

Submission
No 901

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Mrs Belinda Heffernan

Date Received: 9 August 2023

Partially
Confidential

I received 2 replies from Mr . The first reply was saying he was in contact with Mr Ryan Park Minister for Regional Health.

The 2nd reply was Mr Ryan Parks response.

I have not had the strength to reply to either Mr or Mr Parks. I was diagnosed with depression. For 4 weeks I woke to the sound of those 2 babies that cried on maternity ward on "Good Friday" I have spoken to so many of my friends and it appears nothing has changed in the last 20 plus years.

We need change now.

I will attach Mr Park's reply. His reply states that no one is placed on maternity ward. However this is incorrect. I have been very open on my social media accounts and the amount of messages or comments made on my posts state otherwise.

I hope to one day have the strength to reply to Mr and Mr Parks.

I was given no information or support. Not even a phone number to call. And because it was a long weekend I had to wait until Tuesday to phone both my doctor and Fertility. I only received information after i wrote my first letter to .

Dear Mr ,

I am writing to you as I need your help regarding my recent Missed Miscarriage and being placed on Maternity Ward at .

First a little about me and my story. My name is Belinda Heffernan I am 40 years old, and I have unexplained infertility. I have a gorgeous boy who will be 3 in August. He is our IVF miracle from December 2019.

On the 23rd of February I flew to alone without my husband Nick. On the 24th of February I had our very first FET (frozen embryo transfer) At . On the 8th of March I was told that our transfer was successful, and we were pregnant. I cried so many happy tears.

On the 29th of March I had my dating scan, seeing that little heartbeat I ugly cried I had never been more excited to see that little baby on the screen with a perfect heartbeat of 104. Our excitement was short lived as the baby was measuring 9 days behind (to far behind with an IVF pregnancy)

We held onto so much hope for our follow up scan that the baby would have caught up. (1mm out is 4 days)

On Thursday 6th April, I had my follow up scan at , my husband and I went into that scan thinking everything was going to be okay. I've had no pain or bleeding which are symptoms of a, miscarriage. But my world changed when looked at me and said I'm sorry sweetheart, there is no heartbeat – those words will be etched into my sole forever. The love support and care shown to me from has been exceptional – also my workplace. explained that I've had a Missed Miscarriage, my body still believed I was pregnant. She explained my options on what happens now. There were 3 options, let my body pass the baby naturally, phone my doctor and get a medication to bring on the miscarriage or ask my doctor for a referral for a Dilation & Curettage Procedure (D&C)

I phoned my doctors surgery in tears I had already made up my mind. I couldn't wait up to 2 weeks for my body to pass the baby, nor could I take the pill. I could not do this at home, and I could not flush my baby down the toilet. I opted for surgery. Dr [redacted] at [redacted] has been my pillar of strength. He phoned [redacted] Hospital – Emergency Department and organised my prompt care with a D&C.

Arriving at the Emergency Department at the [redacted] Hospital with my husband Nick, they had organised us to go to a private room (5) so we could have some privacy. [redacted] was my nurse her care shown to me also outstanding as she knew my struggles to become pregnant. Every baby is a special, but an IVF baby is even more special.

The obstetrician DR [redacted] spoke with me about the procedure what would happen. And I was advised to come back "Good Friday" as theatre was fully booked that day.

I arrived back at [redacted] Hospital Emergency Department on Friday 7th April Good Friday – nothing good about this day. [redacted] was back on. Again, her love and care shown to me was truly beautiful on what will be the worst 2 days of my life.

[redacted] took me to theatre; my husband was allowed to come all the way. Until they wheeled me in for the procedure. The theatre nurses we have an [redacted] Hospital are and were amazing Dr [redacted] the obstetrician, Dr [redacted] the anaesthetists were all so very kind. As they put me to sleep, I was bawling my eyes out. I woke up crying. I haven't really stopped crying.

I was in recovery with my husband when a lady spoke with me. The only room/bed they had available was on Maternity.

I was placed in Room 10 on Maternity Ward – To listen to new baby's cry. Knowing I'd never hear my sweet baby cry. I felt this was some kind of torture. I had just lost my so loved and wanted baby and now I was placed on maternity ward where everyone is happy. Midwives are superheros and [redacted] again was brilliant. But she was also amazing when I had [redacted] in August 2020.

I think every hospital in Australia needs to have a bereavement suite for women like me who have lost all their hopes dreams. So, she and her partner can grieve in silence without listening to newborn baby's cry, without it being Surgical and Medical Wards either. Somewhere private. God forbids I ever go through this again, put me in the Clark Centre – Not blood Maternity.

It doesn't matter when you lose your baby be 6 weeks 12 weeks 30 weeks or have a still born. Women should not have to go through what I did on "Good Friday".

I have no idea where to start to get help. But I know how you have pushed for our nurse-to-patient ratios. Id really appreciate your help with this too.

I have lost so many special people in my life (my dad and all my grandparents) But this, this pain is unbearable, my heart will never be the same again. I'll never be the same again.

But if I can save just one family going through the pain of being placed on maternity ward after losing their baby, then my pain will be worth it.

I hope to hear from you soon.

Warm Regards

Belinda Heffernan