

Submission
No 1087

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 10 August 2023

Partially
Confidential

Subject: Submission on Birth Trauma

AUGUST 08 2023

Dear Members of the Committee,

I am writing to share my personal experiences and perspectives on behalf of women who have encountered birth trauma. As a woman who has personally experienced birth trauma I hope to shed light on the impact it can have on individuals and families.

I, _____, have experienced birth trauma firsthand, and have gone through this distressing experience twice.

The specifics of my own encounter with birth trauma are as follows:

Birth number 1: I was firstly deeply upset that I had no choice where I could birth as there are no prohibitions for women other than a hospital...hospitals are for sick not babies.

Different contacts everytime I checked in, I am autistic so having a different midwife's I'd never met was distressing and my body froze at the hospital I never wanted to be at..birth was over 24 hours long. My pain concerns during pregnancy were dismissed and it was expected that I knew what to do with a baby I was very scared and alone.

Birth 2 was even worse ... I felt I had no choice with the midwife whom I didn't want near me ... I'd met her before and didn't like her manner. She treated me quite badly during the birth tried to bully me into doing things her way humiliated me during birth ripped my placenta out of me too soon causing me to pull big chunks out the day after and haemorrhaging at home ...resulting in an ambulance trip back to hospital drugs that reacted bad in my system making me think I was going to die ... the nurse not wanting to call a doctor for me ...a d&t procedure ... I made a formal complaint to the hospital but never heard from them..the midwife even unmade the bed around me just to get the room clear ..I was barely finished birthing!

Having reflected upon my experience, I believe that several factors contributed to my birth trauma. These factors may include archaic outdated midwife practises that were created by male doctors centuries ago, not listening to the individual women there are many many factors ...

Drawing from my personal journey, I would like to propose specific solutions and changes to enhance maternity care in Australia, with the aim of preventing future instances of birth trauma. The following are the changes I advocate for:

1. **Enhancing Education and Training:** Improving the understanding of birth trauma, trauma-informed care, and evidence-based practices among healthcare professionals can foster more respectful and compassionate birthing experiences. Specialised training in postpartum care ensures comprehensive support for women during this transformative period.
2. **Promoting Women-Centred Care:** Prioritising women-centred midwifery care allows us to recognise the unique needs and preferences of each woman. Investing in models that emphasise personalised care and shared decision-making empowers women to actively participate in their birthing journey and receive ongoing postpartum support.
3. **Strengthening Continuity of Care:** Implementing continuity of care models provides consistent support from known midwives or healthcare professionals throughout the entire childbirth process. This promotes trust, reduces anxiety, and

leads to improved outcomes. We believe in the power of continuity, extending comprehensive postpartum support for women's recovery and adjustment.

4. Increasing Funding and Support for Postpartum Care: Recognising the profound significance of the postpartum period, we advocate for allocating sufficient funding and resources to provide high-level postpartum care. Addressing mental health needs, supporting breastfeeding, providing lactation support, and offering comprehensive follow-up care are vital components of this nurturing process. Let's ensure every woman feels supported and empowered during this transformative time.

Thank you for considering my submission. I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute my experiences and viewpoints to the committee's ongoing inquiry. If necessary, I am willing to provide additional evidence during a hearing to further support my perspective.

With sincere appreciation,