

Submission
No 311

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

In August 2022, I gave birth at _____ Hospital in NSW through the _____ Midwifery Group Practice.

I had a positive experience through the midwifery group practice model of care and wish every woman in NSW had the opportunity to such exceptional care.

In the lead up to, during and after the birth, I felt supported by my allocated midwife and my fourth year student midwife, including continuity of care with the one midwife, education and information via email/text/verbal, the opportunity to ask questions and have my choices and preferences respected.

I truly appreciated having the option to birth at home and the birth centre- I chose the birth centre because of the large central bath. The only things I wish I was informed of sooner was when I went through transition and I started to panic- luckily my student midwife spoke so kindly to me and reminded me of transition, and from then onward I felt confident and powerful.

I had a beautiful water birth, immediate skin to skin cuddles after birth and was given food and drinks during the 4 hours after my son's birth. My midwives were so happy for us and we felt so supported. They showed us the placenta and my husband was supported to put baby's first nappy on.

My midwife and her colleagues provided our aftercare at our home. It was so easy to have appointments at home and I feel it helped me better bond with my baby and recover after birth. My midwives visited for 2 weeks after birth and helped us navigate sleep, baby cares, breastfeeding and reading baby's cues. my baby developed jaundice and the wonderful midwife drove his blood sample to the hospital herself and texted me the results that night so that I didn't need to worry overnight.

I feel that breastfeeding was successful and positive for new because of the support my midwife gave me. I am still exclusively breastfeeding now at 1 year post birth. I healed well and quickly after birth because I was supported to have a physiological birth with no medical pain relief and no instrumentation. I feel confident in the midwifery health system, however only relating to midwifery group practice.

I have friends who have had traumatic experiences through mainstream birth ward births at _____ Hospital. They felt uninformed and did not have a trusting relationship with their midwife because they'd never met them before. They hold fear about birth and don't feel safe birthing through the public or private health systems.

If I could recommend some things to prevent birth trauma and improve care it would be to make the midwifery group practice model available to all birthing people (including VBAC, higher risk and breech specialist teams), make pregnancy/birth/breastfeeding education programs free to all birthing people and their support person, train midwives and obstetricians to better trust and support physiological birth including practical observation of home births and MGP births lead by midwives and also to have an equipment pool available to birthing women at low rental cost (TENS, fit ball, home birth bath/pool, birthing stools etc).