




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Perinatal Depression

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (2.27 pm): I have babies on the brain. My sister and two of my best friends are due in weeks and to say I am excited is something of an understatement. To prepare myself I watched the new TV show on Channel 10 *One Born Every Minute*. I found myself becoming pretty emotional. I was thinking back to my own early days as a new mum.

Every new parent knows the mind-crushing exhaustion that often accompanies having a new baby. I have never experienced anything quite like it and it sounds like neither has the member for Buderim! Your eyes feel red raw, your body does not belong to you and you have little time or inclination to eat. For many mums it goes far beyond that.

Post or perinatal depression is a serious matter that impacts mums when they are most vulnerable and tired. It stops them from fully bonding with and appreciating their beautiful babies, and when combined with fatigue it makes it much harder to help. That is where organisations like the Sherwood RBA come in. They provide social and emotional support for new mums, including breastfeeding advice. You can call them 24 hours a day and they are only volunteers. I personally thank Lisa, Kayleigh, Kay and the legion of other volunteers who have served our local community for many years. For mums who need more specialised care there is PANDA—Perinatal Anxiety & Depression Australia—who offer support to mums and dads suffering perinatal depression.

It can be caused by many things such as a traumatic or complicated birth, physical complications or good old-fashioned sleep deprivation. When my beautiful daughter was born, my labour continued over three calendar days and two sleepless nights. By the time she was born I had not slept since Tuesday. It was now Friday. Due to birth complications I could not get out of bed, but over the coming days visitors streamed into my room nonstop. I grew more fatigued by the hour, and if she had not been such a good eater I do not know how I would have coped. When I got home with my beautiful baby it took months to feel human again. Looking back now, I know there was something more going on than just tiredness. When I looked at my daughter I knew that I loved her, but I could not bond with her the way that I did with my son.

I was so tired that from the time I got up in the morning I would count the seconds until I could sleep again. I would not even eat in case I missed a chance to nap. I wish I had told more of my visitors to wait, but being a first-time parent I did not know what I was in for. When I contrast this with my experience with my son a few years later, I had fewer visitors. I think what made a real difference was that because my son was in the intensive care unit a nurse said to me, 'You can't hold him tonight. Why don't you get a good night's sleep instead?' My sense of relief was immense. I remembered how I felt with my daughter, so I took her advice and I slept. I believe that one extra night of sleep set me up for a more positive experience, and I am so grateful to that nurse.

Childbirth really is an everyday miracle. It happens every minute in our state, yet every single safe delivery is simply amazing. Thank you to the amazing local services like PANDA who make sure our mums and dads can create networks and settle into new parenthood.