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MO: H/07/03697

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000
Email: TableOffice@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter dated 24 May 2007, regarding the petition No. 831-07, received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly, expressing strong opposition to human cloning of any means.

The Commonwealth *Prohibition of Human Cloning Act 2002* and *Research Involving Human Embryos Act 2002* (“the Commonwealth Acts”) were recently amended following a review of the Acts undertaken by a legislation review committee (“the Lockhart Review Committee”).

The Lockhart Review Committee undertook extensive community consultation as part of the review of the Commonwealth Acts, and their recommendations took into consideration the strong community support for medical research to help people who suffer from debilitating or incurable disease and conditions, and infertility.

On 13 April 2007, the Council of Australian Governments agreed that all States and Territories seek to implement nationally consistent legislation in relation to research involving human embryos and the prohibition of human cloning.

Consequently, the Queensland *Research Involving Human Embryos and Prohibition of Human Cloning Act 2003* (“the Queensland Act”) requires amendment to maintain consistency with the Commonwealth Acts and ensure that Queensland’s fertility clinicians and research scientists are acting legally.

The proposed amendments will continue to ban human cloning for reproduction and other universally unacceptable practices, while lifting the prohibition on certain research activities such as somatic cell nuclear transfer, subject to a strict regulatory regime. This will allow significant research into the potential therapeutic benefits of embryonic stem cell research to be explored in an ethical manner.

The Queensland Government is aware of the moral and ethical concerns raised by this type of research and acknowledges the diverse range of community views on these issues. For this reason, the Premier has announced that the proposed changes to Queensland legislation will be subject to a conscience vote when it is debated in Parliament later this year.

Should you have any queries regarding my advice to you, Mr Jeremy Kirby, Acting Director, Legislative Policy Unit, will be pleased to assist you and can be contacted on telephone 3234 0289

Yours sincerely

STEPHEN ROBERTSON MP