

Submission
No 714

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Mrs Emma Reece

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Partially
Confidential

My name is Emma. I live in Sydney. I am 33 years old and I have identical twins aged 3 and a 4 month old.

The birth of my twins, my first birth, was at _____ Hospital in May 2020 through the high-risk doctors clinic. My second birth, and third baby, was a planned homebirth with a private practicing midwife that ended up taking place not at home but at _____ Hospital at 42+3 weeks with my PPM.

My first birth was a planned c-section as both my twins were breech presentation at 36+2. I experienced disrespectful comments from a special care unit nurse (behind my back to a student nurse, but within ear shot as they were standing in the room in front of me) during my attempts to tandem breastfeed my twins. The nurse said "she'll be begging for the formula in a few days." I do not have birth trauma from this experience but emotionally it is something I will never forget.

My second birth was a planned VBAC turned repeat unplanned caesarean after a failed induction at 42+3. Before I was even pregnant I knew my best chances at a VBAC was to birth with a PPM at home. After reading traumatic story after traumatic story in VBAC groups on facebook about the horrible experiences women were receiving who were planning VBACs I knew I did not want those stories to become mine. Hiring a PPM was the best decision I made for myself, my unborn baby and my family. I was given evidence-based information throughout every step of my pregnancy, birth and postpartum and although my birth ended up been in hospital and not at home as planned, I was informed, had continuity of care with my PPM and doula and felt safe and respected the entire time.

I walk away from both of my births happy. If I had my time again I would have had a PPM for my twin birth as well as my singleton birth. I believe the continuity of care when enlisting the services of a PPM result in the best outcomes for mother and baby. The PPM is working for what's best for you as a mother and your baby without being clouded by the restrictions and rulings of a hospital setting.

I would love to see all women have the ability to access continuity of care models. More government funding needs to be allocated to those choosing to enlist the services of a private practicing midwife, regardless of whether they choose to birth at home with the PPM or in a hospital with the PPM. Informed consent legislation needs to be developed ASAP. Studies have shown our caesarean and induction rates are out of control. A statewide target for reducing c-sections and inductions needs to be put in place. Young girls and women should have access to publicly funded women's health physios well before and well after birth.

Birth is not just a woman's issue. It is a community issue. Women should be leaving their births feeling positively transformed.

Thank you for taking the time to read my submission.