

**Submission
No 1108**

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Ms Hannah McBride

Date Received: 7 August 2023

My son is 14 months now, but I still have vivid memories of the vaginal examinations I encountered in labour. They were some of the most painful and uncomfortable interventions I have ever experienced, including breaking my waters. I opted for an epidural, mostly because the examinations were so painful. I do understand I could have refused them, but I did not feel I had the agency to do so at the time. There was also no communication between the doctor and nurse who broke my waters and my MPG midwife who was on shift the day I gave birth. This meant there was a delay in the realisation that there was meconium in my amniotic fluid and required more monitoring. Luckily my baby boy was settled and his heart rate did not fluctuate beyond what was considered normal. However if I was not a nurse and had not informed my midwife this may have been missed and could have caused harm to my baby.

Also in Postpartum in the hospital I had a midwife who kept telling me I 'looked tired' and needed to rest, however every time I tried to rest, she would come into our room and do a number of things requiring me to stay awake. She stated that my baby was very unsettled/hungry, and it was likely I had 'no milk', even though I had been hand expressing approximately 10mL of colostrum everyday leading up to birth. She then suggested I hand express some colostrum while in the hospital, and when I started to do it (having done it for many weeks leading up to this) she took over and grabbed my breast to hand express without my consent and after I had told her I did not need any help hand expressing. This was very painful, and she soon realised that I had plenty of milk.

She suggested formula so I could rest, which we declined at the time. I have been successfully breastfeeding for 14 months now which I am very proud of, particularly because the experience I had with this midwife was a massive blow to my confidence breastfeeding.