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## Bioethics Council to be disbanded

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**The Bioethics Council is the next target for Cabinet ministers wanting to save money in the public sector.**

*Radio New Zealand understands Cabinet will sign off on disbanding the council on Monday.*

The council was set up in 2002 to advise on the cultural, ethical and spiritual aspects of biotechnology. Housed within the Ministry for the Environment, it has nine members, four full-time support staff and an annual budget of about \$1.3 million.

The Labour Party says the council's work is extremely valuable, and disbanding it does not make sense.

Sir Paul Reeves who set up the council in 2002 and chaired it until 2004, says its expected abolition is a huge disappointment. He says far from being financially wasteful, the council did the best with what it was given and should be encouraged to continue.

Labour's environment spokesperson, Nanaia Mahuta, says it does not make sense to abolish the the council as it has been doing extremely valuable work, including looking at xenotransplantation and pre-birth testing.

Environment Minister Nick Smith is refusing to comment on the future of the council.