

Submission
No 1146

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Ms Madeline Goddard

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Partially
Confidential

My name is Madeline and I live in [redacted]. I have a 15-month-old and a six year old. I have had two physiological births and felt empowered by them, due to having continuity of care by skilled midwives throughout my pregnancy and birth. I consider myself lucky. I knew my support team well and trusted them to support me through my physiological, natural births. My midwives trusted me and my body that I could birth my babies without intervention.

The birth of my first child was at the [redacted] Hospital, and the second was at my home in NSW with a private midwife. Both my pregnancies went to around 42 weeks, in the hospital system there is a huge amount of pressure to be induced after one week past my “due date”. Induction for post dates often comes with a cascade of interventions (these can often trigger traumatic experiences, and through an economic lense are hugely costly to the tax-payer).

Birthing in hospital I felt a constant pressure to have things done to me: the use of syntocin to sped up labour, and membrane rupture. In [redacted] there was a publicly funded homebirth program, and although I ended up birthing in hospital due to “post-dates”, I knew my midwife and student midwife very well and they supported me throughout my labour and birth knowing my wish for a natural birth. I remember clearly in the final hours of my labour I had to tell the doctor “no” I didn’t want any drugs or anything from them – this was difficult for me as I was in my animal/birthing brain and had to access the language part of my brain – felt like being forced out of a deep sleep. My body was doing the work, but I was being pulled back into my logical mind when I was in my most vulnerable birthing state.

For my second birth I knew that due to my long first pregnancy going through the public system I was at high risk of being coerced into unwanted and unneeded interventions. I employed a private homebirth midwife and received excellent care, birthing my baby at least 14 days after my “due date”. I had no vaginal tearing in either birth, and while labour itself was grueling, I felt so proud and empowered by my births. I believe continuity of midwife lead care to be critical to these positive experiences of birth.