

13 March 2011

To members of the Legislative Review Committee re

2010 Legislation Review of the *Prohibition of Human Cloning for Reproduction Act 2002*
and the *Research Involving Human Embryos Act 2002*

The doctors of Medicine with Morality, in accord with our statement of belief, are irrevocably opposed to the creation of human life for its destruction and to cloning as a means of creating that life. We believe these matters highlight boundaries that should never have been crossed.

We are therefore opposed to research used to obtain stem cells from embryos (ES cells) and we hold that any mixing of human genes with animal genes is also unacceptable.

We are excited that reports show that induced pluri-potent stem cells (iPS cells) from the patient's own tissues – thereby avoiding any tissue matching conflict – have the advantages of ES cells without the need to create and then destroy an embryo. We are aware that iPS cells have been able to be converted into a wide-range of cell types and lines.

We are further encouraged by the recent report of “direct reprogramming strategy”¹ where mouse fibroblasts have been turned into cardiac muscle cells directly without having to go through a pluripotency stage.

These developments affirm that there is no scientific necessity for destructive embryo research or cloning to create such embryos. We affirm the UN Declaration on Human Cloning 2005 that cloning is “incompatible with human dignity and the protection of human life”²

We therefore recommend that human cloning be once again prohibited.

We further recommend that the provision allowing oocytes to be extracted from the bodies of aborted female babies for the purpose of embryo creation be reversed.

The prospect of incentives being offered to women to donate eggs for research is disturbing when the acknowledged severe medical risks, even if considered rare, are considered. Any offer of lower costs (to donate eggs) for women undergoing ART (IVF), while superficially laudable to allow more women access

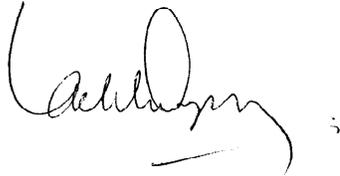
¹ Efe J et al., “Conversion of mouse fibroblasts into cardiomyocytes using a direct reprogramming strategy”, *Nature Cell Biology*, Published online 30 January 2011,
<http://www.nature.com/ncb/journal/vaop/ncurrent/full/ncb2164.html>

² <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2005/ga10333.doc.htm>

to ART, should be considered manipulative of a woman's hope to have and love a child. The price of such an offer – that some of her embryos will be created explicitly for destruction – should never be asked.

We recommend that oocyte donation solely for purposes of research be prohibited and that no consideration be given to cost-reduction for women undergoing egg retrieval for purposes of ART, nor any other incentive be offered to use eggs for research.

Under the present law in Australia the **creation of animal-human hybrids is prohibited** despite this being one of the Lockhart review recommendations. However we are aware that such hybrids are now permitted in UK and **we strongly recommend retention of the present prohibition.**



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