

**Submission
No 1118**

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

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When I look back at the night my son was born, it is pure happiness. Love inducing, life changing, all encompassing. But it's not one of those 'I wouldn't change anything' moments. I believe there is a lot that could have been done differently within the healthcare system for the betterment of me as it's patient.

I laboured as I intended; at home until I couldn't manage my contractions anymore. At 9.30pm my partner Zacc and I arrived at the hospital. I laboured very quickly, with only fleeting, momentary check-ins from the midwives on the high acuity Friday night shift. I had asked for morphine when I first arrived, but no doctors were available to assess and prescribe; they were all busy attending other emergencies on the birth unit. Only one and a half hours after arriving at the hospital I started spontaneously bearing down; I was fully dilated. My partner buzzed and a midwife rushed in. The midwife checked me and monitored the heart rate of my baby. It was then identified that his heart rate was slow and not picking back up after each contraction (bradycardia). An emergency buzzer was pressed and a slew of people entered our room. Baby had to come out quickly. After two failed vacuum attempts, forceps and an episiotomy, our son, healthy landed earthside. With my legs still in stirrups and my episiotomy not repaired, the registrar was then buzzed for another delivery. I waited for over an hour to be stitched up.

The reason I write this is to bring awareness and get more midwives and obstetricians on shift. A dear friend, who is a psychologist, told me a saying, spoken amongst her peers; acceptance is not approval. I have come to a place of acceptance with my birth, but that doesn't mean I approve of it. We need change...more doctors and midwives on shift to support the acute needs of birthing people. We need to feel safe and looked after in the places we birth.

I want it to be known that there was no issue with the staff involved. They were all terrific and I am forever grateful (in debt) that they helped me and Zacc in our delivery of a healthy baby. We literally could not have done it without you all.