

Submission  
No 743

## INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

**Name:** Mrs Amelia Luke  
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Partially  
Confidential

I am 26 years old and gave birth to my son in February this year (2023) under the care of the Midwifery Group Practice. I am extremely grateful to have been given the opportunity to access this model of care and to come away from my birth feeling empowered and feeling positive about the experience. As part of the MGP program I was allocated one midwife who provided majority of my antenatal appointments one on one and mostly conducted in my house. Being able to develop a relationship with my midwife was so important to me as I have anxiety, especially in the lead up to my due date.

I approached my due date with excitement at the idea of giving birth and did not feel the terror or fear that many women advised they had felt. This was mostly due to the fact that I was provided information so that I was informed of what happens in labour and birth and what my options are for birthing. I felt I had autonomy in how I wanted to birth and that the midwives were there to support me to make my own decisions without coercing or influencing me. My birth came earlier than I expected and was faster than expected (4 hours). I began pushing whilst at home in my own bath and had to very quickly get into the car and drive 40 minutes to the birth centre trying to hold off on pushing. We met the midwives on the side of the road 10 minutes out from the birth centre to check that I was going to make it or if it was going to be a car birth.

We decided to continue to the birth centre where I was rushed through in a wheelchair and 40 minutes later birthed in the bath (water births should be available in all birthing suites! Best pain relief!). I was able to accoucher my own son and have skin to skin time following. Despite haemorrhaging 1.1L due to the rapid birth I chose to go home after 6 hours and recovered in my own home environment. Over the next two weeks midwives visited me in my own home to provide postnatal care, care to my newborn and breastfeeding support. I am extremely grateful for the amount of support I received with breastfeeding.

When I reflect on my birth, the only thing I wish I could change was not having to leave my safe and calm home environment when I was in labour to drive 40 minutes (resisting the urge to push) just to birth in a birth centre. I believe all women should have access to home birth through the public system. Continuity of care should be available to all women and the ability to birth outside of the mainstream hospital such as a birth centre should be possible for all women. The atmosphere in the birth centre is designed to make it psychologically safe for women while they are in a vulnerable state giving birth and encourages the release of oxytocin.

The research into what a birth space should look like has been done it disappointingly it does not appear to have been taken on board in most hospitals. I am so grateful to have been able to access such supportive care and wish that this was possible for all women. I am surrounded by friends and family who have experienced birth trauma and have seen first hand how this can have an impact on a person on a daily basis psychologically, physically and sexually. I hope Australia steps up and leads the way using the information and stories provided in this inquiry. Thank you for taking the time to do this inquiry.