regard some human lives as being valuable primarily for their instrumental use have already won some battles. They have been allowed to destructively exploit young human lives - so-called 'excess' embryos - for the possible benefit of other bigger, born human beings. (Ostensibly for the health benefits of many but arguably for the financial benefits of a few.)

But that is not enough for them. Now the push is on to allow for human lives to be deliberately created – by means of so-called 'therapeutic' cloning - solely for the purpose of ruthlessly using them, then destroying them.

Only four years ago such a proposal was **unanimously rejected** in the Federal and State parliaments. This of course included Senators Patterson and Stott-Despoja.

Indeed in 2002 Senator Patterson very forthrightly stated:

- *"I believe strongly that it is wrong to create human embryos solely for research,"* and,
- *"It is not morally permissible to develop an embryo with the intent of truncating it at an early stage for the benefit of another human being,"* and,
- *"It is disingenuous to suggest that approving this research will open the door to further killing of living human beings."*

The principle that every human life is inherently valuable from its very beginning at fertilization, and is thereby inviolable, has long ago been breached. Young human lives are now regarded by some people as things, as raw materials that are there to be used. Once that position is adopted there is no limit to the abuses that will be attempted, over time, on young human lives.

The Lockhart Committee recommendations and the Patterson and Stott-Despoja Bills give ample, indisputable evidence of this taking place now. There is nothing disingenuous about that claim! **The slope is very real and very slippery.**

Respect for human life from its beginning at fertilization must be restored, rather than further eroded. A human embryo is a human being, i.e. a member of the species *homo sapiens*. A human embryo does not *become* a human being because it *is* a human being from the time of fertilisation, albeit a human being at an early stage of development but nonetheless an actual human being. The fundamental biological status of the human embryo has not changed during the last four years and there is no reason to believe that it will change in the future

Therefore:

- No experimentation should be conducted on any human embryo at any stage of its development (regardless of how the embryo may have come into existence) which is not for the benefit of that embryo.
- The ban on the cloning of human embryos, whether for reproductive or 'therapeutic' purposes must be retained.
- No embryos should be created which use the genetic material of more than two people.
- No embryos should be created using the precursor cells from fetuses.
- No interspecies fertilisation or creation of chimeras or hybrids should be allowed.
- No importing, exporting or trading in human embryos, human eggs, or human sperm should be allowed.

Distant hopes of possible medical benefits arising from allowing any of the above procedures or actions must not be allowed to blind us to the wrongness of destroying some human lives for the benefit of other human lives.

Even if cloning and destructive research on human embryos was somehow guaranteed to make great medical breakthroughs, that good end would in no way justify the use of immoral means. Quite likely much could be learned if destructive research were to be allowed to be conducted on say, convicted murderers, but we don't allow that because it would be wrong to do so. The lives of young human beings are no less worthy of respect than are the lives of murderers.

Happily it is the case that much good work in this field of research has been achieved in recent years from the unproblematic use of adult stem cells.

This submission has been made by Graham Preston, Queensland Coordinator for Right to Life Australia.