

Dear Senator Humphery

In relation to my appearance before the Senate Community Affairs Committee on Mon 23rd, I wish to clarify a misunderstanding concerning a question put to the panel by Senator Fierravanti-Wells.

The question related to the panel's views on interspecies fertilisation. I misheard your clarification and assumed incorrectly that the question was referring to the production of animal-animal hybrids (or chimeras) used in scientific research. As such I indicated that I did not consider there was an ethical issue.

I realise now from the Hansard transcript that the question was referring to the production of animal-human hybrids. The use of animal oocytes was recommended by the Lockhart Report (23) to address a possible shortage of human ova, always provided it was carried out under licence, and the hybrid not implanted into a woman or allowed to develop beyond 14 days.

I would still answer that I do not consider the production of such a hybrid to be an ethical issue and this procedure would be useful for scientific studies, for instance on fertility. However, I do not consider cells obtained from such tissue would be appropriate for transplanting into humans or for clinical application.

I hope this clarifies my answer.

Yours sincerely

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