

Submission
No 650

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

My name is [REDACTED] I live in [REDACTED] and I was 27 years old when I had my first baby at [REDACTED] Public Hospital on the 21st November 2020. My contractions started around 1pm, by 5pm I went to the hospital to be assessed on how I was progressing and to see how dilated I was. When laying down to be assessed (which I thought was going to be done with their finger tips), they showed me this long prod with a hook like tip on the end and explained they will insert this to determine how dilated I am and if my waters had broken. The staff told me I was only 1cm dilated and that they think that they have just broken my waters. They told me to return home to continue to labour and return once I had progressed further along, and I hadn't then they would need to induce me as there was risk of infection. I returned at 4am. I was examined, still at 1cm. A few hours passed and they put me on pictocin to induce me. I was absolutely exhausted and so confused as to what was happening around me. I had lost all sight of reality. They then asked if I would like any pain relief, I instantly said epidural. It was administered. I fell asleep. My body progressed and I was fully dilated and told to push. I pushed for two hours. The staff then said I needed to be cut in order for my baby to come out. Again, I had nothing left to give. I was out of my body by this stage. It was either an episiotomy or a C section. They cut me but no luck. They cut me again, deeper, in the same spot. And thank goodness my daughter came out and was placed on my chest. I instantly wanted her off of me. And still the guilt and shame that I carry today for these feelings haunts me. I was so hesitant to write this to you. To go back and share my story is something that is not easy. Even three years on. In the maternity ward, I felt there was good support surrounding newborns for the first 24 hours and then once that 2nd day hit, it felt like I wasn't welcomed and should be leaving. The thickness of the episiotomy scar alone and the pain when having sex now as a long term issue, none of this was explained to me. From ALL of my appointments at the antenatal unit, at least 10 appointments over a few months. I wish someone had prepared me better for childbirth. I had a good pregnancy with no complications yet my birth resulted in it being traumatic. Why? I suffered post natal depression 6 months after I gave birth. I wish my birth experience was different. Why I was examined with the instrument used to break waters?! Why did all the staff (from 3 shift change overs) allow me to labour in the way that I did, not suggesting or supporting me to change positions?! Why did not one midwife suggest I just simply have a break and let my body rest? I believe my baby was not ready to make an entrance and that she wasn't in the correct position to be birthed. There was so much rushing and pressure put on me to just

hurry up and get her out. Nothing was done to help or support this. Other than get her out asap, however that looks, with no thought to how the recovery process will be. I have so many unanswered questions surrounding my birth with no way to truly understand or have closure from the experience. Except for I'm alive and my baby is alive. The repercussions from my birth experience affected me and my journey through motherhood and still haunts me three years on. I wish my experience was different. I hope that no one will go through what I went through (and I know there are plenty more women out there who've had a worse experience than me).