

The New Zealand Herald

[nzherald.co.nz](http://nzherald.co.nz)

National Story

# Access to births, deaths and marriages to remain open

11:45AM Friday November 23, 2007

Births, deaths and marriage records will remain open to the public after a committee of MPs recommended throwing out the more draconian elements of the proposed law.

The bill caused a storm of protest from historians, researchers, journalists and others when it was introduced because it proposed privacy controls they said would deny them legitimate access to the records.

In October the Government offered a compromise, saying it wanted to strike a balance between protection and transparency.

The government administration committee has released its report on the bill and two minor parties, who wanted changes made, said today they had won a victory for open access.

United Future leader Peter Dunne and the Green's Keith Locke said they hoped the amendments would be passed by Parliament – which is virtually assured now the committee has ticked them off.

"All the draconian features of the bill have been removed," they said.

"In practice, virtually all records would remain open to the public."

The MPs said the original bill would have closed off access to many records for decades, and subjected researchers to an unwieldy process of gaining the permission of family members.

Under the Government's compromise access to records would:

- \* Require people who want access to certificates to provide adequate identification;
  - \* Create an access register so people can find out who has looked at their information; and
  - \* Enable a person to request their records not be made public.
- NZPA



Peter Dunne

Copyright ©2007, APN Holdings NZ Limited

Served by: **Lilac** Instance: **static** | 25 Nov 2007 10:02:57 | 1,446