

## INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

**Name:** Name suppressed

**Date Received:** 29 July 2023

---

Partially  
Confidential

I gave birth to my son at 40+2 weeks at \_\_\_\_\_ Hospital inside the birthing unit on \_\_\_\_\_ /2015. Both myself and my family have suffered significant ongoing trauma in the years following the birth of our son.

My second pregnancy was relatively uneventful with only mild nausea most of the time, although I did feel I was carrying a larger baby than I had my my daughter (first pregnancy in 2011). Throughout my second pregnancy with my son I had been attending the antenatal clinic within \_\_\_\_\_ Hospital. I had attempted to enrol in the midwife group practice (MGP Program) but was unsuccessful. On my last examination in the clinic at 39 weeks I had not been informed anything to be wrong, although I had asked if I might be able to be induced as I knew my son was measuring large and I felt this would be a safer option for myself and him. I was told no, that I had to be 40+7 to be considered for this.

My labour began at home at 1am on the \_\_\_\_\_ /15 and for the next 6 hours approx I remained at home with my partner whilst labour remained in the early stages (we remained in contact with the midwives on duty in the birthing unit regularly); at approx 8am my contractions began to increase and became closer together. We had spoken to the birthing unit and they had agreed for us to come in.

We presented to the ward and I was examined straight away, the midwife informed me I was 6 cms dilated and within under an hour further I had fully dilated I was informed.

I had access to the gas for relief at this stage.

Once the midwife informed me I was fully dilated and had examined me. She repeatedly sternly told me its time to get this baby out! I very much was wanting to meet my baby ASAP, although I was feeling absolutely no urge to push (as I had felt with first pregnancy at this stage). I repeated this to her several times, and said that my pain was no longer coming and going between contractions it was constant and unrelenting extreme pain. I had already requested for an epidural earlier on after I had arrived, but was told NO I was already completely dilated and therefore could not have one. The pain was rapidly increasing and I was becoming increasingly more distressed and scared. My husband was repeatedly looking for a midwife and doctor on duty to check on me and our baby which took considerable time and he had trouble understanding what was happening.

I believe a couple of hours had passed and I was still trying to push my baby out with nil progression, I was in agony and was screaming for a doctor. A midwife and been checking me at semi-regular intervals, and didn't appear to alert to anything although I desperately felt something was very wrong.

Eventually a Registrar on call came to my room and examined me, he told my husband our baby was not able to crown & enter my birth canal because he was transverse. This had not been reported my any of the midwives who had examined me. He had attempted to physically

turn my baby with no success. At this stage I felt like my stomach was splitting in half. I was still sucking on the the gas, I could not let it go, I remember the midwife telling my partner to take it away from me as I'd had too much. I began to heavily vomit several times. I was greatly concerned for my baby and if he was okay. I had been pushing for so long and was told he was stuck, what was going to happen next!?

We were told (what we had feared) that he was in great distress and they needed to get him out ASAP. His heart rate had been dropping, I do not know how long he had been in distress for. The staff had also asked me (I imagine due to the baby's large size?), in front of my husband, "does this baby have the same father as your first child?".

I believe an emergency alarm was activated as a lot of medical staff entered my room quickly, at this point I was told they were preparing my for theatre for an emergency c-section. Then a few minutes later another doctor walked in holding a very large object covered in a large drape. Neither myself or my husband was told what was going on, suddenly my legs were tied in stirrups and the doctors had began an emergency forceps delivery. I was not given any pain relief prior to this. My husband witnessed the doctors and nurses yelling loudly at each other at this time and he was forced out of the room and into the corridor, (afterwards the next day a young new graduate nurse came to see me in the birthing unit and explained to me she saw my husband crying in the corridor alone & that she sat with him and tried her best to keep him updated on what was presently happening. She told me he said to her "I think my wife and my baby might die" I don't know what's happening'.

Our son remained transverse high up. The forceps were pulled up and down several times to manovere my son into my birth canal towards delivery. I felt like I was about to pass out and the pain was so so severe and out of control. Our son was delivered at 2:30pm weighing 4.6kgs and was 53cms long after having been in distress for so long being transverse and stuck. The cord was wrapped around his neck and it was unclear how long he may have been without oxygen for. We were so concerned for his health and if he was okay & healthy. We were told he was, he did score 9 on his APGAR test.

I had a significant haemorrhage post birth and my blood pressure became very low. I had been given an episiotomy (without consent) and had also severe 5th degree tears. All I needed was to hold my baby and keep him safe. That moment I was able to hold him was so perfect and special. I didn't want to let go.

Post birth I could not walk when transferring to the maternity ward and my vagina remained so so swollen and sore I continued to have to wear ice in my underpants.

was doing well considering, was suckling reasonably although was remaining drowsy at the breast most of the time. I had been teary and upset a lot since my son's birth, and I think I was severely traumatised.

I had the NUM of the birthing unit come to see me in the maternity ward to apologise to me and my husband and explain to me that my birth had been reported as a critical incident and that I will be seeing the social worker in the ward. I did my best to talk to the social worker and I was asked to document my birth experience and to hand it to her before discharge if I would like to proceed with a complaint. I felt so let down and disheartened post birth and all I wanted to do was go home if my son was well enough. My baby had large indent marks to both sides of his head from the forceps.

We were allowed to go home on day 3.

I had to have the community midwives come to my home for my several weeks to monitor my tears/wounds and they both did comment to me that my birth was something "you would see in the third world". They encouraged me to proceed with a complaint if I felt I could. appeared to be doing well at this time and began to feed quite well.

At 6 weeks old he became unwell with bronchiolitis and a UTI and spent several weeks in hospital, he lost a significant amount of weight and could not keep any feeds down, he was constantly projectile vomiting up all his milk after he finished his feed.

spent time in the paediatric ward on IV anti-biotics and fluids until his weight did eventually improve and he could keep his feeds down.

After this health did appear to improve and he was gaining weight, and he was sleeping well. At 6 months old we observed him not able to roll over, he was significantly late to sit up, to learn to crawl and did not learn to walk until 2 yrs old. also had verbal dyspraxia with delayed verbal and communication skills.

At 3yrs old he was diagnosed with global development delay and hypermobility.

We commenced into physiotherapy and OT at this time, to improve his mobility and coordination and knew early intervention is so important. was attending a community preschool, where he was the only child with special needs, he did greatly enjoy his time there and did thrive on the attention of his teachers combined with his physical therapists assistance.

At 5yrs old was diagnosed with a mild intellectual disability and autism level 2.

He started kindy in 2021, he attends an autism specific school which has been a great fit for him. He has come a long way since beginning school and is thriving now in grade 2. He is currently 8yrs old and remains very immature for his age and has no emotional regulation, he requires a lot more constant direction and supervision than other children his age and currently is not toilet trained and still wakes several times per night and ends up having to co-sleep with us.

Each week he attends allied health appointments 4 out of 5 days per week. This continues to affect both my husband's and my ability to work at increased hours.

We have limited family support with only my mum close by for support and assistance with and our other children's care.

Thank you for reading my submission and for the opportunity to share my story of my experience with birth trauma.