



House of Representatives
Standing Committee
on
Legal and Constitutional Affairs

Media Release

18 February 2000

Cloning is No Longer the Subject of Science Fiction

The public will have an opportunity to put questions to experts on human cloning at a forum in Melbourne on Wednesday 1 March.

The **House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs** will host a public forum from **9am until 5.30pm** at **Dallas Brooks Convention Centre**, East Melbourne, as part of the Committee's inquiry into the scientific, ethical and regulatory considerations relevant to the cloning of beings.

The public, along with scientists, ethicists and other community leaders, will have the opportunity to put their views and questions to the House Committee at both the morning and afternoon sessions.

Cloning is no longer the subject of science fiction. In February 1997 scientists in Scotland successfully cloned a sheep; in 1998 scientists, using human cells, achieved the first step in a cloning process; and in 2000, scientists in the United States were successful in cloning a rhesus monkey.

"The technology for cloning is developing at a such a pace that it is now necessary for us to consider thoroughly all the issues presented by the science of cloning and its relationship to human beings," Mr Kevin Andrews MP, House Committee Chairman, said.

The House Legal and Constitutional Committee is reviewing the advice to the Commonwealth Government on human cloning contained in the Australian Health Ethics Committee (AHEC) report.

The Committee has already received more than 250 written submissions from a wide cross section of the community.

"This is an opportunity for those people with an interest in human cloning, or those who may have views about it, to hear the experts address the Committee, and to put their questions to the experts," Mr Andrews said.

Among the witnesses giving evidence at the public forum on Wednesday 1 March will be Professor Don Chalmers, Chair of the AHEC. Other witnesses will include scientists from the Monash Institute of Reproduction and Development, the University of Adelaide, the Royal Women's Hospital and the Murdoch Institute for Research into Birth Defects.

As well as scientists and ethicists, representatives of community groups including the Consumer Health Forum of Australia and Youth Concerned with Cloning will also provide evidence to the inquiry.

***For media interviews contact the Chairman of the House Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee
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For Inquiry Details & a Selection of Submissions visit: www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/laca/index.htm