

**Submission
No 198**

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

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I have birthed two sons in very different circumstances. Both of these births I suffered birth trauma. The care I received was not good enough. The flow on effect from this into both of my early postpartum periods was devastating for my family and my mental health. NSW hospitals need to be doing better.

My first son was born in 2021 at a private hospital in NSW. He was born via emergency caesarean after I ran out of time to birth him vaginally. When I was forced to push him before my body was ready, because I was deemed fully dilated, I had a midwife push her hand inside me to try and force my cervix back over his head with each push. When I, and my husband, voiced concern over my position I was told by my midwife that I couldn't move. This care was not good enough, it was undermining and resulted in me losing complete trust in my body and the hospital system.

Two years later I planned a homebirth for my second son. He was born at home but required medical treatment so we were transferred to a NSW public hospital for care. My husband and I were both Covid positive at the time. Without having met my baby he was taken straight to NICU and I to an isolation room on the maternity ward. What followed were three days of not seeing my baby. Constant fighting with the hospital policies to try and reunite us. Constant pressure to give my baby formula because I was deemed not able to pump enough milk for him. Constantly telling the staff I needed to meet my baby so I could produce more milk. Mothers and babies NEED to be together in those early days to help with bonding, milk supply and so many other things. This was taken from me, and took a threatened self discharge to finally see my baby brought to my room. I was so grateful to have the support of my private midwives during this time to help me navigate the experience and give me a voice. I have no doubt that if I'd chosen to birth in the hospital system I would have been coerced into a repeat caesarean, and probably not even been able to try for a vaginal delivery. I would have been risked out of many midwifery programs or potential VBAC for many factors, but due to birthing at home I as able to have a successful vaginal delivery.