

Submission
No 137

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

I have had 2 babies in NSW. I am currently pregnant with my third baby. I have been cared for in the public system during each pregnancy. Whilst my pregnancies and births have been mostly positive, there were aspects of my care that left me feeling frightened, gaslit, belittled, not listened to and like a bad mother.

In my first pregnancy, I was told that I was risking a still birth if I did not induce the birth of my baby. During the course of this induction, I was explicitly told i was on the clock when I asked to labour without the syntocin drip, being told it was “already late in the day”. Towards the end of my birth, an episiotomy was performed on me without my permission. Whilst I appreciate this had to be done, no efforts were made to seek my informed consent at all. I was just told what was happening. After this birth, I suffered with significant guilt around choices made in my birth. When I tried to bring this up with my midwife post birth, I was brushed to the side and as a consequence, really suffered mentally for at least 3 months. I know I am still one of the lucky ones.

In my second pregnancy and birth, I was told to induce the birth of my baby because they were measuring big. I was not supported in waiting for labour to start spontaneously. It was the peak of Covid 2021 and I was required to attend countless appointments alone, without any support. When I attended the hospital for my induction, I was assessed and advised they would not be starting the process until the following day. I asked to go home and was told I could not - for no reason at all. The following day, an OB came in to break my waters. She went to break them by inserting the implement, and then quickly withdrew it. She told me baby had moved out of my pelvis and I was at risk of a cord prolapse. She then told me she would need to perform an emergency Caesarian or a CROM in theatre. She told me they had done nothing at that point. Again, I asked to go home as nothing had been done for me

And I did not see the point of this induction. I was told I would be leaving against medical advice and was once again risking the life of my baby. This is despite the fact I had performed nil interventions on me and my baby and my baby was happy and healthy. My waters then broke whilst I was sitting on the hospital bed. I am sure it was triggered by the OB’s attempt. I called to let them know my waters had broken, I was examined by that OB and told that I had wet myself. I assured her that I had not, this was my second baby and i knew my waters had broken. This went on for 30 more minutes. Finally, I was believed by my midwife and I went down to birth suites after it had been confirmed my waters had broken. I then asked to labour without the drip again and once again, I was advised I was acting contrary to medical advice. I ultimately had a positive and empowering birth but it was marred by the above.

Finally, I would like to note that at a week post partum, I had to bring my son in to the ED at 6 days old because he had an eye infection. I was less than a week pp, bleeding with an exclusively breastfed newborn. Due to covid, I had to attend alone, I had no food, no water. I bled through my pants.

I will be birthing my next baby at home.