

Submission
No 950

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 3 August 2023

Partially
Confidential

Thank you for the opportunity to make this Submission.

I am a mother of 4 and by all accounts could be labelled as one who has suffered what once was called as a “complicated delivery”; hence redefined as “birth trauma”; and now stigmatised as “birth violence”.

The renaming conventions appear to have escalated quite quickly and curiously align with the vocabulary gymnastics of sociology’s post-modern times. Birth has always been risky but to turn complications into “violence” and thus, professionals into “perpetrators” has concerning societal consequences:

- Creating fear
- Creating victimhood
- Damaging the institutions of obstetrics and midwifery

Creating Fear - Women have been the childbirth heroes throughout history. Stretch marks, scars and stitches underscore the foreboding stories of 24+ hour labours, forceps deliveries, breach births and emergency Caesar’s. Yes, there have always been risks but the narrative was always one of resilience and fortitude. It is important that your deliberations and the outcomes of this Committee does not create an environment of fear for vulnerable new mothers.

- Creating Victimhood - A social contagion that has embedded itself in our communities and families, disempowering individuals and negatively impacting our communities, courts, culture and coffers. Mothers can be victims of malpractice and this is already an established and legislated avenue of compensation/redress. Why segregate a minority within the health sector? Today Birth Trauma, tomorrow, Tonsillectomy Trauma. (I am by no means minimising individuals’ experiences, only highlighting a concern.)

- Damaging the institutions of obstetrics and midwifery - Once held in the highest regard, obstetrics and midwifery are vocations for life. Overburdening bureaucracy, threat of litigation and burdensome regulation does nothing to free up the headspace of those we trust with our and our babies lives. Please be mindful not to create further regulation without addressing sustainability within the sector. On behalf of all mothers, we want the best and brightest, well trained, confident in their knowledge and abilities. Re-adopting the Hippocratic Oath for all Medical Professionals would be a positive step forward.

In researching this topic, I was overwhelmed with the information and support already available to those who have suffered birth complications. There is a swathe of organisations, counselling, legal supports, associations and websites full of information on Birth Trauma, all established, up and running. Please take this into account when the inevitable push for

redress or funding for departmental implementation arises. Can the taxpayer or householder afford anything extra either by direct taxation or cost shifting?

In conclusion, Motherhood is Nation Building - Victimhood is not.

Thankyou for taking the time to include my Submission in your deliberations.

Yours sincerely,