

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2005-2006 BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome: 1
Output Group: ARC

DEST Question No. E288_06

Senator Harradine provided in writing.

Question:

Are you aware that the Australian Stem Cell Centre – a company the Government has granted over \$100 million – is now lobbying for changes to the *Prohibition of Human Cloning Act* so that it can clone human embryos for research? How will the Government ensure that no government funds are used in the ASCC lobbying effort? Please provide proof to the Committee that funds for lobbying are separately budgeted and that government funding is quarantined.

Answer:

The ARC has provided the following response.

The Australian Stem Cell Centre and changes to the Prohibition of Human Cloning Act

Use of Australian Government Biotechnology Centre of Excellence Program funds by the Australian Stem Cell Centre (ASCC) is governed by the Biotechnology Centre of Excellence Deed of Agreement (the Deed). Subject to the provisions of the Deed and all applicable laws, the ASCC undertakes activities that may assist it to meet the Objectives of the Biotechnology Centre of Excellence Program. The ASCC may choose to comment on current laws.

The ASCC has advised that:

- the ASCC recognises the importance of engaging in public education activities with the objective of delivering information about stem cells and stem cell research in Australia; and
- it will provide accurate, factual information to a broad cross-section of audiences to help inform the public and parliamentary debate.

In relation to funds provided to the ASCC by the Australian Research Council (ARC), under the Deed the ASCC is contractually obligated to use ARC funding only for research activities, subject to the provisions of the *Australian Research Council Act 2001*.