



**Note to Personal Assistant: this letter is to assist a personal conscience vote. The member holding the appropriate portfolio will also have received this letter.**

4 April 2008

To all Members of Legislative Council (individually addressed)  
Parliament of Western Australia

Dear Sir/Madam,

### **Human Reproductive Technology (Cloning) Amendment Bill 2007**

There is now **no need for destructive embryo research to gain stem cells.**

Takahishi and Yamanaka<sup>i</sup> and Thomson et al<sup>ii</sup> have shown how a patient's own skin cells can behave like embryonic stem cells and turn into other tissue cells but without problems of rejection i.e. they are **pluri-potent and patient specific.**

As Prof Ian Wilmut (the 'father of cloning') has observed<sup>iii</sup>, **there is no justification left for human 'therapeutic cloning'.** Other scientists have made similar statements<sup>iv v vi</sup>.

Even without these developments there is the proven success of non-embryonic stem cells<sup>vii</sup>. The emotional presentation of patients in wheel chairs or diabetic children should no longer have any impact.

The proposed legislation should also be opposed because **successful cloning requires hundreds of female eggs**<sup>viii</sup>. Female MLCs should need no reminding that extraction of eggs from adult human females is not without risk<sup>ix</sup> including ovarian hyperstimulation syndrome<sup>x</sup>. The federal legislation forbids financial inducement to donate but the 2003/2007 cloning backflip and overseas experience with egg donation<sup>xi</sup> shows how quickly legislation can be overturned.

The women of our society should never be placed in the situation where they are encouraged – even altruistically – to undergo risky research procedures. This is particularly true when that research involves destruction of human life and has been shown to be unnecessary.

An SCNT clone with 46 human chromosomes is truly human<sup>xii</sup> and is as capable of independent existence as any IVF/ART<sup>xiii</sup> embryo. *This biological fact has nothing to do with moral law or religious principles.*

We remind you that there are already prominent Australian voices calling for the sacrifice of later-stage embryos with formed organs instead of using stem cells<sup>xiv</sup>.

**It is wrong to create human life for its destruction. The proposed legislation can no longer be justified and should be voted against.**

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- <sup>i</sup> Takahashi et al., Induction of Pluripotent Stem Cells from Adult Human Fibroblasts by Defined Factors, *Cell* (2007), doi:10.1016/j.cell.2007.11.019  
Successful reprogramming of differentiated human somatic cells into a pluripotent state would allow creation of patient- and disease-specific stem cells. Human iPS cells were similar to human embryonic stem (ES) cells.
- <sup>ii</sup> Induced Pluripotent Stem Cell Lines Derived from Human Somatic Cells  
Here we show that four factors (*OCT4*, *SOX2*, *NANOG*, and *LIN28*) are sufficient to reprogram human somatic cells to pluripotent stem cells that exhibit the essential characteristics of embryonic stem cells.
- <sup>iii</sup> Dolly creator Prof Ian Wilmut shuns cloning  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/main.jhtml?xml=/earth/2007/11/16/scidolly116.xml&page=1>
- <sup>iv</sup> Professor Loane Skene says that the development would remove a lot of the ethical concerns that are raised about embryonic stem cell research. "What this does is take away the step of using the egg, and creating the embryo which is particularly ethically contentious and it offers the opportunity to get stem cells that are matched to a particular person."  
<http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/news/stories/s2096987.htm>
- <sup>v</sup> "This demonstrates that iPS [induced pluripotent stem] cells have the same potential for therapy as embryonic stem cells, without the ethical and practical issues raised in creating embryonic stem cells," says the lead scientist Rudolf Jaenisch." <http://physorg.com/news116172622.html>
- <sup>vi</sup> Prof Jack Martin, personal briefing to MLCs Feb 2008.
- <sup>vii</sup> Re proven success of non-embryonic stem cells <http://www.stemcellresearch.org/alternatives/111newreasons.html>
- <sup>viii</sup> MICHAEL EDWARDS: It's an increasing trend in the scientific community to be moving away from therapeutic cloning?  
ALAN TROUNSON: Well, I think that's correct because of the difficulties both ethically but, you know, accessing these large numbers of human eggs. And so, you know, that was one of the reasons that we became interested.  
Stem cell finding hailed as a breakthrough <http://www.abc.net.au/am/content/2007/s2096539.htm>
- <sup>ix</sup> Selling Her Body, a Few Eggs at a Time  
By Michael Poore 20 Feb 2008 <http://www.breakpoint.org/listingarticle.asp?ID=7571>
- <sup>x</sup> Professor Adam Balen MBBS, MD, FRCOG Ovarian hyperstimulation syndrome – A short report for the HFEA.  
[http://www.hfea.gov.uk/docs/OHSS\\_Report\\_from\\_Adam\\_Balen\\_2005\(1\).pdf](http://www.hfea.gov.uk/docs/OHSS_Report_from_Adam_Balen_2005(1).pdf)
- <sup>xi</sup> The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) has issued a license to the North East England Stem Cell Institute in Newcastle to allow researchers to ask women undergoing fertility treatment to donate eggs for research purposes in exchange for having the cost of their treatment reduced. This will be the first time women have in effect been paid for their IVF. [http://www.phgfoundation.org/ecard?link\\_ID=2587](http://www.phgfoundation.org/ecard?link_ID=2587)
- <sup>xii</sup> Lockhart report, section 17.4 page 170  
The Committee agreed that human embryo clones are human embryos and that, given the right environment for development, could develop into a human being. Furthermore, if such an embryo were implanted into the body of a woman to achieve a pregnancy, this entity would certainly have the same status as any other human embryo, and were this pregnancy to result in a live birth, that child would enjoy the same rights and protection as any other child.

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<sup>xiii</sup> ART Assisted Reproductive Technology is a more encompassing name for IVF.

<sup>xiv</sup> University of Oxford Professor Julian Savulescu, Director of the Oxford Uehiro Centre for Practical Ethics, an expatriate Australian at Oxford University: "Indeed, it is not merely morally permissible but morally required that we employ cloning to produce embryos or fetuses for the sake of providing cells, tissues or even organs for therapy" *Journal of Medical Ethics* 25.2 (April 1999): p87.

### **Signatories follow:**

#### **Panel of Reference:**

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#### **Signatories:**

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