

Submission  
No 387

## INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

I have had two children now through the NSW health system. My first was in 2020. A pregnancy throughout covid held so many uncertainties but the biggest of those was the lack of antenatal care. As a health practitioner who also worked at the hospital I would be birthing at, I felt that perhaps I missed out on care just because they thought they knew me? Most procedures were not explained, many services skipped over. Had it not been for my sister who also is a midwife I believe I would have missed out on antenatal care altogether. My pregnancy ended in an emergency cesar which was necessary and I am grateful for the services we had on offer but I also believe that I was treated with judgment and poor service throughout. My confidential information was relayed to relatives by the clinical staff, my dad found out how dilated I was as he walked down the street. I was judged and met with hostility for 'planning a secret homebirth' even though I had always planned on attending hospital for my birth. The attitudes of the staff left me feeling like I had done something wrong even though nobody actually knew what it was that I wanted in the first place.

In 2022 I had the privilege of choosing private midwifery care for my second pregnancy where this time I planned (not in secret) a homebirth for my VBAC. I registered with my local hospital as per my midwives protocol and was again met with judgment, I was told

I would probably have to meet with an

Obstetrician and told that if my uterus ruptured my baby would probably die. Yes this is relevant information but there is also a lot of information missing from this statement, fear mongering rather than presenting the actual figures and letting me make my own decision. My private midwife (my sister included in this) provided me with education, options and a continuity of care that was empowering and exciting, just as it should be. After 3 days of labouring at home my very skilled and experienced midwives discussed with me my options and my safety, I decided (on my own, not coerced in any way shape or form) that a transfer to hospital was what was right for me and my baby. I arrived at the hospital, delivered my beautiful girl exactly two years to the day after my first daughter was born and did so vaginally!! I know that had I been in the hospital for this entire time that my VBAC would have been another c-section and that I would have had to fight for this option. I also know that had I chosen the hospital again for my second pregnancy that I would have been continually questioned about my choice for a VBAC and fear mongered.

My second birth also involved a PPH. This was managed in theatre and I know that for the duration of me being away my husband was met with judgement and questioning over the choices we made (I.e leaving the placenta attached until it was white and I was there to cut the cord). I am grateful to my sister and private midwife who supported him to stand up for what our decision was - one that was well researched and evidence based. I did however receive a lot of judgment and criticism for not completing the GBS swab. So much so that my discharge from hospital was delayed as I had 'failed' to do the swab and needed to be medically cleared first. This again was a well thought out and evidence based decision, however that was not respected or listened to by those in the hospital.

In planning a third pregnancy I am aware that I will not qualify for a home birth due to my birthing history, however I will engage private midwives again as I know the importance of continuity of care and being empowered and educated and listened to! I will equip myself with the people and the information I need to birth in the hospital because unfortunately it feels like I need to go in ready to fight for what I want rather than speak and be heard. I am

forever grateful for the doctors and the midwives and their skill set but I am baffled by the coercion and the judgement that continue to greet us even when we present sound evidence to support our choices. It shouldn't be a fight, it is exhausting enough as it is!