

Deirdre Mckeown and Rob Lundie - Conscience votes during the Howard government

During the Howard Government's time in office five bills attracted a conscience vote. These bills were: Euthanasia Laws Bill 1996, Research Involving Embryos Bill 2002, Prohibition of Human Cloning Bill 2002, Therapeutic Goods Amendment (Repeal of Ministerial Responsibility for Approval of RU486) Bill 2005 and Prohibition of Human Cloning for Reproduction and the Regulation of Human Embryo Research Amendment Bill 2006.

This paper considers aspects of these votes and tracks patterns that emerged. Aspects considered include the voting patterns of party leaders, the party vote, the vote of women, the media and conscience votes and the dilemmas facing members of parliament in these votes.

A list of conscience votes in the federal parliament from 1950 to 2007 is included in an appendix.

<http://www.aph.gov.au/library/pubs/rp/2008-09/09rp20.pdf>