



## Summary of Senators Statements

### Prohibition of Human Cloning for Reproduction and the Regulation of Human Embryo Research Amendment Bill 2006

Senate Debate: Hansard from 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> November 2006

Ref:

<http://www.aph.gov.au/hansard/senate/dailys/ds061106.pdf>

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## Issue

The Senate has voted to allow the creation of cloned human embryos for destructive research. This effectively overturns a unanimous decision by the Parliament to ban human cloning in 2002.

## ACL's position

[ACL opposes human cloning](#) whether for so-called 'therapeutic' uses or for reproductive purposes. Human life is precious, even in its very early stages, and it cannot be right to create a human embryo clone for the purposes of destructive research. Parliament unanimously voted to ban human cloning in 2002 and there have been no changes to either the ethics or the science since then that would justify any change to legislation. [Contrary to the hype](#), there is no proven potential for cloning as a method of finding new treatments for disease. Australia should take the opportunity to become a world leader in ethical biotechnologies such as cord blood and adult stem cells, which are already [delivering real therapies for a range of diseases](#).

## Background

In 2002, Parliament passed the Research Involving Human Embryos Act, which allowed research on 'surplus' human embryos created as part of the IVF process but not selected for implantation. While the majority of Christians did not support this, it was justified in many politicians' view because the unused embryos would eventually die anyway. Parliament also unanimously passed the Prohibition on Human Cloning Act, which forbade the creation of cloned human embryos.

The 2002 Acts included a provision for review in three years' time. This review began in 2005, chaired by Professor John Lockhart. Many public submissions were received and hearings took place across the country. The small Committee was dominated by scientists and lacked a minister of religion or a community representative.

On 19<sup>th</sup> December 2005, the Lockhart Committee presented its [report](#). Just four days later, on 23<sup>rd</sup> December, a Seoul University internal review panel found that [Hwang Woo Suk](#), the acclaimed researcher on whose findings a great deal of the Lockhart Report was based, had intentionally faked his 2004 and 2005 research in which he had claimed to have created patient-matched embryonic stem cells through cloning. He was subsequently indicted and prosecuted in May 2006.

News that Hwang had faked his research is significant because his two papers in *Science* were the only peer-reviewed cases of obtaining patient-matched embryonic stem cells by cloning. Peer-review is the process by which other independent scientists review the paper submitted to a journal to evaluate the research. Unless an article is peer-reviewed it is regarded as opinion or anecdote. Hwang's work has been proven false and there is no other case of peer-reviewed patient specific embryonic stem cells anywhere in the world at this point in time. Therefore the claim that 'therapeutic' cloning can create patient-specific cells to treat disease has not been proven.



## Responses to the Lockhart Report

The recommendations of the [Lockhart Report](#) were quite far reaching. The Committee recommended that the ban on 'reproductive cloning' should be maintained, but that so-called 'therapeutic' cloning should be introduced. As there would be difficulties in obtaining the required number of human eggs from women, animal eggs should also be used, leading to the creation of animal-human hybrids (this was originally in Senator Patterson's bill but was not in the final legislation as it was removed in an amendment by Senator Andrew Bartlett). These cloned embryos would be allowed to develop for up to 14 days, when they would be destroyed as their stem cells were harvested. It would remain illegal to implant a cloned embryo into a woman's uterus.

After discussing the Lockhart Report, Cabinet decided that it was not disposed to make any changes to the 2002 laws, despite Lockhart's recommendations. However, others within the Liberal Party were very keen to act on the recommendations of the Lockhart Report. As a result of their lobbying, the [PM indicated that he would not stand in the way of a conscience vote](#) on the issue. Two Private Members Bills were put forward: one by Democrats Senator Natasha Stott Despoja and another by Liberal Senator Kay Patterson. The Senate Community Affairs Committee conducted an [Inquiry into the Legislative Responses to the Lockhart Review](#), which heard from those supporting and opposing the proposals.

The Senate Committee produced a [majority report in favour of cloning](#) and a [minority report opposing any change to the law](#). Senator Stott Despoja waived her bill in favour of allowing the private members bill from Senator Kay Patterson, which was deemed more likely to succeed because she was from the governing party.

## Outcome of the Senate debate

Senator Patterson's bill was debated on 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> November. It had a very narrow passage through the Senate, with 34 in favour and 32 opposed at the third reading. If just one more Senator had voted against the bill it would not have passed as a tied vote would block the legislation. The [painful uncertainty of some Senators was evident](#) with several undecided about how they should vote until just before the division was called. Some were still wrestling with their consciences as the vote was cast and it was reported that at least one woke up the next morning wondering [if he had done the right thing](#).

Certain amendments were passed at the committee stage. Penalties for breaching the bill's provisions were increased from 10 years to 15 years. Senator Andrew Bartlett moved an amendment to prohibit the use of animal eggs, meaning that animal-human hybrid clones cannot be created. Unfortunately, there was no amendment to restrict the use of precursor cells from aborted female foetuses, meaning that such aborted foetuses can still be used as a supply of eggs. ACL will be lobbying for the House of Representatives to make this amendment to avoid the situation where the mother of a cloned embryo is an aborted foetus.

While disappointing, this was much closer than predicted. The close result reflected the very effective opposition to the Bill by diverse groups from scientific, Christian, medical, women's and



even civil libertarian groups. [Thousands of Australians emailed politicians](#) asking them to vote against the bill and ACL was able to have [15, 820 signatures](#) tabled in the Senate in a petition against the Bill, gathered through the [Make a Stand](#) website. The bill will now move to the House of Representatives, where it is expected to pass.

## Who voted for and against

At the third reading, the Senators divided as follows:

Those who opposed the Bill (noe)

Name	Party	State
Eric Abetz	Lib	TAS
Guy Barnett	Lib	TAS
Cory Bernardi	Lib	SA
Mark Bishop	ALP	WA
Ron Boswell	Nat	QLD
Paul Calvert	Lib	TAS
Grant Chapman	Lib	SA
Alan Eggleston	Lib	WA
Chris Ellison	Lib	WA
Steve Fielding	Family First	VIC
Concetta Fierravanti Wells	Lib	NSW
Mitch Fifield	Lib	VIC
Bill Heffernan	Lib	NSW
John Hogg	ALP	QLD
Gary Humphries	Lib	ACT
Annette Hurley	ALP	SA
Steve Hutchins	ALP	NSW
Barnaby Joyce	Nat	QLD
Rod Kemp	Lib	VIC
Ross Lightfoot	Lib	WA
Joe Ludwig	ALP	QLD
Sandy Macdonald	Nat	NSW
Julian McGauran	Lib	VIC
Nick Minchin	Lib	SA
Stephen Parry	ALP	TAS
Helen Polley	ALP	TAS
Michael Ronaldson	Lib	VIC
Santo Santoro	Lib	QLD

Those who supported the Bill (aye)

Name	Party	State
Judith Adams	Lib	WA
Lyn Allison	Dems	VIC
Andrew Bartlett	Dems	QLD
Bob Brown	Green	TAS
Carol Brown	ALP	TAS
Kim Carr	ALP	VIC
Richard Colbeck	Lib	TAS
Trish Crossin	ALP	NT
Chris Evans	ALP	WA
John Faulkner	ALP	NSW
Alan Ferguson	Lib	SA
Jeannie Ferris	Lib	SA
David Johnston	Lib	WA
Linda Kirk	ALP	SA
Kate Lundy	ALP	ACT
Anne McEwen	ALP	SA
Jan McLucas	ALP	QLD
Gavin Marshall	ALP	VIC
Claire Moore	ALP	QLD
Andrew Murray	Dems	WA
Kerry Nettle	Green	NSW
Kerry O'Brien	ALP	TAS
Kay Patterson	Lib	VIC
Marise Payne	Lib	NSW
Robert Ray	ALP	VIC
Nick Sherry	ALP	TAS
Rachel Siewert	Green	WA
Natasha Stott	Dems	SA



Nigel Scullion	CLP	NT
Ursula Stephens	ALP	NSW
Glenn Sterle		WA
	ALP	
John Watson	Lib	TAS

Despoja		
Judith Troeth	Lib	VIC
Russell Trood	Lib	QLD
Amanda Vanstone	Lib	SA
Ruth Webber	ALP	WA
Penny Wong	ALP	SA
Dana Wortley	ALP	SA

### Informal paired votes

Some Senators were not able to be present at the final vote because of other commitments that could not be changed. Senators agreed to 'pair' one another's votes, an informal system which allows a Senator who intends to vote in favour of a bill to be paired with a Senator who intends to oppose it. This means that neither side suffers from having absent members because their votes cancel each other out.

Those who opposed the Bill (noe)

Name	Party	State
George Brandis	Liberal	QLD
Helen Coonan	Liberal	NSW
Michael Forshaw	ALP	NSW
Brett Mason	Liberal	QLD
Christine Milne	Green	TAS

Those who supported the Bill (aye)

Name	Party	State
George Campbell	ALP	NSW
Ian Campbell	Liberal	WA
Stephen Conroy	ALP	VIC
Ian Macdonald	Liberal	QLD
Fiona Nash	Nats	NSW

### Statements from Senators who supported the Bill

(i.e. voted in favour of cloning, against ACL's position)

#### Sen ADAMS (Liberal, WA)

The decision I have made to support this bill has not been taken lightly...

It is important to remember that the word 'cloning' is used to describe replication of single cells and genetic material as well as whole human beings...While the basic SCNT technique is the same as that used to clone whole animals, there are several reasons why this will not happen...The Lockhart recommendations are very clear in stressing that reproductive cloning is unacceptable and the bill proposes severe penalties for anyone attempting to do so...There are numerous examples throughout history that show that if people had not sought to satisfy their own curiosity we would not have cures for some of the most devastating diseases and infections that we have today...Science must be allowed to progress.



**Sen ALLISON (Democrats, VIC)**

The laws passed in 2002 were, in an international sense, relatively conservative and they included a provision that the laws be reviewed after three years. ...Personally, I do not believe that a blastocyst, an undifferentiated embryonic collection of cells – whether taken from a fertility clinic or made through cloning – is a human life. It may have the potential to become a human life but it is not a conscious being.

We need to be alert to arguments that make women out to be victims and which may be used by those hiding their religiously based beliefs behind a façade of caring for the health and well-being of women.

**Sen BARTLETT (Democrats, QLD)**

I have not yet decided how I will vote...when it comes to the final question being put at the third reading stage. I am sufficiently supportive of the intent of the bill to vote in favour of giving it a second reading but I wish to listen to the debate at the committee stage of the process to see what amendments are put forward and to give further consideration to some matters before deciding on a final position.

The more I have examined the issues involved and the arguments put forward, the more unsure and conflicted I have become about some of the key issues – a process that has continued over the last week and continues as I speak...

My concerns with some parts of the legislation are not scientific, they are ethical...My concerns go to the potential wider ethical consequences for our society and some of the individuals within it...I am one of those who believe that the ends do not on their own justify the means. Indeed the means by which we pursue something do tend to influence the end that we actually reach...I am very uncomfortable with the fact that the very first step our nation takes towards legalising the creation of a human embryo through cloning should be accompanied by a very specific assessment that this embryo has a lesser status and a lower intrinsic value than a human embryo created by egg and sperm. Frankly, I can live with that in the context of the specific activities the legislation seeks to legalise, but the rationale and values accompanying that are not quarantined within a single piece of legislation; they do become part of our social and scientific ethical base into the future...That concerns me and I will continue to wrestle with the concerns I have about that...

**Sen Bob BROWN (Green, TAS)**

I also intend to support [the bill]. I came to that decision last night. I slept on it and I woke up feeling the same way this morning. It is not an easy decision...There are strong safeguards in this legislation to stop it being used maliciously or against what our society in general would find acceptable.

There has been very great alarm and concern about the misuse of science...It is going to become part of the business of parliaments around the world to be discussing the use of a range of technologies including nanotechnology, robots, artificial intelligence, and indeed genetics right



through the rest of human existence. Because if we do not keep a sobriety about it – if we do not keep a reasonable lid on what potentially could become out of control science – then humanity as we know it will not go on into the future.

Are we doing good or are we doing harm? In the end, I have come to the conclusion that this legislation will do more good than harm. But I commit myself along with all fellow senators to being a watchdog on the future. For those who might think that scientists are the best people to make ethical judgements, I disagree. The very fact that we have a \$1 trillion armaments industry on this planet flowing out of science with everything from cluster bombs through to hydrogen bombs shows that this is not so. Who is the moral arbiter in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? It has to be the democratically elected makers of the law, listening to the society which, from time to time, puts them in and takes them away.

I will be watching carefully...We will be introducing legislation if we see this or other technologies being abused in our laboratories by corporations and people who have lost the ultimate value in medical experimentation which is a commitment...to the good.

#### **Sen Carol BROWN (Labor, TAS)**

I am unconditionally opposed to human reproductive cloning...but that is not what this bill is about...Why are we being called on to vote on bills that deal with matters of faith and belief? Without wishing to sound simplistic, science moves much faster than articles of faith...The personal beliefs of a few cannot be allowed to stop work that will see humanity progress, and what better progress can we imagine than progress in the areas of research into diabetes, motor neurone disease, Alzheimer's disease, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy and Parkinson's disease.

Beliefs reverently held are bound at times to collide with equally strongly held scientific beliefs. While I believe that in such debates the church plays a healthy role when it challenges science, it has to make its case and show good reason why science should not proceed. On this occasion, in my opinion, it has failed to make the case.

#### **Sen CARR (Labor, VIC)**

As a humanist, I am not much impressed by the more extremist religious hysteria that has been associated with the opposition to this bill. The emotive and often irrational anti-scientific fundamentalism that has been thrown up at members of this Senate is not a fair basis for assessment for the merits of this particular bill, which seeks to legalise medical research and in my judgment may well do more than any other piece of other legislation that we have considered in recent years to enhance human dignity...To say that we cannot follow that particular path because it is simply because it shares some features with another path we do not want to follow – that is reproductive cloning – is, quite frankly, superstition. I would have thought that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, superstition is not a basis for legislation. And, given what is at stake, it is cruel and life-denying superstition.



### **Sen COLBECK (Liberal, TAS)**

This has been an extremely difficult process for me. It is very exposing to stand up in this place and, in front of the nation, on an issue of such importance as this, put yourself out there on the public record...it has taken me a long time to sort this out and work out what my general direction is going to be.

My conscience told me that I had effectively crossed the Rubicon when I decided to support stem cell research in 2002...But having made that decision still did not take away the concerns that I had in relation to the regulation or management of the supply of human body parts, specifically eggs, to deal with this process...Beyond such state legislation, eggs, adult and embryonic stem cells are not necessarily nationally covered in a consistent way. Therefore, in my view, it may be argued that regulations may be developed as part of this process. However, the growing complexity of non-blood based human-tissue based therapies and therapies yet to be devised – whether adult or embryonic stem cell therapies – suggests to me that an overarching national regulatory approach is required.

### **Sen CROSSIN (Labor, NT)**

It is a matter of deciding whether the next step in scientific research is warranted and whether or not we should allow the advancement of science to unlock another mystery or a discovery about future prospects relating to people's health...I should not be the person who stands in the way of this scientific advancement...I understand that for some an embryo is an embryo. But for me, a cell that is fertilized by somatic cell nuclear transfer is intrinsically different from one that is fertilized by a sperm...I see people who are suffering. I cannot vote against this legislation which provides them with a little chance or hope.

### **Sen FAULKNER (Labor, NSW)**

If politicians seek to limit and constrain scientific research, their reasons must be strong.

Fertilisation marks the beginning of a process that ultimately may become a human life. I believe that in 2006 public opinion on methods of contraception, termination of pregnancy, IVF, and embryonic stem cell research shows that our community also draws a strong distinction between a microscopic group of undifferentiated cells without heart or brain, and a human being...it is on the basis of that distinction that I will vote in favour of this legislation.

### **Sen FERGUSON (Liberal, SA)**

I did not find this a difficult decision to make...There are a number of reasons why I intend to support this bill but I preface those remarks by saying that I am a Christian and a regular churchgoer...As far as I am concerned, this is not a matter of a Christian or a Christian church having a singular view.

Thirteen years ago, my eldest daughter was diagnosed with MS. I do not expect that the research that would be entered into by the passage of this bill is likely to bring a miracle cure; no-one expects miracle cures. But if through the passage of this bill we could give scientists the ability to find a cure for many of the diseases which are now incurable I would never forgive myself if I



voted against the bill and did not give medical research the extra possible opportunity to succeed in finding a cure...

**Sen FERRIS (Liberal, SA)**

Our country's researchers should be given the scientific support and legislative protection to undertake the next step in stem cell research...The Australian community is ready to take the next step...To me, an egg, which is not fertilized by sperm, will not be implanted and will not be used after 14 days and has not been scientifically demonstrated as being able to become a human baby does not enjoy the status of a living human being.

**Sen JOHNSTON (Liberal, WA)**

I think it is all too easy to allow my own personal religious and moral beliefs to distract or temper me on the issue of stem cell research when my family and I are all in relatively good health. Even if I wanted to get into a debate about when human life begins or what individual rights should be bestowed upon an embryo that has been cloned for therapeutic purposes, I do not know if I personally should have that luxury to preach to families whose daughter is a quadriplegic or whose father has motor neurone disease and is slowly watching his body die around him whilst his mind stays perfectly alert. Those families do not want to hear about my religious convictions; they simply want my positive support, my participation and our collective help to find a cure...There is a world of difference between therapeutic and reproductive cloning and, whilst I am respectful of the contrary view, I utterly reject the implication that this is the thin end of the wedge.

**Sen KIRK (Labor, SA)**

I appreciate – although I don't share – the view that SCNT crosses an ethical boundary...My family has a long history of cystic fibrosis...On my mother's side, my family has lost five members to this disease. Stem cell research offers great hope to people with cystic fibrosis and I am pleased to say that significant progress is being made.

**Sen LUNDY (Labor, ACT)**

I believe the public benefits of regulated research utilizing therapeutic cloning will have a positive benefit for society...I note that many senators who claim the rights of women are undermined by this bill are the same senators who have opposed the use of IVF and indeed the right to choose to terminate an unwanted pregnancy...The hypocrisy is noted.

I have listened carefully to the contributions of others so far who have formed a view to oppose this legislation. I am surprised at the level of reliance on thin end of the wedge arguments that evoke fear of the unknown.

**Sen Ian MACDONALD (Liberals, QLD)**

*Senator Ian Macdonald was originally scheduled to be absent when the vote was taken and had arranged a pair with Senator Brandis who intended to oppose the bill but would also be absent. The vote was brought forward and Senator Macdonald was able to be present but chose to honour his commitment to the Senator Brandis.*



I am one of those who believes that anything that can possibly be done to give a better quality of life and possible cures in the future to some of the diseases and disabilities that afflict my fellow Australians deserves to be given a chance...I look at the bill in this way: I have faith and confidence in the ethics and honesty of our scientists and in the regulations governing research. Accordingly I do not accept some of the dire predictions that have been made as to where the passage of this bill might lead.

**Sen McEWEN (Labor, SA)**

I respect the views of those who are opposes to these amendments and acknowledge that, in the main, opponents of the bill have put their case in a measured and respectful way, although unfortunately that has not been the situation in all cases...but I have not been swayed by the opponents of the bill because I do not think they have made their case and what case they have made is, in the main, based on beliefs and convictions that I do not share. Some people say that this bill enables scientists to create life with the intention of destroying it. I disagree with that proposition. I do not accept that this legislation creates what can properly be called a human being.

**Sen McLUCAS (Labor, QLD)**

The proposed legislation provides the framework and the safeguards that our community requires to ensure that research using human embryos is conducted ethically and safely and that is why I will be supporting the bill...I think the fundamental question that needs to be answered is this: if research into somatic cell nuclear transfer is allowed to proceed in Australia can treatments, therapies and cures for motor neurone disease, MS, chronic diabetes et cetera be found? The answer is maybe. But if research into SCNT is not allowed to proceed, can treatments for these debilitating conditions be found? Definitely not in Australia. Research will proceed in other countries in the world, and the reality is that only those who have capacity to access support in those countries – that is those we are wealthy enough to travel to those countries and pay for those services – will be able to access that assistance. That is not most of us.

**Sen MARSHALL (Labor, Vic)**

I have carefully considered the content and effect of this bill, but I have not agonized over it for a single second...I will not vote to deprive our children and subsequent generations of future treatments and cures by restricting the medical and scientific pioneers of today unnecessarily. Unashamedly I vote for our children and I at least will put families first.

**Sen MOORE (Labor, Qld)**

Whilst I do not get into the argument about people leaving Australia and going elsewhere, I do accept the really big question, which was raised consistently in our inquiry, that if this technology is available overseas and if advances are made, then how can we as a community possibly stop Australians in our community having access to successful scientific advances that were achieved overseas.



### **Sen MURRAY (Democrats, WA)**

This bill has been characterized by some as religion versus science, belief versus reason. If this is true at all, it is only true to an extent. The ranks of those against these initiatives are filled with those who wear religion as a badge, but they are also filled with those who do not; and the ranks of those who support Senator Patterson's bill are also filled with those who are churchgoers. So to describe this bill as religion versus science is somewhat simplistic and probably inaccurate.

Personally, I am too conscious of the past and present of history and practice to be inclined to automatically accept the urgings of many religious leaders. I am too conscious of some of the old religions' attachment to profit, power and politics, of the practice of hypocrisy, of pockets of paedophilia, of bellicosity and hatreds, of misogyny and homophobia, to be unquestioning of their orders. As for some of the new religions, they seem to have the vices of the old, as far as I can see, with a particular love of profit...No, I am all for the old fashioned idea of faith...I like people who practice faith, hope, light, peace, charity and good works; I like people who are fallible, tolerant and human. Fortunately, I know quite a few like that so it turns out one can have faith after all.

There are of course mad scientists as well as religious maniacs. Science has given us many of the evils of our time: environmental, social and economic disasters. This bill, however, is not about harming but about helping...I do not fear that mad scientists will pervert the intention of this legislation, not because I do not expect Australia to have its share of mad scientists but because I think the legislation gives us appropriate safeguards against them.

### **Sen NETTLE (Greens, NSW)**

I do not share the view of many who oppose this legislation that every egg, every sperm and every embryo is a human being...Much of the stem cell research that is being done is in private hands, and it is currently generating massive profits for the biotech industry...This brings with it the commercialization of human reproductive material...The Greens see the establishment of a national stem cell bank as a fundamentally important way of ensuring that embryonic stem cell research is well regulated, that it remains in the public domain and that it delivers public health benefits.

### **Sen PATTERSON (Liberal, VIC)**

Before I speak to the bill I want to clear up something which, until now, I have refrained from addressing. During my speech in the second reading debate for the Research Involving Human Embryos Bill 2002, I made the following statement: "I believe strongly that it is wrong to create human embryos solely for research. 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."

It should be noted that this statement was not made in relation to the Prohibition of Human Cloning Act; it was made in the context of the creation of sperm-and-egg embryos for research, and this bill continues the prohibition of the creation of an embryo using a human egg and a human sperm, except for the purpose of assisted reproductive technology, or ART. I stand by that statement today as consistent with asking you to vote for this bill.



My statement has been used by some people to discredit this bill by implying that I have changed my mind about issues, but they have quoted me out of context.

I see a sperm and egg embryo as different from a skin cell that is cloned using an egg as an incubator. It is not a fertilized egg, it will never be permitted to develop beyond 14 days and it cannot be implanted into the body of a woman or an animal.

### **Sen SHERRY (Labor, TAS)**

My approach to issues around human life has been a socially conservative one. It is not a social conservatism based on an active involvement in religion or Christianity...It was very difficult for me to come to a conclusion on this matter. The central problem is moral and ethical; there are two difficult moral and ethical issues to resolve...it is with great trepidation and worry that I view developments around experimenting with the fundamental building blocks of human life...The other moral and ethical issue I had to consider was the possibility – and I do say possibility – and the hope that there may be some scientific advance as a consequence of this legislation that would see the improved diagnosis and treatment of currently untreatable diseases.

On this occasion I have to say, without a great deal of confidence and with a great deal of worry about where we are headed, that I have come to the considered view that I will support the second reading of the bill...If the life of even a few people can be improved by advances in research, and thus diagnosis and treatment in this area, certainly that is a more important ethical and moral consideration when weighed against the ethical and moral considerations of experimenting with the building block of life. It was not an easy decision I came to last night after a great deal of thought and grappling with what is an extremely difficult issue.

### **Sen STOTT DESPOJA (Democrats, SA)**

I am a strong supporter of the Lockhart Review and I am a strong supporter of the bill before us...For opponents to suggest that we should not pass this legislation because of what might happen or what might be sought in the future is ludicrous...Around the world somatic cell nuclear transfer is a widely accepted technique for progressing stem cell research. It is not a radical agenda...We risk losing more of our best and brightest scientists if they are feel thwarted from pursuing such cutting edge technology...If we allow this bill to pass, we can ensure that Australians benefit not only from the outcome but from the knowledge that is gained in the process and the increased speed with which progress may come about if Australia's innovative prowess is allowed to be brought to bear on this challenge.

In the absence of federal government action on the Lockhart Review's recommendations, the Victorian and Queensland governments have indicated that they may go it alone – that they will legislate to permit somatic cell nuclear transfer. I believe a nationally consistent framework that permits research using somatic cell nuclear transfer is necessary and preferable.



**Sen TROETH (Liberal, VIC)**

Looking at the evidence that has been given by eminent scientists through the Lockhart review and by many other bodies of opinion through the country and looking at the recommendations of the Lockhart review about what should be allowed and what should be prohibited I can only come to the conclusion that we should pass this legislation.

**Sen VANSTONE (Liberal, SA)**

I will support the legislation. My mind is made up and it did not take long...I will support the legislation because I think science is what offers hope.

Because there has been, over my lifetime, a decline in the moral authority of the churches, I think we have to construct moral agreements ourselves, together...We will all have different religious commitments. We have to respect each other's right to have those commitments but not ever expect that this place will legislate them for us. Between us we have to come to moral decisions on which we agree that have the authority of reason and the discipline of consent. We have to choose things because they are ethically appropriate and not because we seek to claim that they have some divine warrant.

**Sen WEBBER (Labor, WA)**

Science is ready to move beyond the limits imposed by the 2002 laws, and Australia is at risk of being left behind the international community...When opponents argue that cloning is cloning, regardless of whether the purpose is to create embryos for destruction in research or to implant embryos to enable birth, it is they who are being deliberately inaccurate. Cloning, or copying cells, is not the same as cloning for the purposes of creating identical human beings.

**Sen WONG (Labor, SA)**

We as a community seek to weigh the various ethical considerations and potential benefits. The community, by and large, supports IVF, which does involve the destruction or succumbing of embryos, because the benefit is seen to outweigh the negative consequences. In truth, what we do is place the potential benefit to couples or people with infertility problems and their desire to have a child above the rights of excess embryos which are produced. I am able to accept that ethical framework. Similarly, we also permit excess IVF embryos to be used for research and we do so, frankly, not just because of the purpose for which they were created but because of their potential benefit to research. I find it extremely difficult to accept that the ethical dilemmas posed by an entity created by somatic cell nuclear transfer, which has less potential for continued existence, mean that it should be accorded greater rights by this parliament than an excess embryo created by IVF.

Those who support this legislation have been accused of peddling hope or of manipulating people's hopes. It seems to me that there are some on the other side who have peddled fear. I personally always try to look to hope rather than fear as a basis for behaviour and action.



## **Statements from those who opposed the Bill**

(i.e. voted against cloning, in agreement with the ACL position)

### **Sen ABETZ (Liberal, TAS)**

Once we countenance the destruction of human embryos for research, albeit restricted to a specific class, we countenance the deliberate destruction of human embryos...We are to legalise the deliberate creation of human embryos only to destroy them in the name of science and in the hope of some unknown miracle cure. To me, that is repugnant to every instinct within me. And the so-called safeguards are meaningless. Really, they are worth nothing. If it is right to destroy an embryo up to 14 days old why not when it is 14 days and one second old or 14 days and one minute old – or for that matter, 15 days old, or indeed, 20 days old. What is the moral and ethical difference? There is none, other than that the embryo would simply be even further developed...Once the destruction of human embryos, deliberately created for destruction, is justified, then the 14 day limit will be seen as simply irrelevant and extended in the name of so-called scientific progress.

### **Sen BARNETT (Liberal, TAS)**

My summation of the inquiry is that the science does not add up and the ethics – I think it is pretty much agreed across the board – are controversial. In short, the case for change has not been made...Dolly the Sheep was created using the same cloning techniques to be legalized under the cloning bill currently before the Senate. Good science requires good ethics.

As a person with type 1 diabetes and with a father who died of motor neurone disease, I can relate to this issue...It is because of this empathy and concern that I support adult stem cell research....adult stem cell research avoids the destruction of a human embryo and is actually delivering, in spades, therapies and cures...Professor Bob Williamson of the Australian Academy of Science conceded that therapeutic cloning is not of importance in giving cells to treat patients and that these are far more likely to come from so-called adult stem cells...Why pursue the contentious practice of cloning when an entirely ethical source of stem cells, superior for both treatment and research, is readily available in our own tissues and in the blood of a baby's cord?

We will have two classes of human embryo – an A and a B team. The proponents of the bill say that the B team will only be the size of a full stop, will live in a Petri dish, will bring benefits to the world through research and, yes, will be killed after 14 days. So the usefulness of the human embryo to society outweighs the dignity and respect that all humans and human embryos deserve. This is a sad utilitarian argument which sends a terrible signal to the frail, aged, disabled and vulnerable in our society.

### **Sen BERNARDI (Liberal, SA)**

An embryo at any stage of development is the beginning of a human life. This is supported by the Lockhart report. It is a fact supported no less passionately by every woman hoping to have a baby on learning that she is pregnant. Also beyond dispute is the fact the cloned embryos could ultimately result in cloned human beings. It is a case of simply adding a womb and hoping for the best.



Just as we have become desensitized to an increasing level of violence in movies, just as we have become desensitized to an increasing level of bad language in our music and just as we are becoming desensitized to the use of quasi-pornographic images in advertising, so too are we becoming desensitized to the creation of human life for the sole purpose of medical experimentation.

There are a number of eminent scientists who are trying to suggest that embryos are not really human life – somehow they are regarded as lesser. Somehow we are expected to believe that an embryo at 14 days is less valuable than one at 15 days, 21 days or 28 days... Even the supporters of the bill acknowledge that it is dangerous. They acknowledge that it is dangerous for women who may be encouraged to supply eggs. In her speech, Senator Stott Despoja said that if there were not enough women to donate eggs for the research to continue then tough, the scientists will have to do without. I would suggest... that we should adopt this exact same approach in regard to those who say that the more than 104,830 embryos currently available for embryonic stem cell research are not enough.

#### **Sen BOSWELL (Nationals, QLD)**

Senators will recall the urgency and intensity of the earlier debate, when many agonized over whether to support research on excess IVF embryos. Basically, we were given a long list of diseases that we were told would benefit from the research. Understandably that persuaded many senators to vote for the original legislation in 2002. Everyone was very careful to draw the line at creating embryos for research – even the mover of the bill before us now.

How many senators are aware of what has happened since? Surely we could have expected a long list of studies into various diseases using the excess IVF embryos... As was made clear by the NMHRC in answer to the Senate committee on the bill, only one licence has been issued for the generation of embryonic stem cell lines aimed at treating a particular condition. To date, 30 of these excess embryos have been used, resulting in the production of the stem cell line, Endeavour 1... Now the same people who urged us to vote for embryo research in 2002, the same people who put forward a long list of diseases but have yet to research into them, are coming to us again and saying we need human embryo cloning so we can research this long list of diseases. The question is, what have they been doing since 2002?

#### **Sen CHAPMAN (Liberal, SA)**

The Australian parliament first considered legislation on cloning and embryos experimentation in 2002 on a conscience vote... When those bills came before us, no parliamentarian spoke in favour of creating embryos for the purpose of research and experimentation... The very fact that we are debating this bill proves the veracity of the slippery slope argument... It was claimed [the 2002 legislation] went as far as should go and needed to go on this issue. Yet here we are, barely four years later, debating another bill to remove restrictions contained in the earlier legislation. I say the slippery slope case is proved. How long before we will be back here again in the name of science removing the very limited protections claimed to exist in this bill?

Those supporting this bill attempt to rationalize embryos with less than 14 days of life as being



'pre-embryonic' and available for experimentation and destruction. Make no mistake: that cluster of cells is the same way you and I, and all the rest of us, started our lives. Experiments which subject the zygote or embryo to any significant risk are the ethical equivalent of the infamous medical experiments that were inflicted on unwilling and uninformed victims in the Nazi death camps. Ends do not justify the means.

I am a strong supporter of science, technology, research and development, and I certainly want biomedical research to produce cures for terrible diseases. But there are alternatives to creating embryos for experimentation and research. We should not abandon respect for life by denoting embryos as a means to an end.

**Sen EGGLESTON (Liberal, WA)**

I am opposed to this legislation because I believe that the Senate is yet again being rushed into enacting laws to suit the interests of the biotechnology industry before there has been time to fully appreciate the implications of these proposals and give adequate consideration to whether changes are needed for the regulatory regime surrounding stem cell research. I am deeply concerned by the observations of both the Chief Scientist, Jim Peacock, and Associate Professor Sherley, who are on opposite sides of the debate, that federal parliamentarians did not appear to be well informed about the science of stem cell research or the ethical and regulatory considerations needed to surround the use of such technology...An example of this is the emphasis that some colleagues seem to place on the fact that sperm are not involved in the creation of a cloned embryo, apparently not understanding that sperm are just a vehicle to transport nuclear material and that they play the same role as the glass pipette in the laboratory in making an embryo.

I am profoundly concerned that the problems associated with the development of stem cell therapies are being glossed over in the haste to enact this legislation before the Senate. For example, it has emerged in the last four years that there is a great deal of uncertainty as to whether embryonic stem cells or adult stem cells have the most potential in providing the basis for further research for the development of therapies for human illnesses. Four years ago, we were given the impression that embryonic stem cells had the greatest potential and that adult stem cells would be of very limited value in developing therapies. However, recently here in Parliament House, we have heard from Professor Sherley and Professor Mackay-Sim that this assumption is far from being the case and that the balance is now tipping towards adult stem cells having the most potential to benefit mankind in treating illness.

I am particularly concerned about the question of permitting therapeutic cloning because allowing therapeutic cloning is a threshold which, once crossed, also means the de facto enablement of cloning humans. This is because once a blastocyst is created from cloning if placed in a woman's uterus, it would develop into a baby...I believe the supporters of this bill are extremely naïve to imagine that such a ban on cloning humans could not and would not be broken.

**Sen ELLISON (Liberal, WA)**

In 2002, the option was available for any Senator or Member to move an amendment to allow for therapeutic cloning whilst banning reproductive cloning – but no-one did. Many members and



Senators who now support this bill spoke emphatically against human cloning...We do have to consider the merits, scientifically, of any proposal such as this, as serious as it is, and also the ethical aspects which apply to that. After all, what we are doing is looking at changes to the law in a short space of time where just four years ago we drew a line in the sand and said that therapeutic cloning was not to happen...I am opposed to this bill for more than one reason...There are aspects which involve doing away with any constraint over the export of embryos overseas and there is also the issue of women's health in relation to the harvesting of eggs.

### **Sen FIELDING (Vic)**

Family First strongly opposes the cloning of human embryos for research for three reasons: firstly, the science, which tells us this will not produce the much hyped miracle cures; secondly, the exploitation of Australian women where there are health dangers for women whose eggs will be needed for cloning; and, thirdly, the fact that cloning human embryos crosses a major ethical line because, for the first time, we would be deliberately creating a human being with the intention of destroying it.

### **Sen FEIRRAVANTI-WELLS (Liberal, NSW)**

I seek leave to table a petitioning document...This document contains 15,820 electronic signatures from all over Australia opposing human cloning, including therapeutic cloning. [Leave granted].

There have been serious and genuine critiques of the science, methodology and ethical paradigms employed by the Lockhart Committee. A critique is not a personal attack...It has been stated in this chamber that to claim that this bill will promote further, more radical research, including reproductive cloning, is a reprehensible slur on the advocates of this bill. The sad facts are that the evidence from overseas, especially in the UK – which is held up increasingly as the model to follow – confirms that the slippery slope is well greased.

This is about community standards and the dignity of legislation. We need to be sure that the Australian people are prepared to make the quantum leap of creating embryos for the scientific purpose of research and then destroying them – only four years after this parliament comprehensively rejected it.

The media has portrayed this issue as simply being about finding cures for debilitating diseases, when in fact the evidence before the inquiry suggested that such cures were extremely unlikely from cloning. Cloning raises complex scientific, medical and ethical issues. All deserve consideration...Having been a member of the Senate Community Affairs Committee and having been afforded the opportunity to read much of the material and to question all the witnesses who appeared before the inquiry, I am in no doubt that this legislation should be opposed. It crosses a scientific and ethical boundary that should not be crossed. Once crossed, we can never return. Once crossed, no parliamentarian will be able to withstand the next demand and the demands thereafter.



### **Sen FIFIELD (Liberal, VIC)**

I can see the moral inconsistency in supporting the use of excess ART embryos for research but not supporting it in the circumstance proposed in this bill. What troubles me more and what for me is the threshold issue is the fact that the proposal is to create human clones...I cannot cross the line to create cloned human embryos that have the potential to become cloned human beings. I am not convinced that it is right to create human clones even if they are only allowed to progress to embryonic stage.

### **Sen HOGG (Labor, QLD)**

This is both a scientific and an ethical debate. It is the intersection of the desires of science and scientists and the dignity of humanity. Scientists will always press their research to the limits of current knowledge and beyond. If they did not do this, then many of the basics of human life today would not be at our disposal. However, all of what the scientists do should and must be constrained by ethical values.

The legislation before us today seeks to allow the development of cloned human embryos for research purposes. I stress the words 'cloned' and 'human' quite deliberately. The subsequent purpose or use of a cloned human embryo cannot give any justification for the initial action. No matter how seemingly well intentioned the subsequent purpose or use might be, the initial action in creating the cloned human embryo crosses fundamental ethical lines...Cloning, whether to create embryos for destruction in research or for implantation leading to birth, is still cloning...Having crossed the ethical line, where to next?

### **Sen HUMPHRIES (Liberal, ACT)**

This legislation...redefines the ethical boundaries of Australian science more fundamentally than any decision of this parliament in recent memory...The crux of this debate and, in fact, the sole question that we face in this debate is whether this parliament will authorize and enshrine in legislation the bringing forth of human life – human embryos created through cloning in other words – in order that those human lives can be used and then destroyed in research...I believe there is no principle that can justify the creation of human life in order to destroy it.

There is a striking disjunction between on the one hand claims about the need for access to embryos so that embryonic stem cells can be procured and research conducted to relieve disease and, on the other, the fact that only one licence has been issued for such a purpose. How many embryos have currently been used across all areas under the current legislative regime? The answer from the NHMRC was just 178 – out of 100,000 embryos. If embryonic stem cells are the miracle weapons to fight disease...then why so few licences?

### **Sen HURLEY (Labor, SA)**

I majored in biochemistry and microbiology for my Bachelor of Science degree and it was tempting to get immersed only in the scientific detail of this debate...I am convinced also from my review of the information that using adult stem cells will not, certainly over the short to medium term, substitute for somatic cell nuclear transfer. That means by restricting SCNT technology, we run a clear risk of not developing technologies that will assist human medicine.



However, despite my view that voting against this bill will restrict scientific discovery, I do not think that it will be critical to advances in this area in Australia...I do not think we have clarified the ethical parameters that will be tolerated by our society, and it is therefore impossible to put in place adequate policy to cover the justified concerns put during this debate. In particular, I believe we need to proceed cautiously and conservatively with regard to any science that deals with human life and reproduction. Therefore, it is a difficult decision, but I have decided that I will not support this bill.

### **Sen HUTCHINS (Labor, NSW)**

I believe this legislation will inevitably lead to the opportunity in a few years time for proponents of this research to come in here and say that the only way we can really do this properly is to clone ourselves – to clone humans. They will say, “I need that kidney,” or “I need that liver.”

I am very concerned about the moral and ethical lines that we will cross as a result of passing this legislation.

### **Sen JOYCE (Nationals, QLD)**

It is put forward in the Lockhart report that “embryos created by egg and sperm may have a different social or relational significance from embryos formed by nuclear transfer.” That is stating that human life created by this technique has not rights because it has no social or relational significance...Refugees have no social or relational significance. So are we by default now presupposing that they have no rights or have we come to the conceit that we can pick and choose our moral premises which can fluctuate as required from issue to issue?

If the embryo created was allowed to grow, would he or she be something akin to a slave, a person that has no social or relational significance or would it be that a slave would have more rights because they may attain these rights whilst those conceived under this legislation would be defined as having none and no prospect of attaining any? Do we implicitly, by association in legislation, say that ovaries are now commercial property disassociated from the person and as property, can be extracted from prisoners in China or aborted fetuses in Australia? These so called ‘useful parts’ will be used in their thousands as test materials for the effects of drugs on human life...Did Dolly the Sheep have a different moral status from Mary’s little lamb because Dolly grew from a cloned embryo...does that mean she as of less intrinsic value, different moral status or less equal to all the other little lambs?

### **Sen MACDONALD (Nationals, NSW)**

I remember the debate we had on embryonic stem cell research in 2002. It was a very difficult debate, and the parliament was divided on the issue. However, we were not divided on the issue of cloning. There was no voice raised saying that we should allow the creation of embryo clones for research. Now it is 2006. We are not having the stem cell debate all over again. We have embryonic stem cell research in Australia. It is already happening. Today, we are simply having a debate about cloning. And I have to say I have not seen sufficient evidence to make me change my opposition to creating human embryo clones for research or reproduction.



It is a huge proposition put to me that I should support human embryo cloning. It is a major step to go from using excess IVF embryos for research to creating embryos that are the clone of a human being and using them for research. You would need ironclad guarantees that it was going to solve all the woes of medical research in order to go ahead. And they are not there. No-one has even created a human embryo clone yet. No-one has derived stem cells from one, and no-one has proven the technique will be therapeutic in any way.

I was astonished to learn from the NHMRC that only nine licences have been given since the 2002 debate. Only four of these relate to deriving embryonic stem cells and only one – imagine that: only one – has been given with the aim of treating a specific condition. What did we go through all that debate for last time? It makes me extremely wary of listening to the claims by the same people this time around for cloning.

### **Sen McGAURAN (Liberal, VIC)**

If you believe that life begins at conception then what choice do you have but to reject this bill? The private members bill before us today deals with life at its very beginning yet it is no less precious than at any other time. It is worth noting that the first seven days of human life after conception is the greatest period of growth in the whole human life span.

We should not even be creating the array of embryo types listed in the bill...once an embryo is created it all becomes a horror story. That life is created by scientists to carve up and destroy within 14 days has all the pride equal to a Nuremberg rally - a rally of Dr Strangelove chanting for such weird experiments as the creation of hybrid embryos, mixing humans with animals. Ironically the Nuremberg code titled 'Directives for human experimentation' was developed post World War Two and came out of the experience of some of the terrible research done in that era. The declaration has been updated many times since then and clearly lays out a worldwide standard. It says that you may not do destructive research on human beings and you may not use one human being and kill them or harm them in order to gain knowledge or advantage for another human being.

If this legislation is passed, we are crossing the scientific Rubicon; there will be no turning back. The scientists who have controlled this debate to date will be back again demanding greater freedoms for their research. Their record is on the board.

### **Sen MILNE (Green, TAS)**

*(Senator Milne was not present at the vote but took part in a pair)*

Respect for human life and dignity is at the heart of our legal and moral code. Equality is the basis of our democracy. We are putting in place a regime that does not respect a SCNT embryo in the same way that we respect an egg/sperm embryo and nor do we consider it equal.

As a concerned citizen opposed to cloning and increasingly concerned about the capital and military application of science, I need to know who will benefit and who will bear the risk of cloning experiments...The people who will benefit immediately are the drug and pharmaceutical companies and the people who are at immediate risk are women.



The cloning research that is proposed can go nowhere without women. Women's bodies are required to provide ova. The procedure has risks both long term and short term. It is clear that women will not provide ova without incentive either financial or preference in IVF or altruistic. All involve exploitation. There is not a sufficient supply of eggs for this experimentation and will not be without payment or inducement or criminality involved.

I recognise the promise of adult stem cells for research and therapeutic purposes and as with all others hope that it may produce the cures so longed for, but I reject human cloning. I reject human-animal hybrids. I reject the commodification of women.

#### **Sen MINCHIN (Liberal, SA)**

Probably the most important role of the state is the protection of innocent life...To apply that injunction to this bill does require one to decide what is human life that would command the state's protection. I would not have thought that there was any real dispute about the status of a human embryo created by whatever means.

I, for one, do not consider this semantic attempt to distinguish between cloned embryos and other human embryos at all convincing. It is the cellular composition of an embryo that gives it the integrity of human life, not the manner of its inception or the swiftness of its destruction...If one accepts that the state's obligation is to protect innocent human life then that obligation must be triggered at the point at which human life commences. For that reason I remain strongly opposed to all embryonic stem cell research because it necessarily involves the destruction of human embryos. That is why I opposed the 2002 legislation and that is why I oppose this even more profoundly objectionable bill, involving as it does the permission of cloning techniques outlawed by this parliament just four years ago.

#### **Sen POLLEY (Labor, TAS)**

This science, whichever way you choose to look at it, would require a human to be cloned...Back in 2002 not a single senator or member chose to move an amendment to allow for therapeutic cloning whilst banning reproductive cloning. That is exactly what is happening now though through this legislation we are considering today. So, if the ethical boundaries and opinions of people can change so quickly in just four years, it leaves one to wonder exactly what we could be back here debating in four years time. Those who have changed their mind from their position on this issue are saying at the moment that they are opposed to reproductive cloning. But how do we know that in a few short years we will not be back here debating whether it is appropriate for women to be implanted with cloned embryos or whether it is appropriate for scientists to be able to create another little Johnny for parents who are sick with grief over a lost child?

What is the point of crossing this ethical boundary, a boundary which has long been recognised in medicine – the creation of cloned human life only for the purpose of its destruction in the pursuit of knowledge – when there is already so much hope and promise from adult stem cells?



**Sen RONALDSON (Liberal, VIC)**

I must say to the chamber that my initial views on this matter are not where I have ended up...I am not convinced by the arguments of where life does or does not begin. I do not pretend to have the answer to that but I have heard enough to convince me that there is a chance that that small dot, the size of a head of a pin, may be life. Equally it may not be. But if it is, I do not think there is a course of action we can countenance...I acknowledge that eminent Professor Trounson says that there is only a one per cent chance [that a cloned human embryo could develop into a baby if it were placed into a woman's womb]. I am afraid that I think that is one per cent too many.

**Sen SANTORO (Liberal, QLD)**

I believe that, at the most basic level, the decision to suspend the recognition of a life, or to redefine life as being at a certain point which suits a particular branch of scientific research offers a threat to our most fundamental concept of our own humanity...We are being asked to stake the many potential lives of embryonic humans on the prospect that there may be some benefit, either incremental or miraculous, for those whose lives have already passed from potential to actual. I have several problems with that wager, not least of which is that it sets a precedent for exchange and values one life more highly than another. I know that many people console themselves that this is not a real exchange, that we can delineate a critical point where life begins, but I suggest this is an argument of convenience and not a contention of fact. Again, I suggest that what is at stake here is our humanity. It is a question of justice, which should not be answered in terms of convenience.

As Senators would know, embryo cloning is legal in some countries, and has been for some years, yet it does not appear to have been the irresistible magnet for top scientists that proponents of today's bill would have us believe. One cannot help but get the feeling that at the roots of the desire to remove the prohibition on cloning and on hybrid embryos is a lack of faith in the democratic process – that parliament is unfit to draw a line between what is right and what is possible.

...science is now our 'new sacred.' It was once a given that our values and actions had reference points in what was right and good and what most of us believe about this world and the next. We are now told that there is no place for such petty abstractions when they stand in the way of research. We are asked to baptize what is possible, rather than what is good...At heart science is driven by curiosity, which is a necessity for a good researcher but does not in any way translate to justice. Accompanying this are the traditional structures of the universities, research institutes and peer environments in which scientists operate, where prestige and promotion are common goals and 'publish or perish' remains a powerful dictum. Again, one struggles to find elements of justice here...

...a journalist...put it to my media advisor that my personal faith provides a conflict of interest for me as a senator and as a minister...We are asked to believe that the universities, individual scientists, biotechnology vehicles and drug companies who would patent this research have no conflict of interest...yet belief in the goodness of God and man, and the presence of objective truth is a conflict of interest.



### **Sen STEPHENS (Labor, NSW)**

We are debating here not a choice between science and ethics but a choice between science that is ethically responsible and science that is not. Cloning involves the destruction of a human life, and the thrust of this bill is that such destruction might one day prove to be of possible benefit to others, but to reproduce human life in a depersonalized way, in a laboratory, for the purpose of killing that life indiscriminately is to reduce it to a mere means and an instrument of other people's wishes. It is exploitation that can never be justified, no matter what putative benefits might be claimed for humanity in doing so.

We need to support alternative viable options. We can do this without dashing the hopes of people who suffer debilitating illnesses. Remember that there are three sources of stem cells. As well as embryonic stem cells, there are adult stem cells and neonatal cord blood cells...Treatments that do not require the destruction of a human life are at least as promising as any approach using embryonic stem cells.

### **Sen WATSON (Liberal, TAS)**

I remind the Senate that the system put in place in 2002 is still working. Scientists who wish to undertake research on embryos excess to the IVF process can do so under licence from the National Health and Medical Research Council. The scope of allowable research is quite generous. But creating a human embryo for research is quite a significantly different matter and I believe that this should remain prohibited...I would now like to acknowledge Mr Jim Wallace AM of the Australian Christian Lobby...Mr Wallace has been working very hard in this area and I think his efforts are to be commended...The absence of any demonstrated potential for cloned embryonic stem cells except in the discredited Korean results, on which I believe the Lockhart report is based, means that the 2002 decision should really stand...nor do I think it is prudent to continually relax legislation in this area just to keep up with other, less ethical, societies.

### **Articles of interest**

[Public ethics in bioethics](#) – Frank Brennan's address to the Thomas More Forum

[Post-doctoral scientists with pre-school ethics](#)

[Make a Stand](#)

[Do No Harm](#)

[Hands off our Ovaries](#)

[How cloning harms women](#)

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