

# **LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA**

## **COMMISSION ON SOCIAL & BIOETHICAL QUESTIONS**

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Community Affairs Committee  
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### **RE - INQUIRY INTO THE LEGISLATIVE RESPONSES TO RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE LOCKHART REVIEW**

Thank you for the invitation to make a submission to this inquiry. I write to express concern with the findings of the Lockhart Review and the contents of the amendment Bill tabled by Senator Kay Patterson on the 26<sup>th</sup> September 2006.

1 – Cloning creates a living human embryo, similar to you or me at that stage of our development. No fuzzy language about “products of somatic cell nuclear transfer” should be allowed to obscure this essential truth.

2 – In 2002 every member of Federal Parliament agreed to ban the creation of human embryos by cloning. Senator Patterson herself said – “I believe strongly that it is wrong to create human embryos solely for research.” Australia helped to pass the United Nations declaration banning all forms of human cloning.

3 – The Patterson Bill will allow scientists to create human embryos by cloning for destructive research. It will also allow creating human-animal hybrid embryos for research, and creating human embryos from fetal precursor cells – as in using human eggs from aborted baby girls to clone embryos for research.

4 – Cloning can exploit women in poverty who are recruited as egg donors. Ovarian hyperstimulation can endanger women’s health and future fertility.

5 – Some scientists claim that cloning human embryos will allow them to study disease processes and perhaps eventually develop lines of treatment. Since 2002 there have been no advances in making embryonic stem cell therapy either safe or effective. Many scientists regard cloning human embryos as impractical and irrelevant. Private venture capital will not invest in this area.

6 – *Many people believe that to create a human life with the intention of destroying it is ethically wrong, and a moral frontier that we in Australia should not cross.* A recent survey by Swinburne University found that 63 per cent of Australians did not agree with cloning human embryos for research. In 2002 scientists wanted to use “surplus” IVF human embryos. In 2006 they want to clone human embryos. What will come next – growing human clones for fetal organ harvesting, or live-birth cloning ?

7 – The good news is that we do not need cloning. Stem cells obtained ethically from umbilical cord blood and from adult tissues are already being used in effective treatments in over 70 medical disorders. Australia is at the forefront in this pioneering work, as shown by Prof Alan Mackay-Sim at Griffith University in Queensland. Our Parliamentarians can be assured that their vote against human cloning will not delay healing disease or relieving disability.

8 – Cloning is wrong and cloning is unnecessary. With respect, I urge you to help Australia to lead the world in safe and effective and ethical adult stem cell research of which we can all be proud.

If you wish me to expand on any of the points I have made please feel free to contact me.

Please keep me on your mailing list for any reports that may arise from your Inquiry.

Yours sincerely,

**DR ROBERT POLLNITZ**