

Submission  
No 301

## INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

I experienced trauma with the birth of my first child. I was prevented from receiving the care I wanted because I lived rurally and only had access to one Obstetrician and birth options/locations were limited. I felt coerced to change from my preferred birthing position to give birth in the position that the doctor preferred which greatly influenced associated birth trauma and a difficult birth results in an instrumental birth (ventuse). For each midwife on shift following the birth I received different information that greatly impacted me emotionally and psychologically as I felt I was failing significantly as a new mother. One midwife was very forceful in trying to get my child to breastfeed, by grabbing my breast to feed my child rather than allowing me to do it. I felt very fearful when this midwife would come to 'help', ignoring or dismissing my concerns.

I experienced birth trauma with the birth of my second child in a large private hospital as a result of how I was treated during and after the birth. This affected me emotionally and psychologically. During birth I felt pressured by the midwife to have pain relief which I did not want to have according to my birth plan. My needs and wishes as outlined in my birth plan were ignored and I felt like they made decisions for me. I was not given evidence-based, unbiased information to make an informed choice during the birth. My chosen Obstetrician was not available for the birth (due to scrubbing up for surgery last minute) which added to the traumatic birth experience. My preferences regarding birthing positions and wishes were ignored for preference of the midwife.

After the birth I received different advice from each midwife on shift, contributing to high levels of anxiety. I wasn't given consistent information to encourage or support breastfeeding in the early days, instead the individual midwives each had their own opinion on what I should do impacting me emotionally and psychologically.

I am currently pregnant with my third child and am already experiencing negative opinions and pressure from General Practitioners in regards to my preference for care and birth. When I was pregnant with my first two children I was not aware of birth options, access to different care models or information regarding postpartum care. Having more awareness of options due to personal research and experience from first two births I am taking control of my birth options with this pregnancy. If this doesn't align with the GPs/hospital preference, my needs and wishes have been ignored, I've felt disrespected and not listened to. This is affecting me psychologically and emotionally. To claim Medicare for Private Antenatal and Postnatal midwifery care I need a GP referral. I have currently sought a referral from three GPs and have been refused due to the GPs personal opinion on antenatal care, postnatal care and birth options. This is impacting me financially as I have to pay for the appointment to get a referral only to be refused a referral. Not being able to obtain the required referral to claim Medicare will impact me financially. I have been pressured by two separate GPs to use the hospital system over private midwifery services or home birth options, without even knowing anything about my previous births or experience. Early consultations with a GP during the pregnancy have involved my preferences being ignored for their birth preference without any evidence-based information to support it.

There needs to be greater access to midwife-led continuity of care models to allow pregnant mothers to develop rapport with the midwife, explain their needs and wishes, as well as feel heard. This will contribute greatly to lowered stress levels and a more supportive birth. Continuity of care will prevent mixed messages being given to mothers.

There needs to be easier access to birth options, for example public funded home birth and birth centres. A mothers birth preferences **MUST** be respected at all times.