

Letter by Dr Robert Pollnitz on behalf of the

Commission on Social & Bioethical Questions, regarding the *LOCKHART REVIEW OF HUMAN CLONING AND HUMAN EMBRYO RESEARCH*

5th April 2006

Dear Pastors and Church Members,

RE - LOCKHART REVIEW OF HUMAN CLONING AND HUMAN EMBRYO RESEARCH

I write to express my concern about this unbalanced Lockhart report, which will be considered by Prime Minister John Howard and the State Premiers and Territory Chief Ministers at their COAG meeting in June 2006.

Back in 2002 our Federal and State governments passed laws to prohibit all forms of human cloning and to allow destructive research only on 'surplus' IVF human embryos created before April 2002. The Prime Minister accepted the use of 'spare' IVF embryos because they were "going to die anyway", but added "my very strong belief that human embryos should not be created for any purpose other than IVF treatment."

Now the Lockhart review group has reported to Federal Parliament recommending

- creating human embryos by cloning for destructive research*
- creating human-animal hybrid embryos (chimeras) for research*
- changing the definition of a human embryo to allow wider research.*

While the report talks about 'ethical standards' it is based on sheer research pragmatism. It seeks to completely undo all the controls in our 2002 legislation.

If our Australian society accepts these changes we shall have crossed a major moral frontier, in that for the first time we will be creating human life with the intention of destroying it *Once we accept that, it is only more step to grow those human embryos in glass jars till their organs and tissues are mature enough to be useful for transplants.*

While adult stem cells are being used right now for successful treatments, human embryonic stem cells are used only for testing drugs or toxins or cosmetics, or exploring patterns of gene expression. The millions that biotechnology companies will make in these areas cannot justify the deliberate destruction of tiny living human beings. Further details are in my submission to the Lockhart review, copy attached, also available on the LCA website.

If you share my concern I urge you to write one-page polite letters to the Prime Minister John Howard (Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600) and to your State Premier or Territory Chief Minister. Please express two or three points that concern you in your own words and request a reply. My local Member of Parliament tells me they regard each letter they receive as expressing the views of 100 people, with the other 99 being too lazy to write. Please help to defend these tiny human lives - please write now.

Yours in Christ's service,

Dr Robert Pollnitz