

CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY

PROTECTING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES, PROMOTING VALUES AND ETHICS.



Senate Community Affairs Committee
Committee Secretariat

By email: community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au

Legislative responses to the recommendations of the Lockhart Review

We stand by the notion that every life, from the very moment of conception, is to be cherished, valued and protected as a human life. Each and every human life carries unique and distinct genetic material, giving that life individual and immutable worth. We maintain that every human life has value – regardless of race, age, health, birth status, level of development in the womb or perceived value to society. We assert that an embryo, as a human life, should be ascribed the same value as a life that is fully viable and independent from his or her mother.

We observe that what may be perceived as progress in the realm of the life sciences, poses a significant risk to human life, especially at the embryonic stage, because life may be exploited for its research and ‘therapeutic’ potential. We further observe that there is a very real danger that current technologies may be employed to dehumanise embryos, given their supposed commercial or therapeutic potential.

We see ourselves as representing a Christian voice within Australia and we hold that our concerns reflect or perhaps typify, concerns that a reasonable Christian person would hold. We see that our concerns contribute in a valuable and considerable way to defining what should be considered as community standards in Australia.

In looking to the future, we, in conjunction with the majority of churches in Australia and the Australian Christian contingent, submit, in particular, that a ban on human cloning should be retained for the following reasons:

(1) Cloning, for any purpose, is ethically wrong.

Embryonic life must not, in any form or at any level, be used for any self-serving purpose. Though it may be argued by some that cloning may advance breakthroughs in areas of medical research, and ultimately, in areas benefiting the community at large, this is at the cost of destroying human life. Clearly, this results in making human life a commodity. Cloning has the potential to create a market – demand and supply – for human material. The concept of experimenting with human life, inevitably resulting in the destruction of that life, is abhorrent.

Moreover, we categorically reject any practice that involves the use of human embryos or embryonic material with animal material i.e. chimeric and hybrid embryos. The moral and ethical ramifications, arising out of cloning, and in particular, cloning involving

Office of Rev. Hon. Dr Gordon Moyes AC MLC

Parliament House Macquarie Street SYDNEY NSW 2000
Telephone: (02) 9230 3340 Facsimile: (02) 9230 2098
Email: gordon@gordonmoyes.com Website: www.gordonmoyes.com

animal material, lead us to classify such a practice as falling within the realms of crimes against humanity. Cloning violates the sanctity of human life and eradicates the individuality of each human being, by replicating genetic material unique to that person. The ability to replicate such material for *alleged* commendable use creates a potential for misuse of that material. Cloning for any purpose is ethically wrong.

(2) Cloning was not acceptable in 2002, and neither is it now

We concur with the ban on human cloning as entrenched in the *Prohibition of Human Cloning Act 2002*. Arguably, the value to be ascribed to this enactment by a couple of hundred parliamentarians far outweighs the value to be given to the recommendations made by a six-person Committee, a Committee that is largely less representative of community views than Parliamentarians. As a voice for the people, parliamentarians would more closely reflect community standards than a closed-set Committee. The serious moral and ethical implications of this practice have not washed away with the passage of time. If cloning was deemed not acceptable in 2002, then by the same token, neither is it now.

(3) Cloning is not necessary

Disease specific adult stem cells offer greater benefits as cloned embryonic stem cells. Apart from no ethical concern attached to their use, adult stem cells are more genetically stable, are more readily and cheaply obtained and may be readily multiplied. Cloning is not necessary.

(4) Cloning is at odds with community views

Human reproductive cloning is strongly opposed in the Australian community, and is banned in most developed countries. The potential for abusing this type of technology is great, and it offers nothing to the search for medical cures to human afflictions. It provides false hope based on unsound ethical, moral and scientific considerations.

We submit that the Commonwealth *Prohibition of Human Cloning Act 2002* and complementary State and Territory legislation be maintained.

We submit that all research causing harm or destruction to human embryos should be prohibited and appropriate legislation repealed. We submit that any legislation that seeks to permit human cloning for any reason should be rejected.

We submit that the Federal Parliament strongly resist pressure from commercial interests who are only interested in financial gain, not the public interest, common good or issues tied to morality.

We recommend that legislative emphasis be given to the utilisation of adult stem cells and cord blood stem cells, for research and therapeutic purposes.