medicinewithmorality.org.au

Australian Doctors concerned with the drift
of ethics away from moral absolutes

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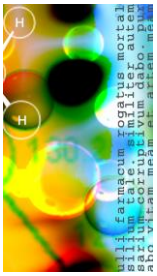

27 September 2006.

Submission to the Community Affairs Committee
Australian Senate
community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au

Re Lockhart Review

Medicine With Morality was set up early in 2006 by doctors concerned with the drift of medical ethics away from what we consider to be moral absolutes concerning human life. The attached *manifesto* embodies these absolutes and provides an ethical framework for scientific advance. We believe this to be consistent with the time-honoured standards enshrined in the Hippocratic Oath – part of which is inscribed in the letterhead design above – and that great dictum of medicine *Primum non Nocere* (*first, do no harm*).

In affirming the value of human life we express our serious concern regarding the recommendations of the *Lockhart Legislation Review Committee.* We believe that in the pursuit of medical science there are boundaries that should not be crossed and procedures that should not be done regardless of potential benefit.

Relevant to the Lockhart Review such boundaries include:

1. **The deliberate creation of human life for its destruction**
2. **Cloning by Somatic Cell Nuclear Transfer (SCNT)**
3. **The placing of human genetic material into eggs of animal origin.**

As is clear from the *Manifesto*, the doctors of *Medicine With Morality* are opposed to any legislation that permits crossing of these boundaries.

We state the biologically obvious fact that a cloned human embryo formed by the technique of SCNT is *human life* regardless of whether it is created for 'therapeutic' or reproductive purposes. We maintain that human life has intrinsic value simply because it is human and that the moral status and value of the embryo is not determined by whether it is intended to be implanted. Respect for human life must include all that are vulnerable, impaired or dependent.

The increasingly apparent advantage of *non-embryonic sources* of stem cells over embryonic sources renders embryo destruction unnecessary. Others will make the case for this. Suffice it to say that we are aware of and excited by the advances that have been made. We believe that medical research in Australia has a bright future without cloning and that research which pays respect to all human life will in turn be honoured.

We are thankful that the Australian Government supported the United Nations Declaration on Human Cloning and we ask for all Australian legislation to be consistent with that Declaration.

Yours faithfully,

The doctors of *Medicine With Morality*