

## **Notes from Chairperson at Launch of Stem Cell Document**

**The Bioethics Council welcomes you all to the launch of our Stem Cell Report. Consistent with our terms of reference when first founded in 2002, The Council sees its brief to consider the ethical, scientific and legal issues in relation to stem cell research in Ireland. There is undoubtedly widespread public interest in the advances of medical and biological technology. Stem cell research is a prime example of a rapidly evolving field of biomedical technology that generates complex and often contentious ethical questions.**

**The stem cell project began in 2006 when the Council established a Rapporteur Group to outline the ethical questions requiring Council analysis on stem cell research. The interdisciplinary structure of the Irish Bioethics Council provides a range of experts in areas that are central to this project. Illustrating that diverse expertise, I would like to thank the three Rapporteurs, Professor Andrew Green, Geneticist, Dr. Richard Hull, Philosopher and Professor Linda Hogan, Theologian.**

**During the initial stages of preparing this document, the Council conducted a consultation process to determine the views of the general public and the key stakeholder groups on issues relating to stem cell research. The stakeholder groups were chosen on the basis of the relevance of such research to their particular area of expertise and activity.**

**The Council would like to thank the 2188 individuals that responded during the public consultation process as well as the 23 stakeholder groups that made a submission to the Council.**

**The stem cell opinion document examines a range of issues related to stem cell research: the multiple sources of stem cell, the ethical questions arising from the diverse sources of stem cells, the therapeutic goals of stem cell research, the legal status of stem cell research in Ireland and the desirability of National policies or legal and ethical guidelines for this ongoing research.**

**With this document and, after many hours of deliberation and debate among Council members, the aim is to provide a balanced and reflective overview of the issues surrounding stem cell research. If the Council succeeds in facilitating further debate and reflection on this complex issue of stem cell research, then a most important social and educational goal will be achieved.**

**Special thanks must go to the four members of the Secretariat who gave tirelessly of time and research to the formulation and production of the document.**

**Without further adieu, I will introduce Professor Andre Green who will speak specifically about the stem cell document and its recommendations.**

**[D. Dooley, 18 March, 2008.]**