

Submission  
No 289

## INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

February this year I had a planned home birth with the public birth centre. I had to pass many stressful points to maintain my position in the program. I really had to fight to have a home birth. I had to learn how to say no to many interventions. Right up until the day I went into labour I was refusing interventions and being given talks about still birth. My baby was ten days overdue. I knew she'd be overdue. It was in my genetics to have long gestation. I was confident but the hospital system kept trying to get their machines onto me and I knew as the evidence says that as soon as I allowed that I'd let in a whole cascade of interventions.

At one point in my care I was sent to the main hospital as I was measuring small. The midwife told me maybe my baby had stopped growing. I am a small person. My mother also had a small fundal height with me and they told her it was fine. I don't know how they give so much weight to a measurement especially when they had no reference point with my body- it was the first measurement. After fear and hours in their machines which made me feel terrified and took all of my confidence away it was confirmed my baby was oversize and very healthy. I spent the next week crying because I'd thought I'd lost my bub and I felt I had failed her. I didn't need that experience. I knew my bub was going well. But they took away my confidence and I had to fight hard to get it back.

I ended up with some incredible midwives in the end through the birth centre. They told me what my rights were and didn't push me when I said no to things that were normal procedure in a hospital. They let me make informed choices.

On the day I went into labour I rang the midwife. It was 10.30 at night and she said that she couldn't come until 7 am. She wanted to come but because there were no other midwives available that night she couldn't (legally two must attend a home birth). So I set out into the night alone. Only a little while later the contractions were 4 minutes apart with no breaks and the sensations were immense. At 4am my midwife said I should call an ambulance as it seemed like I wanted to push. I was screaming down the house.

The ambos came and said I wasn't dilated (from standing 4 metres away and looking at my face somehow they thought they could tell this) and bub would be a long way off. I knew bub wasn't too far off and I also knew that I had absolutely no capacity to get into an ambulance with the intensity of the contractions.

I know my midwife wanted to be there to help but she wasn't legally allowed.

I rang her and begged her to come.

She found a midwife from the main hospital who could come.

My bub was born within 10 minutes of them arriving. I knew I'd been holding on until they arrived. The feelings of holding and not having reassurance or guidance were immense.

I am so grateful to have birthed my baby at home because I wanted to be safe from any intervention. I knew my body could birth my baby safely but it also would have been more peaceful if I'd had the guidance I needed.

Making two midwives essential for every homebirth meant my midwife had to stay at home when I went through that experience. If midwives could attend on their own with follow up ambulance if necessary it would be much safer. And would make home birth possible for many more women. Including rural women.

I had a PPH after my bub was born. I believe this was due to holding on so much during transition stage. The pressure built up so much that placenta and blood flew out of me after bub. Now that I've had a PPH it's not easy for me to birth again through a public home birth program. If I can't have my baby at home I am terrified of what the hospital will do to me mentally and physically.

My bub is six months old. She's been breast feed exclusively from her birth. We are both doing well. Home birth is a choice that all women should have. I am so sad that every woman doesn't have access to a public funded home birth. My midwife wore a beautiful dress to my baby's birth. The room was full of women and the sun was rising outside as the magpies sang. Birth should be a celebration of life and all it's wonders, not an event for hospital which is so often a place of sickness and death.