

Submission  
No 384

## INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

I didn't have a traumatic birth BECAUSE I birthed at home.

I didn't have a traumatic birth BUT I've heard countless stories of women who have. Women I know have been abused, violated and had their preferences ignored during their most vulnerable and sacred moments birthing their babies. I am in complete disbelief at the amount of coercion, fear mongering and force placed on pregnant women and birthing mothers, and these health care professionals should be ashamed of their conduct.

I didn't have a traumatic birth BUT I had access to experienced midwives and continuity of care throughout my entire pregnancy. They worked with me for months to plan and prepare for my birth to be exactly the way I wanted it. They supported my choices and protected me while my body did what it knew innately to do on its own.

I didn't have a traumatic birth BUT I chose where and how I wanted to birth my baby. I chose to birth at home under the care of experienced midwives and have limited contact with the medical system in general. I chose to birth in the water because of the increased comfort it gave me during my long 40 hour labour. I chose to continue birthing my baby naturally and to avoid any intervention despite him taking his time to descend into the birth canal and make his way into the world. I was supported and empowered during my labour to take my time, move as I felt comfortable, eat, drink, sleep and rest when I could. My team sat with me for two hours after my baby was born to give me time to birth my placenta. They did not rush me or threaten me with drugs or surgery. They simply sat back and let me body take the rest it needed before birthing my placenta. They respected my body, my limits and my birth experience – even though it took away their time.

I didn't have a traumatic birth BUT my financial situation did not dictate what my options were. I did not feel any part of my labour was dictated by what was affordable versus what was safest and most comfortable for me. I was not limited by what was offered to me as I educated myself and discussed all options in detail with my midwife. I took responsibility for my care and found a team that aligned with my views – something that is not accessible to many women who can't afford private care. I have met many women who wished they could have had a homebirth but couldn't afford it and ended up being mistreated during their stay in the hospital. It is time for the Australian health care system to allow full funding for home birth for those who wish to birth at home.

I didn't have a traumatic birth BUT I was taken to the hospital for stitching of my complicated tear. The hospital staff were kind in the moment, however the discharge summary I received following my treatment was shocking. It was an opinionated stab at the choices I made which had nothing to do with my outcome of needing hospital attention. There were blatant lies in combination with exaggerations of the truth and an unwelcome, unprofessional and unnecessary comments and personal opinions of the doctor. It was not up to her to judge my choices – my team did nothing wrong, and deserved respect for their incredibly attentive work and dedication to honoring my plan.

I didn't have a traumatic birth BUT I am the exception. For many women, it will take them years to realise the trauma they endured and how it affected their first weeks, months or years as mothers. It's time to respect women and stop obstetric violence.