



DO NO HARM!

Australians for Ethical Stem Cell Research

CLONING – WHAT THEY SAID JUST FOUR YEARS AGO

Statements in the Parliamentary Hansard by Coalition MPs and Senators who voted FOR the use of 'surplus' IVF embryos, but opposed cloning.

The Prohibition of Human Cloning Act 2002 was passed just four years ago **without a single dissenting vote** in either the House of Representatives or the Senate. [Section 9](#) of that Act provides that "A person commits an offence if the person intentionally creates a human embryo clone".

"DEAR COALITION SENATOR AND MEMBER:

**IF IT WAS 'WRONG' IN 2002
TO CREATE EMBRYOS SOLELY FOR RESEARCH,
HOW CAN IT BE 'RIGHT' IN 2006?"**

Senator Kay Patterson (Liberal)

I believe strongly that it is wrong to create human embryos solely for research. It is not morally permissible to develop an embryo with the intent of truncating it at an early stage for the benefit of another human being. However, utilising embryos that are excess to a couple's needs after a successful implantation is a very different matter. I believe it is disingenuous to suggest that approving this research will open the door to further killing of living human beings when the Prohibition of Human Cloning Bill 2002 bans the creation of a human embryo for a purpose other than achieving a pregnancy.

Sharman Stone (Liberal – Murray)

...I have little doubt that most Australians feel repugnance at the thought of human cloning or the creation of a hybrid human... **There is no place in the world, much less Australia, for commercial exploitation of embryos for research or their deliberate creation for research.**

Brendan Nelson (Liberal – Bradfield)

If you look at Australia's competitors in the US, public sector research has continued to make advances with the National Institutes of Health permitted cell lines. At the same time, in the US private sector there has been something of a free-for-all. One company, ACT, recently claimed that it had succeeded in creating an early stage embryo via human therapeutic cloning, to which of course I would be most opposed.

Hon Julie Bishop (Liberal – Curtin)

Put simply, I support a prohibition on human cloning and other such unacceptable practices as outlined in the bill and I support the regulated use for research of excess human embryos created by assisted reproductive technology. I have arrived at this position after a great deal of consideration over a number of years.... The most controversial aspect of the bill is not the issue of human cloning. There seems to be **unanimity for the proposed prohibition on research that would yield a human clone....**

Bronwyn Bishop (Liberal – Mackellar)

All are in agreement that cloning should be outlawed, and that is what this bill does....I conclude my contribution to this debate by saying that it is a very difficult area, that **the idea that any legislation should permit the production of embryos for the purpose of harvesting those stem cells to me would be an anathema.** I believe this bill is sufficient to prevent and to outlaw that occurring, just as it outlaws cloning.

Peter Costello – Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party

The first **is to prohibit cloning and to make certain offences in relation to cloning and crossing animal and human genetic matter. As far as I am aware, there is general agreement that those practices ought to be banned.** I have not heard anybody in the debate suggest that that aspect of the bill is wrong or that they would be voting against those parts of the bill that put in place, in my view, very important prohibitions... Some of my colleagues who have lobbied me on this issue have said, 'If you let this go you'll compromise your ability to call a halt to such experimentation in future circumstances; you'll be in a worse position and more compromised down the track.' I do not feel that is the case. I feel—and I had some involvement in bringing this about—that this bill does draw a line.

Teresa Gambaro (Liberal – Petrie)

I agree, however, that **we should not support human cloning, whether reproductive or therapeutic cloning.**

Warren Entsch (Liberal – Leichhardt)

With regard to the first section of this bill, human cloning, let me state that I totally and fully support the ban on human cloning. I am **totally opposed to human cloning in any shape or form**. I think it is absolutely abhorrent and **I would never support it**.

Michael Johnson (Liberal – Ryan)

In the first place, let me state my complete support for the relevant provisions of the bill that seek to legislate a ban on human cloning. Like the Prime Minister, I advocate the position that any attempt to introduce human cloning should be vigorously resisted by every member and senator who sits in this parliament. The bill provides for **any form of human cloning to be an offence** and provides a 15-year maximum prison sentence. The prison sentence is indicative of the gravity in which the parliament holds the offence of human cloning.

Kay Hull (Liberal – Riverina)

While this bill will prohibit human cloning—an issue I strongly believe has no place in our society—it will ensure that work can continue on embryonic research, and in turn this may discover cures for many terminal and disabling diseases... Each of us are individuals with our own genetic make-up derived from our parents. **I believe that creating copies of ourselves sets a dangerous precedent. That is why I certainly do not support any research into human cloning.** It is a frightening thought and something that this bill completely outlaws. As a society, we could never allow fellow human beings to be used as living experiments.

Senator John Watson (Liberal)

I believe it is therefore important to keep both routes to therapy open. Unlike some in this chamber, I have no innate or unreasoned fear of terrible crimes against humanity waiting for medical scientists to be let off the leash. At the same time, I want to put on the record and make abundantly clear that **I am firmly against all forms of cloning**.

Alexander Downer (Liberal – Mayo)

I do not think many would argue with one of the two central propositions of this legislation, and that is to ban human cloning. I think all of us would agree that the implications of allowing human cloning are uncertain and, to some of us, even somewhat frightening. It raises concepts of eugenics and those who have argued for these things over the generations in some totalitarian regimes; one particularly reflects here on the Nazis during the 1930s and the 1940s. Anyway, the whole notion of breeding out certain genetically inherited characteristics and trying to breed particular types of humanity is one for me which is instinctively anathema, regardless of what the moral arguments may be.

The moral arguments are put forward by all of the major religions of the world. They argue that a person's unique identity would be challenged, would

be undermined by some system of cloning and that human beings would be treated as a means to an end rather than as ends in themselves, the ultimate of unattractive utilitarian arguments. In any case, to the best of my knowledge there is unanimous support in the parliament in opposition to human cloning. This legislation provides for that.

Dr Andrew Southcott (Liberal – Boothby)

I will first address the issue of human embryo cloning. The bill provides for the prohibition of human embryo cloning. This technology is relatively new. In 1997 it was announced that Dolly the sheep was successfully cloned. However, only about 10 per cent of cloned embryos result in live births, and amongst the live births there is a high percentage of malformations and deformities. In fact, when you look at the process that was required to create Dolly the sheep, you see that it took about 430 eggs, 40 donor sheep and 277 reconstructed eggs to develop 29 embryos. After using 13 surrogate mothers, one clone was born: Dolly. Clearly this technology is dangerous, and it is unacceptable to experiment in this way with humans. Apart from these obvious technical problems, Dolly appears to have cells that are just as old as the adult cell from which she is cloned. She already has arthritis.

Some scientists in Italy, South Korea and the United States may have already cloned humans to a four-cell stage. I join with the vast majority of my parliamentary colleagues to condemn human embryo cloning and to support the measures in this bill which will prohibit this. This technology is dangerous: it raises the spectre of designer babies and could lead to the commodification of children. If pursued, it will distort families and relationships within them. Division 1 of part 2 of this bill, which codifies prohibited practices, prohibits the creation, implantation and import and export of a human embryo clone. I support this section of the bill.

John Forrest (National – Mallee)

There are two important aspects of the bill which I would like differentiate. It seeks to **ban the cloning of human beings, which is an action I very strongly support**—and I do note there is a universal will to do this across the community and obviously amongst the members and senators of this place—and I want to be associated with that.

END OF STATEMENTS FROM COALITION SENATORS AND MEMBERS.