



## Stem cells, cloning and related issues

The *Prohibition of Human Cloning for Reproduction and the Regulation of Human Embryo Research Amendment Act 2006* ('Patterson Bill')

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### Background

Senator Kay Patterson's private members bill, the *Prohibition of Human Cloning for Reproduction and the Regulation of Human Embryo Research Amendment Act 2006* will come into operation on 12 June 2007.

The Act amends and broadens the scope of activities permitted under the *Prohibition of Human Cloning Act 2002* and the *Research Involving Human Embryos Act 2002*.

Among new activities permitted is the use of embryos created specifically for research through somatic cell nuclear transfer (also known as 'therapeutic cloning').

» Download: *Prohibition of Human Cloning for Reproduction and the regulation of Human Embryo Research Amendment Act 2006* (PDF, 80kb) 

» View: *Prohibition of Human Cloning Act 2002*

» View: *Research Involving Human Embryos Act 2002*

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### What this means for the NHMRC

As a consequence of the 'Patterson Act', and related recommendations arising out of the Lockhart Review, the NHMRC will be revising a number of guidelines and related materials, and changing its administrative, processing, and monitoring and compliance activities surrounding the licensing of research involving human embryos.

Prior to the Patterson Act provisions coming into operation, the NHMRC will:

1. **Revise the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*.**  
This has now been approved by the Council of the NHMRC and the NHMRC CEO. These guidelines are expected to be tabled in Parliament and released before the end of March 2007. There will be a transition period between operation of the old Statement and the new. The new Statement includes more extensive guidance on consent, and chapters on human tissue samples, human stem cells, and research involving foetal tissue.
2. **Revise the NHMRC's *Ethical Guidelines on the use of Assisted Reproductive Technology in Clinical Practice and Research* (2004).**
  - o Consultation draft available in early April 2007. The document will incorporate guidelines on when embryos are unsuitable for implantation, and guidelines for egg donation.
3. **Revise the *National Ethics Application Form* (NEAF).**
  - o Major changes will be made to reflect the requirements of the new National Statement. Users of NEAF need to be aware that there will be a short period of changeover between the current and revised versions of NEAF. See the NEAF website or phone the NEAF helpline on 1800 823 993 for the latest information.
4. **Review the administrative and technical protocols** involved in managing application forms and licences.
  - o Information sessions are being arranged in capital cities in April and May 2007. Key stakeholders were contacted by post in mid-March.
  - o For more information please email [embryo.research@nhmrc.gov.au](mailto:embryo.research@nhmrc.gov.au)
5. **Implement new arrangements to monitor compliance** with the increased scope of the legislation, and ensure appropriate expertise is available to support the NHMRC Embryo Research Licensing

Committee.

6. **Communicate with researchers, institutions, human research ethics committees and the public** to raise awareness of new responsibilities as a result of the changed legislation.
7. **Consider developing simple proforma applications relating to training and quality assurance activities** in Assisted Reproductive Technology clinics.

For further information on any of these issues please contact [ahec.nhmrc@nhmrc.gov.au](mailto:ahec.nhmrc@nhmrc.gov.au).

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