

Submission  
No 503

## INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

I am a registered psychologist, worked for the federal government for 17 years recently retired, gave birth 4 times in the 1980...90s without violence.

Shockingly, I witnessed a birth in 2018, where coercion, intimidation, abuse and power/control impacted the birthing mother to the point of not being able to feel safe enough to birth. After 30 hours she finally had to ask for help from an ambitious obstetrics registrar who had agitated behind the scenes for 24 hours to get into the birth suite intimidating midwives to do so. She then lied to the mother about the safety/choices of interventions and violently reeved the baby from the mothers body, the father was ignored throughout the experience as if he did not exist, the woman was punished for trying to leave hospital after the staff continuously undermined her breastfeeding efforts, she was denied after care due to her need to escape the horrifying hospital experience. I have never complained due to the fear of retributions on other family members (same surname) who have not yet given birth. Free birth is the only escape at this point in time as hospitals and AHPRA wield such power over midwifery that women have no safe choices despite government policies to provide birth choices for women.

Birth violence against women is real it is pervasive and through the magic of the Stockholm syndrome many women are beholden to the violence as they think their abusers are their saviours.

Please Please Stop this violence against women (and their most private body parts their sex organs) in labour.

Please provide non - 'power over' choices that allow women to be supported to feel confident in their body's ability to birth.

Women do not need to feel fearful and have a baby violently removed like a band aid being ripped off. This is supposed to be a slow gentle process without pressure or violence.

This is supposed to be a rite of passage an empowering experience not a devastatingly violent and soul destroying experience ... women then have to shake off the trauma (to their mind and intimate sexual organs) and raise a vulnerable human being . Stop this now. It is affecting mothering and family relationships - men are being traumatised too and do not know how to manage this feeling that they have witnessed and unwittingly condoned the intimate abuse of their partner - these ugly complex feelings destroy people and relationships / families.

Please stop this industrialised state funded state sanctioned sexual violence against innocent women and their families. This is destroying lives and families and is completely avoidable unnecessary and lucrative to a small number of ambitious medical 'practitioners'.

We could follow the humane methods employed in New Zealand, Canada Norway.

We have policies for continuity of carer midwifery group practice, and to offer publicly funded homebirth options yet hospitals and certain alarmist practitioners with power and conflicts of interest stubbornly stand the way of delivery of these policies.

The current situation for birthing women and their families is cruel, unacceptable and according to expert Prof Hannah Dahlan comes under the umbrella of 'violence against women'.

Since birth involves women's sex organs, I prefer to call it under the term ... 'sexual violence against women'.

The outcomes are life long devastating physical and psychological scars for the woman and her partner, any support persons and staff members as well.