

## EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

### SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE – QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2003-2004 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING

**Outcome:** 1  
**Output Group:** ARC

#### **DEST Question No. E704\_04**

Senator Harradine asked on 18 February 2004, EWRE Hansard p. 33.

#### **Question:**

Senator HARRADINE – I think it is important, with respect, that the public know. Have applications been made by the National Stem Cell Centre for licensing by the licensing committee of the NHMRC?

Mr HARPER – I am unsure. We will have to take that on notice.

#### **Answer:**

*Applications made by the NSCC to the NHMRC licensing committee for embryonic stem cells*

The ARC has provided the following response:

The NSCC has not applied for an NHMRC licence for the use of embryos in research at the NSCC.

We understand the NSCC is looking to collaborate with two groups that have applied for such licenses in the development of new human embryonic stem cell lines. One collaborator is a commercial company, and the initial goal is to develop six new human embryonic stem cell lines within two years. The establishment of this collaboration has not been legally formalised, and thus the identity of the collaborating group is commercial-in-confidence.

We understand that through Monash University, Professor Alan Trounson and Associate Professor Martin Pera, are named on an application for a licence from the NHMRC to derive stem cells from human embryos. This collaboration would be seeking to produce approximately 14 embryonic stem cell lines. Both these researchers are also associated with the NSCC.

There will be no undertaking by the NSCC in either of these collaborations that would involve the harvesting of cells from human embryos at the NSCC laboratories.

The NSCC has met with officials from the NHMRC's Embryo Research Licensing Committee, and is aware of the ethical and legal framework for research involving the use of excess assisted reproductive technology embryos. The NSCC will require in the respective collaboration agreements that both the NSCC and its collaborators meet the on-going responsibilities associated with such research, including maintenance of the NHMRC licence, appropriate ethics approvals and ensuring informed consent is obtained from donor families.