



Guy Barnett
Liberal Senator for Tasmania



MEDIA RELEASE

CASE FOR CHANGE NOT MADE

Friday 20 October

"Today's hearings at the Senate Inquiry into the Patterson Bill to allow so-called therapeutic cloning have demonstrated that the case for legislative change has not been made," Senator Guy Barnett said today.

Dr Peter Silburn said that all the therapeutic advances in the last four years had come from adult stem cells, and that so-called therapeutic cloning was not needed.

Professor Peter Williamson from the Australian Academy of Science said that when it comes to therapy, it is adult stem cells that will be used. Despite this, he made it clear that he supported the creation of cloned embryos for research purposes.

No witness was able to say how many eggs would be required for therapeutic cloning. This is a cause for considerable concern.

While it was acknowledged that the Australian legislation currently does not allow women to be paid for their eggs, Professor Renfree suggested that this was a matter of free choice on behalf of those women in the US where payment is allowed.

Witnesses were split on the issue of the use of animal eggs to create cloned human embryos. Some supported it as a way of avoiding the use of "precious human ova".

Evidence was given that confirmed there is no scientific difference between the process of therapeutic and reproductive cloning. The only difference is in the intention of those who created the clone as to how the clone would be used. The process seeking to be legalised by the Bill was the same that was used in the creation of Dolly the Sheep.

Professor Kerridge of the former Lockhart Committee confirmed that the consideration of community standards was critical to their report. The Lockhart Recommendation that cloned embryos not be allowed to survive beyond 14 days was reflection of this. This raises the prospect, over time, of this arbitrary limit being pushed out indefinitely if some future scientist claims that this would have research benefits. The question arises: where do we draw the line once this fundamental ethical threshold is crossed?

Further information: Barry Prismall 0438 384 520



- Advancing Tasmania's Interests -

33 George Street, Launceston Tasmania 7250.
Phone: 1300 132 937 Fax: 03 6334 1624

06 10 20 0 16