



Speech by

Miss FIONA SIMPSON

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

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CLONING OF HUMANS LEGISLATION

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (10.26 a.m.): I believe we all support good ethical medical research and are keen to see science used for the benefit of humankind to achieve better outcomes for health and wellbeing. But does this mean anything goes, that the end justifies the means and that no statutory regulation is necessary? Can we trust codes of conduct and goodwill to provide the necessary protections for society against the huge and cashed-up biotechnology industry? Certainly not! There are complex ethical issues, not only in research on human genetic material and embryos but also on animals and plants. If the wider community feels strongly about genetically modified food, it cannot be assumed that they would feel less strongly about genetically altered humans.

I am strongly critical that this government has, in reality, done next to nothing to address these issues in legislation and certainly has not consulted the community and encouraged an informed public discourse. There are no laws in Queensland, on the statute books or on the table of parliament for debate, which would prevent cross-species research and the mixing of animal and human DNA. Already in Australia there has been research mixing human and pig DNA. Does Queensland want to follow suit and have a smart pig as the mascot for the state's biotechnology boom? Or maybe it would be a dumb pig, depending on whose human DNA you used. The all-party Commonwealth parliamentary committee made recommendations that states such as Queensland which have no legislation regulating embryo research should introduce legislation to limit research in human embryos according to the principles set out in the National Health and Medical Research Council guidelines—guidelines such as banning the mixing of human and animal gametes to produce hybrid embryos or banning the commercial trading in gametes or embryos.

I am urging the government to refer this issue and the currently totally inadequate Cloning of Humans (Prohibition) Bill to an all-party parliamentary committee to consult with the public and the scientific community as the alternative does not promote a Smart State. The use of stem cells is a promising area of scientific research. Stem cells also can be sourced from other areas, but these matters must be dealt with together and they must be dealt with by an all-party parliamentary committee in a way which involves proper consultation.

Time expired.
