



The Australian Society for Medical Research

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A Submission to the Legislative Review Committee Legislation Review of Australia's Prohibition of Human Cloning Act 2002 and Research Involving Human Embryos Act 2002

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**A Submission from the Australian Society for Medical Research to the
Legislative Review Committee of Australia's:
Prohibition of Human Cloning Act 2002
Research Involving Human Embryos Act 2002**

The Australian Society for Medical Research (ASMR) is the peak body representing health and medical researchers in Australia. Through more than 1,000 direct members and affiliations with 62 specialist societies, medical colleges and patient groups, the ASMR network reaches an additional 140,000 Australians involved, or having an interest in, health and medical research.

The ASMR supports the Australian Academy of Sciences policy that:

“Human cells, whether derived from cloning techniques, from ES cell lines, or from primordial germ cells, should not be precluded from use in approved research activities in cellular and developmental biology.”

“Reproductive cloning to produce human fetuses is unethical and unsafe and should be prohibited.”

The ASMR supports the following:

- **A continuation of the 2002 legislation authorising the destruction of human embryos including derivation and studies of embryonic stem cells**
- **Accurately defining and prohibiting reproductive cloning**
 - Prohibition of using egg and sperm to create embryos with specific genetic properties for research.
 - Prohibition of implanting a human embryo (other than those created by fertilisation of a human egg and sperm) in the uterus of a woman for the purposes of reproduction.
 - Prohibition of the growth of a human embryo in any place other than the uterus of a woman, past the stage corresponding to development of an embryo for 14 days *in vivo*.
- **Allowing research into improved clinical care and human health**
 - Stem cell lines not formed from a fertilised embryo and that are studied entirely *in vitro* should not be considered an embryo. This includes pluripotent cells derived by nuclear transfer. It would be an offence to implant such a cell in a human uterus.
- **The decision by the Commonwealth and State Governments to allow the use (with appropriate consent and Ethical approval) of excess assisted reproductive technology (ART) embryos, even if fertilised after April 2002.**
 - The NHMRC Australian Health Ethics Committee and institutional human research ethics committees should have responsibility of managing ethical issues surrounding use of excess ART embryos donated for research with the donors consent.

Yours sincerely,

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