

Submission  
No 1159

## INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

**Name:** Miss Katelyn Nye

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Partially  
Confidential

Katelyn Nye  
Birth: April 2022  
Hospital:

## Submission into the NSW Inquiry into Birth Trauma

My Name is Katelyn Nye and I'm writing to you to share my experience of a traumatic birth and post-Partum experience as a first-time mother, aged 21.

I endured medical negligence, obstetric violence and uninformative care which overall, resulted in an induced 24 hour labour, 2 failed epidurals, 4 hours of pushing, an attempted forceps delivery then an emergency sedated c-section. The impact of this, denied my experience of not only being awake during the first moments of my son but due to the severity of my birth experience, my son came out not breathing and with a very swollen head due to being stuck in my birth canal for an extended period.

This is my story in short; In terms of having 2 failed epidurals, I was introduced to the anaesthesia team – a male and female. Whilst the needles positioning was being discussed, I realised the female person being explained too was In training or completing training as each step was being confirmed. In that moment I had a gut feeling I should ask the experienced anaesthetist to do it but I gave the benefit of the doubt and thought everyone has to learn. Unfortunately, the positioning was wrong and lead me to having the male (experienced) anaesthetist to perform another epidural placement due to the first one failing. I was not informed prior to the procedure. Had I known, I would not have given consent for the less experienced person to have done it.

After nearly 24hrs of labour and pushing for 4 hours, I was screaming in agony from the pain in my back and lower abdomen, the obstetrician was called in, whilst waiting another nurse came in and asked why the epidural bag wasn't changed over and the midwife replied "It doesn't need to be changed because this baby will be out soon" \*We have the whole 4hr birth on video and noticed when the drip monitor started beeping, I ended up not having pain relief for 2hrs all due to the midwives own assumption that the baby will be here. Despite her words, once the obstetrician arrived, he asked the same question, she proceeded to lie and said that it had just run out. The team then attempted to use forceps to deliver baby to which I could feel everything then the decision of an emergency c-section was made.

Before being sedated, I remember not feeling heard or cared for in the right way - I kept having my midwife touch me for baby's heart rate readings when I told her repetitively to stop as I was screaming in pain. I remember the anaesthetist and midwife arguing as to why she removed my epidural cap – exposing me to a high risk of infection and resulting in being sedated as the original

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plan of a spinal block couldn't be performed for the c-section. I remember the anaesthetist stating she will have to write up a report due to the midwives actions, her reply was "sorry I had a brain fart". I remember my partner crying and feeling scared, he was also denied the experience of watching the birth of our son. I was in theatre for 2 hours, during that time I lost 1.5 litres of blood. After waking in recovery, I was handed my baby 4 hours later and unable to enjoy the initial first stage of his birth (skin to skin contact, breast feeding) due to the inadequate care I received and multiple mistakes made by hospital staff. The effect of this made me never want to have another baby again. I had also planned for my placenta to be encapsulated but due to the midwifery staff double bagging my placenta in blue plastics I was unable too. This was an unusual action that the doula and her educator had never come across.

My post-partum experience involved no visitation (home visit) after being discharged from the Hospital. This resulted in an infected c -section scar and meant I was admitted in and out of hospital during the first 5 weeks with my newborn son. Whilst navigating my way as a first- time mum and dealing with my traumatic birth experience, I was diagnosed with Post- Partum Depression and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder which had a significant effect on my mental health and relationship with my son. I felt like I hadn't got a chance to heal from everything that happened- I was a mother now and needed to care for a baby which I didn't feel was mine. I had significant depression to the point where I didn't want to be on this earth anymore, a loss of self-identity. I reached out to a private physiologist at 3 months post-partum, as the access to a public one had significant wait times and I received 2 sessions a week to help deal with my thoughts and learn strategies on ways to cope. I also reached out to Tresillian and completed the overnight program to deal with the challenges of an unsettled and colic baby. I very much believe my son had carried this trauma since birth, hence why his journey after birth was difficult, constantly sensing his mother's vibration with sadness, depression and anxiety.

The issues I have are related to;

- Obstetrician and midwifery care- their knowledge and experience (In my case, the care I received was limited, midwife walking in and out of room numerous times, laughing and commenting jokes whilst I was pushing, not changing my epidural pain relief bag over for the remaining hours resulting in me feeling everything, Why did it take 4 hours of pushing for an obstetrician to be called in? Does every single medical worker that comes in for their shift know time guidelines?
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- Feeling pressured from staff for an induction because of my preeclampsia and having to stay in hospital for 5 nights leading up to the induction. I felt there was no other option. I'm grateful that I did discharge myself and stand my ground despite this pressure. I signed papers to leave as hearing the women scream at night had no psychological benefit for me in the lead up towards my first birth.
- I believe there needs to be more awareness of Birth education outside of hospital perimeters, as medical workers are restricted to act according to strict guidelines in place. This adds to my opinion of birth people feeling not protected by legislations of birth trauma.
- Post-partum care and needs- why did I have no home visit once discharged? Why did it take me to have to go to hospital to get my scar looked at not knowing it was infected? Being told I had to wait 4 months through the public system to see a psychologist despite presenting with symptoms of suicidal tendencies.
- Access to midwife-led continuity of care models
- Access to birth options – funded home births
- Legislation on informed consent
- MANDATORY TRAUMA INFORMED TRAINING FOR CLINICIANS

Please be aware that writing this submission was personally tough, I write with an uneasy and traumatising feeling in my gut of having to revisit these moments and being reminded of the reality of what I endured. I do hope that the issues stated are voiced, as I believe no woman or family should ever go through medical negligence or an experience at this level. I really hope one day I can heal from my first birth experience and be at peace with the resentment, anger I have towards medical staff. The purpose of sharing my story is to encourage others to trust themselves and what's being 'recommended' or handed to you. This experience has shaped my thoughts on the medical system, and I still struggle to this day to walk into a hospital or go to a doctor appointment without being riddled with anxiety and flashbacks. Birth is a transformative, defining experience that will be remembered for a lifetime whether the outcome is good or bad. It is vital that mothers are receiving supported, well-informed care during their birth and post-partum experience. In my eyes there are too many gaps and this will continue due to the lack of informed knowledge, policies and awareness related to our medical system. In saying this, there are many women who have experienced birth trauma and continue now to birth outside of the medical system due to the treatment that exists. This submission will add to my continual healing journey of my birth trauma.