

Submission  
No 350

## INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

I feel strongly about women and families being listened to in relation to this inquiry. Many women and families experience great shame in talking about their birth trauma stories as there is such a lack of understanding. Birth Trauma often feels like failure and on the other extreme can be deeply traumatising or re-traumatising for the women and others present at the birth.

My own daughter is now 16 years old. The birth trauma I experienced at the Hospital is still vivid in my mind. I won't relive the details in this submission as this may be re-traumatising for me. I will simply say that I was abandoned in pain and distress, left alone overnight in this condition with seemingly no staff on the ward during an induction procedure. I do understand that Doctors and staff get busy - however the distress of my cries for help no doubt impacted negatively the other patients in my room - its unacceptable that no-one came to help me.

By the time my labour was induced everything settled for me with my husband present and a midwife I felt comfortable with - for this period of time I felt supported, safe and cared for. Unfortunately for myself, my husband and my baby - just before I was about to birth - shift change clocked over and my gentle caring nurse went home. The nurse that replaced her was cold, rude, bossy and uncaring. She did not listen to how I felt and proceeded with invasive practices and refused my right to move my body or to use the bathroom - it was over quickly and what would have been (with continuity of care) a potentially gentle supported induced birth was terrifying, exhausting and painful. This experience triggered my PTSD, and anxiety and depression. I did not realise any of this until much later as I was really unaware of the world of birth and its potential challenges. This affected my marriage negatively, my partner also experiencing depression, along with my fear of ever giving birth again. Honestly - there is so much more to my story - I could write a book on my birth experience alone.

One of the biggest factors stopping women from speaking up and seeking support is that energetically and emotionally it take a lot and women's work loads are full with the responsibility of caring for their children not to mention work roles and extended family responsibilities. To keep going and hold things together for the family is seen as their role and responsibility - so this is their priority.

When my daughter was 3 years old I started a business called [redacted] - it was during this time that I learned so much about the world of birth. With all I was learning I wanted to be able to support women more wholistically so studied a formal qualification to be a life coach and studied with the organisation [redacted]. These studies were transformational for my work supporting women. I do need to make a living and charge for my services - money is yet another obstacle that women face when needing support with Birth Trauma.

I have listened to over 100 womens individual stories through my services and know full well that in my community of [redacted] NSW this is a drop in the ocean and thousands of women and families have been effected negatively. I understand that change - especially within institutions is difficult and takes time to implement. It is time for change - this is how our children - our next generation are bought into the world - it is their most formative time that is put under such great distress causing long term - often unidentified issues for the baby, mother and whole family.

Please take these submissions seriously and know that for every individual that has spoken up there is at least another 1000 who are unaware or somehow unable to speak - if it wasn't form my [redacted] on social media - I would have been unaware that this inquiry was taking place. I am pleased that it is happening and am happy to be contacted to participate in any further work on this project. Many thanks