



This story is available at: <http://www.cathnews.com/news/611/172.php>

Abbott to implement Parliament stem cell decision

Health Minister Tony Abbott says he will discharge his duty as a government minister to implement Federal laws on stem cell research but he will vote against the proposed laws to be debated in parliament today.

"As a government minister, my duty is to discharge the law of the Commonwealth. That's what I have to do as a minister and that's what I do," Mr Abbott who is a well-known Catholic told reporters, according to the *Sydney Morning Herald*.

"As a private citizen ... this is a conscience vote, I'll be expressing my views as a citizen."

Liberal senator Kay Patterson's private member's bill would allow scientists to clone embryos to extract their stem cells for medical research.

All MPs have been given a conscience vote on the legislation, which was narrowly passed the Senate early this month.

Prime Minister John Howard says he is thinking about the matter and "I will give a considered view to the parliament when I make a contribution."

Meanwhile, opponents of the legislative changes are making a last ditch bid to prevent the news from being adopted.

Dr David Van Gend of lobby group Do No Harm - Australians for Stem Cell Medical Research says that Australia will be a world leader in a "sick science" if the Federal Parliament allows the cloning of human embryos for research, the *Catholic Weekly* reports.

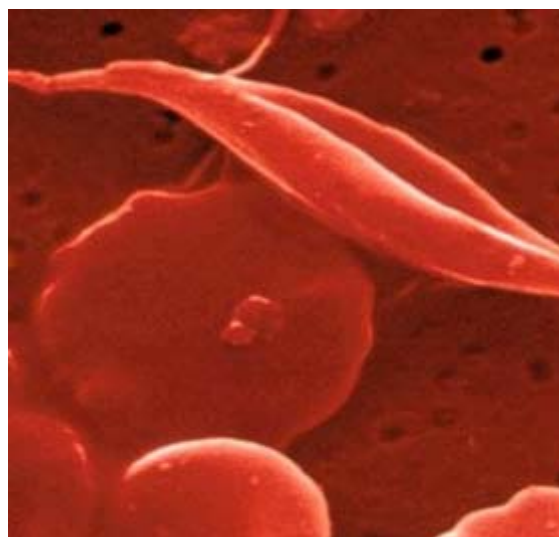
Dr Van Gend said that the bill would allow for an aborted baby girl to be used as the "mother" of a cloned embryo which will then be destroyed in research. "How many of us realise that this bill allows the creation of human embryos where the sperm of an adult male is combined with the egg of an aborted baby girl?"

"This is sick legislation based on immoral science," he told the *Weekly*.

"It is no comfort to be told that these embryos will never be allowed to be born as a baby," he added.

"What have we become, when the state makes it a crime to allow a living member of our species to continue living beyond 14 days of age?"

Dr Van Gend said that Australia, as a leader in stem cell technology, has a duty not to be a teacher of



procedures that can lead to foetal farming, live-birth cloning and other abuses that may happen overseas if not here.

The Archbishop of Sydney, George Cardinal Pell, also made a last-ditch appeal to MPs preserve the protective legal barriers against cloning erected in 2002 and "not waste government money on unproductive research".

Dr Nicholas Tonti-Filippini, senior lecturer in bioethics at the John Paul II Institute in Melbourne, said that the proposed legislation, with its long list of criminal offenses and heavy penalties, was without substance and would inhibit regulation by the National Health and Medical Research Council.

"It's nonsense to use criminal offences to regulate scientists because they are unenforceable," he said. "You're not going to send an ordinary policeman into a laboratory to determine if illegal research is being conducted.

"So we're going from having existing regulation of medical research which works reasonably well to effectively no regulation at all."

Abbott makes deal on cervical cancer immunisation

Meanwhile, in another story, the Federal Government has struck a deal to vaccinate all young women against cervical cancer.

Females aged 12 to 26 will be eligible for free immunisations with the homegrown vaccine Gardasil from April under a \$436 million arrangement with pharmaceutical company CSL.

The deal is a victory for the Government which earlier this month rejected a proposal under which it would have paid CSL \$600 million, saying it was not cost effective.

Health Minister Abbott said adding the vaccine to the National Immunisation Program was not making any moral judgments about sexual behaviour.

SOURCE

[Abbott may put own stem cell views aside \(Sydney Morning Herald, 30/11/06\)](#)

['Sick' legislation, immoral science \(Catholic Weekly, 30/11/06\)](#)

[Cancer immunisation plan gets go-ahead \(Courier-Mail, 30/11/06\)](#)

LINKS *(not necessarily endorsed by Church Resources)*

[Tony Abbott - Federal Member for Warringah](#)

[Parliament of Australia: House of Representatives](#)

ARCHIVE

[Pell in last minute appeal against cloning vote \(CathNews 27/11/06\)](#)

[Cloning fight not over, say clerics \(CathNews, 9/11/06\)](#)

[Lobbying fails in narrow Senate vote on cloning bill \(CathNews 8/11/06\)](#)

[Abbott trashes Rudd criticism of "un-Christian" coalition \(CathNews 31/10/06\)](#)

[Pell slams "pro-cloners" \(CathNews, 2/11/06\)](#)

[No cloning cures for Catholics, says Bishop Fisher \(CathNews, 23/10/06\)](#)

[Bishops step up campaign against cloning \(CathNews, 20/10/06\)](#)

[Proponents of therapeutic cloning should cool it: Pell \(CathNews, 25/8/06\)](#)

[Catholic groups reject claims of stem cells breakthrough \(CathNews, 24/8/06\)](#)

[Poll shows Australians against cloning, Champion Director says \(CathNews, 22/8/06\)](#)

[Abbott lashes "evangelical" stem cell scientists \(CathNews, 21/8/06\)](#)

[Catholic parliamentarians in firing line again over stem cells \(CathNews, 16/8/06\)](#)

[Catholic union official compares therapeutic cloning to Nazi experiments \(CathNews, 4/8/06\)](#)

[Premiers face stem cell backlash as Hart criticises debate \(CathNews, 24/7/06\)](#)

[Catholics divided over stem cells \(CathNews, 14/7/06\)](#)

SOURCES - FULL STORIES

30 Nov 2006