

**Submission
No 1116**

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

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There were a number of situations during my pregnancy and birth which were confronting and absolutely would have been traumatic had I not been prepared for them. Thankfully my partner and I had taken a private birthing and postpartum class and also hired a doula to supplement the basic education provided by NSW health. These are not standard nor cheap options and it was only having an expert who had experienced all the various things happening to pregnant women that I felt informed and ultimately could manage (or had them advocate for us) the issues that came up.

Namely these issues were

- the big baby / macrosomia “talking to” I got by the antenatal doctor at my 40 week appointment, their language pressuring me to book an elective Caesar (not asking our thoughts but “let’s look at available dates”, “we’ll book you in anyway and you can call to cancel”
- being told we couldn’t use the bath for pain relief due to the “big baby”
- cascade of interventions from induction through to unplanned caesar, having to push back at every step for more information, a moment to consider etc when it was never an emergency
- being told baby would be separated from me in recovery due to no available midwives, our doula pushed back hard on this as she knew how important that golden hour and establishing breastfeeding was to me, we were told we “got lucky” that our primary midwife was able to join baby and I in recovery

Had we gone into these situations without the knowledge of what to expect / ask for / push back on, and actually having someone there to advocate for us at each step I absolutely would have felt the experience was traumatic and that we weren’t listened to, or guided in a compassionate way. Most midwives were wonderful, as was the Dr who performed my caesarean but other drs during antenatal were all about risks and interventions, language like the example above was condescending, uncaring and assumed you’d just go with what they said. I’d love to see more midwife support during Dr interactions and better/ cheaper access to education outside of NSW health.