

[Home](#) » [National](#) » Article

Key clone advocate backs shift

Katharine Murphy
November 9, 2006

A LEADING supporter of therapeutic cloning research says he will accept Senate changes, despite his campaigning for all of the Lockhart Review.

Liberal MP Mal Washer, the backbencher who has led the push to legalise therapeutic cloning, said he would accept the amended bill passed by the Senate on Tuesday, despite it omitting a major recommendation of the Lockhart report.

The amended bill will not grant scientists access to animal eggs for stem cell experiments. The report recommended limited use of animal eggs to prevent the overuse of human reproductive tissue, but the controversial recommendation would have sunk the bill in the Senate because of concerns about "animal-human hybrids".

"I can live with these amendments," Dr Washer said, predicting most of his colleagues would support the bill.

Prime Minister John Howard said he was still weighing the matter before coming to a final position.

Dr Washer believes a strenuous opponent of the science, Treasurer Peter Costello, has moved into the "yes" camp.

The Senate vote on a private member's bill drafted by Victorian Liberal Kay Patterson was celebrated by scientists and researchers yesterday, but opponents of the research were bitterly disappointed.

Sydney's Catholic Archbishop, George Pell, urged members of the House of Representatives to oppose the legislation.

Victorian Premier Steve Bracks welcomed the Senate vote. "This is a great occasion where legislators are able to deal with a matter dispassionately and to deal with it effectively."

With **PETER KER**

[Get The Age home delivered for as little as \\$3.00 a week*](#)

Copyright © 2006. The Age Company Ltd.