

Submission
No 197

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

My fourth birth was traumatic and I am still angry about it. I was attempting a VBAC. I had a good chance of success because I had two previous NVBs prior to an emergency LSCS with number three due to a face presentation.

The Caesar itself was not the issue. The issue was the way I was treated by staff at the small Sydney hospital. They were likely under staffed that evening and the small hospital factor with no obstetrics registrars on hand overnight was also a problem.

I was told by the midwife that she could not hold the CTG monitor constantly for hours and the fact that there was loss of contact with the fetal heart rate meant my baby could be in danger. The paperwork however states that there was no fetal reason for the Caesar.

I was told that the hospital had no means of breaking my waters as the baby's head was high. I understand that this is a risky thing, however the staff were not wanting to call in a doctor to assist with doing this in a safe manner. I was also not offered more time to let my baby engage in the pelvis. I was treated as an inconvenience to have on their birth unit as a labouring woman.

Following calling in the doctor and having the caesarean section, I was separated from my baby and husband with no time for skin to skin contact. I was not told where they were going. Additionally I was left in the operating theatre with one nurse and the cleaners who were literally cleaning the floor underneath me. I was not told how long I would be there. I was not told that this was happening rather than me going to recovery because there were no recovery staff. It was silent and no one spoke to me or explained what was happening. I knew this was weird because I had a previous Caesar at a different hospital where my midwife and my baby was with me the whole time and my midwife was explaining everything. Additionally my husband was also not informed of what was going on, whether I was ok and when we would be reunited.

The postnatal care at this hospital was also abysmal, but is for a different parliamentary investigation.

I still feel upset about my final birth experience, not because of the outcome but because I was treated so badly by staff, like an inconvenience, and because I was not given options for more time to achieve a vaginal birth given the baby was completely fine and I was also healthy and well. I feel angry at myself for not standing up for my rights and angry that I even feel like this because I should not have to stand up for being treated like a human rather than an inconvenience.