

Downer expects lively stem cell debate

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FOREIGN Minister Alexander Downer expects a lively debate on embryonic stem cell research in the House of Representatives.

Legislation to overturn a ban on therapeutic cloning for research purposes passed the Senate 34 votes to 32 last night.

Lower house MPs will now have their own conscience votes on the legislation in about a month.

Asked if the legislation would pass the House of Representatives, Mr Downer said: "We'll have to wait and see, I don't really know the answer to that question".

"I would imagine it will be a fairly lively debate," he said.

"But I don't think members of the House of Representatives, obviously by definition, have focused on it to the extent the Senate has because it was a bill that was introduced to the Senate.

Debate is expected to begin in the lower house when it resumes sitting at the end of this month.

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