

ISSCR



International Society for Stem Cell Research

ISSCR

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10 August, 2006

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Dear Members of Parliament,

As a representative of the Board of Directors of the International Society for Stem Cell Research (ISSCR), and Chairman of the Government Affairs Committee, I am writing to urge you to adopt the recommendations of the Lockhart Legislative Review Committee: concerning the Prohibition of Human Cloning Act 2002 and Research Involving Human Embryos Act 2002. Revisions of these bills should be made to enable Australian medical scientists to participate in the full range of stem cell research that includes embryonic stem cells and their production from donated eggs fused with cells of patients with complex and intractable disease and injury. These stem cells may be complementary to adult stem cells and move the area of regenerative medicine closer and more quickly to clinical therapies. It is important to allow Australian scientists to work together with global collaborators in these important new areas of research.

As the primary international organisation of scientific, ethical and clinical researchers in the field of stem cell biology, ISSCR speaks for our many members who study stem cells of all types. The Lockhart Report is consistent with the long-standing scientific and ethical positions of the ISSCR. Our scientific opinion is that considerable and strong scientific data establish that research on stem cells of all types should be pursued with the goals of reducing human suffering and better understanding of human physiology.

Our strong support of embryonic stem cell research is also based on the newest research findings presented at our recent annual international meeting in Toronto, Canada. At this four day meeting of more than 2000 scientists, clinicians, and ethicists from over 40 countries, leading researchers from around the world presented their most recent findings on

stem cells of all types. New data presented at this meeting demonstrated that many of the newer human embryonic stem cell lines generated since August 9, 2001 have excellent characteristics, and based on the published and unpublished work presented, appear to have many substantial advantages for high quality and rigorous biomedical research. The cutting edge research presented at this meeting also demonstrated once again the great potential for stem cell research of all types to lead to improved understanding and treatment of many terrible diseases such as cancer, diabetes, Parkinson's Disease, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, and many others.

We attach the Summary Recommendations of the Lockhart Legislative Review Committee and we remind you that the welfare of millions of people worldwide depends on medical research advances that can help alleviate the suffering caused by injury and illness. Adoption of the Lockhart Review recommendations will help to meet this scientific and medical challenge and will also send a message of hope to Australian patients, and those in many other countries of the world, suffering from diseases that could be helped by research involving new stem cell lines.

We welcome this opportunity to advise you of the ISSCR endorsement of the Lockhart Legislative Review Recommendations and we look forward to adoption of policies by the Australian Government that will support the very best scientific and clinical research to proceed with careful oversight and regulation.

Sincerely,



Paul Simmons
ISSCR President
(www.isscr.org)



Alan Trounson
Member, ISSCR Board of Directors
Chair, ISSCR Government Affairs Cmte.