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Australians for Ethical Stem Cell Research

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Qld MPs must block the Federal 'clone-and-kill' Bill

"There is no mandate for cloning from the Federal Parliament" said Qld GP Dr David van Gend, National Director of *Australians for Ethical Stem Cell Research*.

"The Senate cloning Bill came within one vote of defeat – and the next morning Democrat Senator Andrew Bartlett said he might have made a mistake supporting the Bill. That is a split vote, not a mandate. Cloning was opposed by the leaders of all the major parties – Howard, Rudd, Vaile, Costello – on the grounds that it is wrong to create new human lives solely for research.

"We have met with State MPs and will continue to urge them to reject cloning on exactly the same ethical grounds as their Federal leaders. We hope they show more scientific skepticism and moral seriousness than those MPs in Canberra whose fell for the hype and false hopes of cloning .

"State MPs must decide the key ethical question: *Will they support the creation of living human embryos solely for research?* Embryos which could, like Dolly the sheep, be born as a baby, but will instead be destroyed in experiments. Embryos which are made as mere laboratory material, with no mother to defend them.

"This is a violation of the deepest human relationship – that of mother and offspring – and of basic justice – that a human life is not mere material to be exploited for the alleged benefit of science. And already Australian ethicists proposed growing cloned embryos to the fetal stage to harvest their organs, and also allowing cloned babies to be born. This is the slippery slope to further inhumanities, if cloning is ever permitted.

"And it is completely unnecessary science, since we are getting the great things of stem cell therapies without any need for cloning. Only this month we read of breakthroughs using adult stem cells to treat diabetes in children, to repair human livers and heart muscle. The journal *Nature Biotechnology* estimates 88 human treatments using adult stem cells – while embryonic stem cells remain entirely useless and unusable, since they cause tumours in animals.

"Right here in Queensland we have world leaders at the National Adult Stem Cell Centre at Griffith (Prof Alan Mackay-Sim et al), now researching the treatment of Parkinson's using stem cells from the nose.

"Adult stem cells are the real hope for patients; cloning embryos must be rejected by our representatives as profoundly unethical and completely unnecessary."

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