

Submission  
No 511

## INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

I live in the regional NSW.

This was the birth of my first baby and I felt like things started going wrong from my pregnancy. I was just over 30 weeks when I contracted COVID-19, and my baby was diagnosed with a growth restriction. With many unknowns about COVID-19 and pregnancy at the time I was following up through my public hospital having second weekly scans. Each week brought a different opinion or different locum about when I should be induced or what the plan would be. This caused a significant amount of anxiety as I was so fearful without a concrete plan.

I was 37.5 weeks when I had a stretch and sweep. I went home that night and my waters had broken. The next 24 hours were the worst of my life. I was in agony. 12 hours in I had an epidural which only lasted a few hours. By the time of the evening I was still only 2cm dilated with significant pain from contractions. An oxytocin drip had commenced. And the pain was significantly increasing. I remember thinking I would rather die than go through the pain that was occurring. I was trying to push for some hours once I was fully dilated. I continued to have chest pain through my labour and an abnormally high heart rate for someone of my age and fitness. I was told to consent to an episiotomy/vacuum forceps delivery as this would be the best and safest option for my baby and myself, I didn't want to but I consented. I continued to push, and all of a sudden baby's heart rate dropped too 80 sustained. I had an emergency c section, and was told if I could feel anything I would be put to sleep due to the urgency of the situation. My husband was waiting anxiously outside until he was allowed to come in after they were prepping myself for theatre. I remember saying to my husband if you have to choose, choose the baby as I was so fearful we both wouldn't come out alive. Our baby was born via emergency c section and needed CPAP at birth. My baby also needed IV Antibiotics and was admitted to special care nursery due to Sepsis as my membranes had been broken for so long. Some hours later I met my baby. I couldn't feel anything from my shoulders down due to my spinal block. They had put the baby on my chest and were trying to make the baby breast feed. I remember wanting to go back in my room, feeling no love for the baby and feeling so disconnected to the world after the fear I had just been through. I remember thinking I had made a mistake wanting a baby and wanted it all to end. I suffered significant PTSD from the fear of my birth which contributed to the severity of my post natal depression. I was unable to bond with my baby for 6 months. And things were hard with my husband. Things only improved once I started on Sertraline. Whilst my post natal

Depression was multi factorial, my birth was a significant component of why I was feeling the way I did. I didn't want to keep reliving my birth thoughts in my head and can remember thinking my baby and husband would be better off without me.

I write this submission because women should be empowered to have a c section at any time of their birth in the public sector and not just in emergency cases. The midwives are working in a system of poor staffing, resources and are trying to do the best they can. The midwives should be commended because they are the heart of regional maternity units. No woman should start their life with a new baby like this. Continuity of care is so needed in public hospitals and MGP. Our public hospital once offered MGP but doesn't anymore due to staffing. I hope the government can really feel the impact of the emotional trauma that women go through every day. A lot of us don't want to talk or write about our stories, but do in hope of change.