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God didn't sway stem cell vote: Garrett

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Federal Labor's environment spokesman Peter

Garrett says religion was not a factor in his decision to vote against a recent bill aimed at lifting restraints on stem cell research.

Federal politicians were this month allowed a rare conscience vote on therapeutic cloning.

The bill was successful and restrictive rules governing the area were thrown out.

But Mr Garrett, a committed Christian, said he did not feel comfortable with what the bill now allowed scientists to do.

"I wasn't convinced that the true benefits that were being put up by people at that time to advance the legislation were actually the kind of benefits that we were going to see," Mr Garret told the ABC's 7.30 Report.

"I wasn't opposed to stem cell research generally. I think there are, obviously, great prospects for people to be cured from diseases in the long term, particularly from adult stem cell research.


"But this idea that we were just going to create clones, create a bit of life and then destroy it in order to get something which we hadn't actually got to now, I didn't feel entirely comfortable with," he said.

Asked how important religion was to him, Mr Garrett said: "As important as it is for any member of parliament or any member of the community".

"It informs your thinking and your behaviour and your action, but I am not a card-carrying sort of person who jumps in and out of church every weekend.

"It's a part of the make-up of somebody. I'm not driven by it," he said.

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