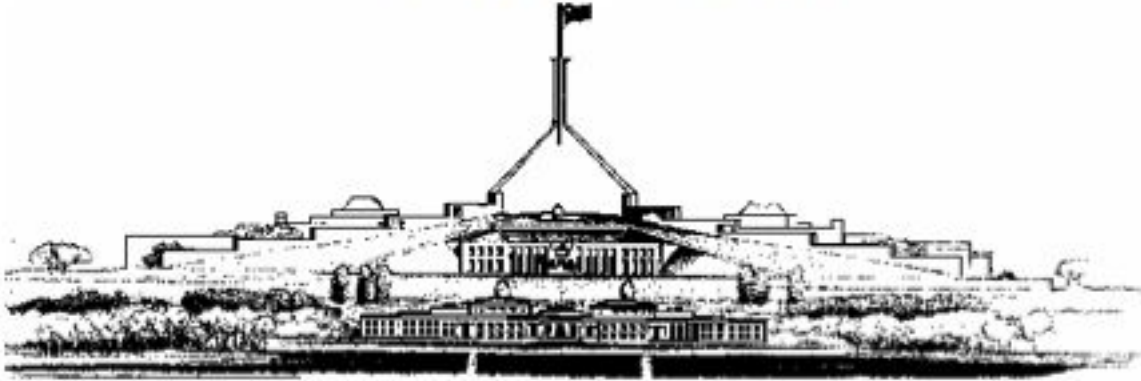




COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PROOF

Main Committee

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Maternity Services

SPEECH

Monday, 15 June 2009

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

Date Monday, 15 June 2009	Source House
Page 114	Proof Yes
Questioner	Responder
Speaker Hawke, Alex, MP	Question No.

Mr HAWKE (Mitchell) (6.42 pm)—I rise today in support of the mothers and midwives in my electorate who came to see me about their concerns over the Rudd government's failure to accommodate the needs of women choosing to birth at home with a private midwife. Midwives, of course, have a concern that after this budget they will not be allowed to attend home births due to the new national registration of health professionals planned to be implemented in July 2010. Of course, midwives are the only health professionals without any indemnity insurance, despite \$500 million being given in 2001, and this appears to me to be an extremely valid concern.

I want to note here that since 1993 the UK's official policy has been that women should have more choice in the place of birth, and this is a position which the coalition supports. We certainly support the choice of childbirth options for women. The government has not resolved this situation despite it being noted in the maternity services review, and from listening to the experiences of these midwives and mothers within my electorate I can understand their concern. Despite an overwhelming 53 per cent of responses to the recent maternity services review advocating more accessible home birth services, the outcome of the review appears to take home births off the agenda and as a result could potentially make home birth with a midwife illegal.

I want to record that private maternity could be made more supportive and much cheaper if private midwifery were enabled and recognised. Indeed, it is something which the government ought to consider and take very seriously before the July deadline. The shadow minister for health has written personally to the Minister for Health and Ageing raising these concerns and requesting that the government act and resolve this situation, and we are currently developing our health policy. *(Time expired)*