

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Mrs Kate Walton

Date Received: 19 July 2023

Partially
Confidential

My birth was at the

in Sydney on the 17th December 2019.

I was pregnant with my 3rd child and had been booked in for a planned cesarean at 35wks due to him being transverse and small.

At 35wks my waters ruptured & as previously instructed we made our way promptly into hospital to negate risk of prolapsed cord. My first 2 were planned cesarean at 39wks (transverse) & 36wks (due to IUGR/transverse) so I wasn't at all worried about the surgery or my baby and knew what to expect.

As baby was considered premature a subsequent OB was also brought in to support. This support OB didn't introduce himself and just had generally bad bedside manner, what was most traumatic was he seemed to take over & was incredibly rough during the surgery and as the surgery unfolded I noticed my OB looking uncomfortable which only made me feel more uncomfortable.

Although there was no 'pain' it felt really overly rough and very uncomfortable. It was like he was reaching all the way up into my abdomen/ribs to get my son out and there was talk of him being 'stuck' which confused/worried/scared me - I was having to really keep myself calm to not lose it (which is saying a lot considering I have training in mindset and hypnotherapy). My son was ok after birth however for me it was a different story.

My son was taken to special care, my husband went home to care for our other 2 kids and I was just left in the maternity ward without contact with my son for almost 24hrs. At no point did anyone help me to get up to see him, I never even knew it was an option available to me, there was no communication about when I could see him and I was in so much pain in my ribs from the surgery and I felt extremely disconnected and numb.

Eventually when someone finally helped me up in a wheel chair to special care I was just wheeled next to his humidicrib and left there alone feeling extremely helpless and not sure what I was supposed to do or what I 'could' do - I cried so much at the thought of him not having me near by and me not having him near by sooner. I watched another mum have her bed wheeled in after birth to be close to her child which really hurt that it was never offered to me - it should be standard practice. Mums need their babies and babies need their mums asap after birth.

Another very traumatic part of the experience as I'm sure so many other prem mums experience is having to leave my baby once I was released from hospital.

For months afterward my ribs hurt whenever I laid down, the physical and the emotional healing took so much longer than my other 2 births. Despite it being my 3rd child the trauma of it definitely took its toll on my confidence and mental health as well as the physical healing from unexpected rib pain.