

**Submission
No 803**

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

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I felt I was forced into an induction, I didn't want one but I wasn't given much of a choice. I went through the public hospital clinic for my pregnancy. I never saw my assigned doctor and I never saw the same doctor twice. It didn't feel like a very personalised experience. I was induced at 4pm and for the first time was told my partner would have to leave at 8pm that night I was in pain and terrified and he had to go home and leave me. I started having contractions right away and they were painful as I had an anterior placenta and a posterior facing baby which I didn't fully understand what this meant until after my baby was born. I was in so much pain I couldn't sleep and the midwife I had, had little sympathy.

At 4am when my waters finally broke she came in and said I knew that would happen, I spent the next 12 hours in labour exhausted from not sleeping a new midwife came in and said I think this is it and I was excited I could do this. She prepared the birthing table and turned on the little incubator light for the baby to keep warm and then a doctor came in and checked and I was only 3cm dilated after all of that I was crushed, exhausted and emotional. I just cried and all the people left the room to give my husband and I time to think about our next move. We tried an epidural and artificial hormones to move things along and still after hours nothing worked so opted for an emergency c section.

Under bright mirrored lights they warn you not to look at the mirrors because you can see the blood when they are cutting you open. My daughter was finally born after being induced 28 hours earlier. We returned to our room at 8pm and the night staff told my husband he would have to leave soon. The first few days are a blur as I was so dosed up on pain meds. I know the midwives took my baby to give me some 'rest'. It was devastating my husband had to leave me with this tiny baby when I couldn't get out of the bed unassisted. I don't have those beautiful memories of having my first child all I have are memories of pain and loneliness. I couldn't make milk and so my baby was hungry.

I asked for formula and was told to keep trying. On the last day they told us we could back our bags and I was so happy to go home. One last thing we have to weigh your baby. But she had lost too much weight from birth so we weren't allowed to go home. We were finally given formula top ups to give after I'd tried breastfeeding for 15mins. My milk only came in after being home for 24hours and although I carried a vacuum pack attached in my body and I was basically unable to do a lot of things were finally going the way I had hoped for. My focus was on her. She was beautiful and it made it all worth it. I enjoyed this part. When she turned one my husband and I started to discuss the idea of a second baby and that is when I would just cry. I can do that again were the main thoughts rushing through my mind.

I went to see my doctor and I cried. At that time I realised I had a lot of birth trauma. I started the process of looking for help. With the cost of living on the rise and I was still on maternity leave, my daughter was about to start daycare we just couldn't afford the counselling needed to unpack my trauma. Most agencies only offer it up until the child is 12 months of age and I had to wait to have my breakdown until 14 months. She is now nearly two and although we have been trying for over 6 months and I am yet to fall pregnant and I wonder if it is my trauma getting in the way.