

Qld MPs to debate stem cell research

20th August 2007, 17:31 WST



Queensland MPs are this week expected to have a conscience vote on new laws allowing embryonic stem cell research within tight restrictions.

The Research Involving Human Embryos and Prohibition of Human Cloning Amendment Bill 2007 allows the creation of human embryos by cloning for research, and the creation of hybrid embryos - the fertilisation of an animal egg by human sperm.

It retains prohibitions on placing a human embryo clone in a human or animal's body.

The laws - introduced to parliament earlier this month - mirror commonwealth legislation, and state MPs will be given a conscience vote.

Opposition Leader Jeff Seeney said coalition MPs had been briefed on both sides of the argument and he was yet to make up his mind.

"There's a number of people who have asked to come and see me before I make my address to the parliament," he said.

"The last time this type of issue was debated in the parliament there was a diverse range of opinions on both sides of the house, and I would expect the same thing to occur this time."

Mr Seeney said the opposition also would continue its attack on council amalgamations this week.

At the weekend, Premier Peter Beattie reversed his decision on referendums, allowing councils to hold federally-funded polls on the issue if they wish.

Mr Seeney said he hoped it was the first of many backflips.

"It's important that the dishonesty of the premier is revealed, when he goes on national television and claims that the majority of Queenslanders support this," he said.

"Every community should try and have a ballot to illustrate just how dishonest that claim is."

AAP