



Speech by

**Hon. Kevin Lingard**

**MEMBER FOR BEAUDESERT**

Hansard Thursday, 11 October 2007

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## **RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN EMBRYOS AND PROHIBITION OF HUMAN CLONING AMENDMENT BILL**

**Hon. KR LINGARD** (Beaudesert—NPA) (5.57 pm): One of the first aspects this debate on the Research Involving Human Embryos and Prohibition of Human Cloning Amendment Bill demonstrates is how ridiculous it is that there is no unified policy throughout Australia on an important decision such as stem cell research. Surely, it is important that throughout Australia we have a common system. How ridiculous it is that something like this might be banned in one state yet be legal in another. I am sure that our constitutional fathers would have changed their mind if they could see the Australia we live in in 2007 compared to that of 1900. Even more ridiculous is the fact that one state legislation may be at odds with Commonwealth legislation. Not only does it make decision making impossible but Commonwealth funding for such an important project might be at risk.

If we are to play an important part in world research, I see very little potential in a piecemeal approach by each state—similarly, with research into cancer, Alzheimer's, cystic fibrosis and other diseases. My own personal experience as a minister demonstrated the limitations of legislative control when states and the Commonwealth differ. My own experience was with the state legislation on surrogate parents. Queensland did not allow a surrogate parent to carry a child for a married couple. When you are faced with a very genuine couple who have just found out that the woman is unable to carry a baby but both the husband and the wife desperately want to have children, it is very difficult to tell the couple that Queensland law does not allow this unless there are special circumstances.

If the couple had the financial ability and the personal determination, it is possible to have this procedure outside Queensland. I challenge any person to tell me that, when a child is born to the couple, the minister or any person representing the minister would stand at the Queensland border and stop the return of the baby and the mother to Queensland. So in many cases we end up with ridiculous legislation. We have the potential here to end up with ridiculous legislation unless we are very careful.

Because most speeches up until now have outlined the specific details of the stem cell legislation, there is no reason for me to repeat those details. For me the legislation allows scientists the potential—and I have heard that word mentioned a few times—to create human embryos and undertake research on the resulting cell cluster for up to 14 days. Cloning is forbidden, and I support this strongly. Aspects of cloning human life in the future are abhorrent to me, but I have no doubt this problem will have to be faced by future generations. At present I see no way that cloning can improve the society in which we live. However, the potential for human medical breakthrough is enormous.

Far too often we are faced in modern society with accidents which have horrific effects on people, and it would seem that if the cause of the problem were to be replaced it would be so beneficial to the injured person. This is particularly the case with grown people who are faced with debilitating lives because of some muscular damage—similarly, brain damage which causes physical limitations. To me the potential—and I say again 'potential'—of creating embryonic stem cells over using adult stem cells is that embryonic cells can change themselves into myriad tissues found in the human body. This development, I believe, could lead to the growing of new body parts which it seems is limited in adult stem cells.

Similarly, I believe that in the exchange of body parts there will be the potential in growing body parts which will stop the rejection of body parts between bodies. What we need to have is very strict legislative control over future experimentation. Similarly, with this legislation we have to accept that in other parts of the world there will be experimentation with human embryos by people and groups with massive finance and with personal opinions which differ markedly from ours but which they hold strongly that will not limit this experimentation. That is not the reason for my support of the legislation. I support the legislation because I believe that progress in medical research such as creating embryonic stem cells will give us much more success in the solution of the problems experienced by paraplegics and those with debilitating diseases.