

Submission
No 809

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Mrs Caysey Roach

Date Received: 7 August 2023

Partially
Confidential

Subject: Submission on Traumatic Birth Experience and Maternal Care

Dear Chairperson and Members of the Select Committee on Birth Trauma,

I am writing to share my deeply distressing experience during the birth of my daughter on 22 September 2018.

I had my first baby in [redacted] Hospital in September 2018, a month before it closed and the [redacted] Hospital opened.

We presented at the hospital 4 times when I was in labour before they would admit me. My labour lasted from Thursday 20th to Saturday 22nd September 2018.

I had extremely traumatic birth which I almost lost my life in twice in 2 different surgeries from loss of blood and drop in blood pressure. Special thank you to blood donors at the Australian Red Cross. I owe my life to donors who are kind enough to volunteer their time and donate blood to people they've never met. I wouldn't be alive if it weren't for these people.

My baby was delivered by a doctor in training, that information was not disclosed to us at the time of delivery. What should have been an emergency caesarean became a forceps delivery, episiotomy, broken tailbone and retained placenta followed by 3 x blood transfusions from haemorrhage and 2 emergency surgeries, one immediately after birth another 3 weeks later.

They made me push for 3 hours. I was absolutely exhausted and it should have absolutely been an emergency caesarean as the baby was stressed at this stage. Eventually they got her out after the episiotomy. The epidural was wearing off so it was extremely painful, My body went into shock and my cervix began to close before the placenta was out. My husband was watching me and he said the bed I was in was dripping blood into a huge pool of blood under the bed. have 15 minutes to get my placenta out before they took me to theatre.

My body was in so much shock that I could not stand by myself and my whole body was shaking uncontrollably. As I was rushed to theatre I remember how cold I felt and my entire body was trembling. I trembled for a couple of hours after the spinal block d&c to manually remove the placenta.

Less than a week after giving birth I could not walk, could not hold or pick up my baby and was in extreme agony. I constantly had waves of nausea and when I would stand up my vision would black out and I'd feel dizzy. We returned to the hospital we went where I had a doctors tell me there was no issue and was sent home.

For 3 weeks I called [redacted] Hospital telling them I felt so unwell, I was dizzy and blacking out but they told me it's normal to feel that way after having a baby. We packed our bags and went back to [redacted] hospital as we were not satisfied it was normal. We did this because we know a midwife at [redacted] and she told us to go to the hospital immediately. I was internally

haemorrhaging and I was referred on to private treatment at [redacted] Private by a private gynaecologist. I didn't want to return to [redacted] after having such a horrific experience.

After having an ultrasound they found a large piece of placenta. I not only had an infection which I know was a direct cause of my manual placenta removal, it had gone to my blood stream and was turning to sepsis. I had to have another surgery, this time at [redacted] as I refused to let [redacted] touch me. This is when my blood pressure dropped so low the surgeon didn't think I was going to wake up. It was meant to be a day surgery but I stayed 4 days. My 3 week old baby had to stay at home with my husband as I was too unwell to care for her.

I had lost a lot of blood in the first surgery and had extremely low blood pressure. My vision went black and my ears were ringing as I was haemorrhaging. The second surgery 3 weeks later, my blood pressure dropped so low the surgeon didn't think I was going to wake up.

I wasn't able to breastfeed my baby and was pushed by the hospital to breastfeed not bottle feed. Formula was treated like it was the devil in the public hospital. I listened to my mother and gave my baby formula so she wasn't starving. The advice provided by the hospital was beyond negligent. Eventually once the retained placenta was removed my milk came in and I could breastfeed. I didn't have a big supply as I was still unwell.

A year later after my birth I was diagnosed with Asherman's syndrome after I never got a period after my birth. I wanted to have another baby so we had to resolve the issues but most gp's told me it was normal to not get a period for a year. I had to push so hard to get answers.

I've had 9 surgeries to correct the issues I was caused from her birth. We spent thousands on medical specialists. We had calls with lawyers who told us we still have time to submit our case (3 year window) and we had a strong case of medical negligence against NSW Health. However, we would be out of pocket by approx \$200k in legal fees until we won the case. As a young family with a house and child it seemed risky to go ahead with a law suit and we were funding ivf.

It cost me my fertility and tens of thousands of dollars in specialist fees, scans, tests and ivf. The ivf ended didn't work for us but I did end up having a baby without the aid of ivf. It took 3 years.

We found out this doctor had done this to multiple other women and one happened to be my naturopath who had to have 11 surgeries to correct the damage done by the same doctor who delivered my baby. The doctor was thankfully fired. I would hope she's been de-registered but I am not hopeful. The amount of trauma this person has caused is unreal.

I am grateful for the opportunity to present my testimony before the committee to shed light on the issues faced during my childbirth. It is my sincerest hope that my story will contribute to meaningful changes in maternal care practices and the provision of support for mothers during and after childbirth.

I am willing to provide evidence at the committee hearing to help facilitate a comprehensive review of the maternal care system and offer suggestions for improvement. I am also willing for my submission to be published.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I trust that the Select Committee on Birth Trauma will consider my submission and work diligently to ensure safer and more supportive birthing experiences.

Sincerely,

Caysey Roach