

Submission
No 491

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

My experience with birth trauma began in 2020 when I first became pregnant and due to some minor complications, I was referred to a special clinic at the [REDACTED]. In order to attend this clinic, they instructed all attendees to arrive at 7:30am and wait to be seen. I was required to wait for many anxious hours in an uncomfortable waiting room with many other women, some of whom were clearly very anxious and in pain. The atmosphere was highly chaotic with staff constantly rushing around and it led to further stress and anxiety to people in an already anxious situation.

After being given the all clear at this appointment I was then told I would not have any further appointments for months, because the hospital was over subscribed. Despite having further complications that were dealt with by another hospital, I still was not offered an earlier appointment or one with a Doctor. Just after halfway through my pregnancy we decided to move to [REDACTED] in part due to my concerns about the hospital system in Sydney.

Once in [REDACTED] I began to have more regular appointments with midwives via [REDACTED] Hospital. These went relatively smoothly, until I was around 8 months pregnant and I was told at one of these appointments that my baby was mal presented for birth. When I asked questions regarding the implications for birth, the midwife was cagey and told me it may be a longer labour.

When I saw another midwife at my next appointment, the baby was still in the wrong posts and I asked how long they would let the labour go on before a C section, I was told it would go on as long as it needed as long as the baby wasn't distressed.

I was beginning to find the advice given to me by the midwives and extremely concerning, and I requested to see an obstetrician at the hospital. My request was twice dismissed, until my husband called and I was finally given an appointment.

There were numerous other actions taken by the midwives I found concerning.

When my husband and I arrived at this appointment we were extremely surprised to find that we were not seen by an obstetrician, but instead by an extremely junior Doctor who had to leave the room, or use google to answer every single question we asked.

By the end of the appointment, we were so concerned by the actions of the hospital that we sought an appointment with a private obstetrician. Given that by this stage I was over 8 months pregnant, it was difficult to find an obstetrician who could fit me in, however I managed to do so.

At our first appointment the obstetrician performed an ultrasound (which midwives had not performed for months) and expressed the opinion that it would be extremely difficult if not

impossible for me to give birth naturally, and that I would be advised to have a C section. When the same doctor performed the operation, he confirmed his opinion, and had difficulty removing the baby even surgically, due to the position.

I am extremely fortunate that I was able to access the private obstetrician, as if I had been forced by the midwives to give birth naturally, I would have experienced extreme birth trauma, and in all likelihood an emergency c section, after spending hours in labour. The behaviour of the midwives was both gaslighting and negligent. They created an atmosphere of hostility when questions were asked. The behaviour and actions at the private obstetricians office showed how negligent and unprofessional they were. I'm sure that many women suffer because unlike me, they were unable to afford private care in similar situations.