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Poll 'yes' to stem cell laws

By Christian Catalano
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An emphatic public endorsement of expanded embryonic stem cell laws, outlined in a fresh survey, comes as politicians prepare to make a final conscience vote on the issue.

In the most comprehensive analysis of Australians' attitudes on the use of cloned human embryos, pollsters Crosby Textor found that 58 per cent of 802 people questioned supported changes that allow the therapeutic cloning of donated embryos - more than three times the 18 per cent who strongly opposed the idea.

Senator Kay Patterson, whose private member's bill passed the Senate this month and is due before the House of Representatives next week, was not surprised. "This just continues to confirm what the Lockhart Committee said and what a majority of the other research on the subject has said," she said. The survey was commissioned by medical science advocate group Research Australia, whose 190 members have diverse views on the issue.

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