

Submission
No 1161

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Mrs Sophie Smith

Date Received: 7 August 2023

Partially
Confidential

In July 2020 I gave birth at Sydney. I gave birth there again in October 2022.

The midwifery group practise (MGP) at was the saving of my births and healthy progression into motherhood.

The system I birthed in caused me to be dismissed, physically invaded, loose confidence in my body and isolate me from support systems.

From doctors at I experienced disrespectful care that ignored me, my body and my values as they recommended care for me that was not evidenced based or weighed with appropriate explanation of the risks associated with the hospital based interventions that were suggested. The threat that my baby would likely die if I continued to carry it past 42 weeks was detrimental to my mental health and cause significant anxiety in what should have been a last few beautiful days of pregnancy.

My first birth (2020) was peppered with the recommended vaginal exams that I believe stalled labour and were extremely painful, and interruptive to the hormonal and physical progress of my birth let along detrimental to my mental state during labour. I consented to these because they were hospital policy. I will not consent to this painful and unnecessary, hospital serving physical invasion of my body again.

I was unable to have my a support person stay with me after birth and was required to care for my newborn by myself overnight with paralysed legs in an overworked understaffed ward. This is when I felt the most isolated and low in my whole birthing experience.

At my 6 week postpartum appointment the doctor dismissed me completely by recommended future cesarean section to me without any questioning about my future plans for children, without giving my body a chance to show how it might heal and recover from the physical injury while birthing my first child and without any acknowledgement of the real risks, limitations and dangers of a caesarean section.

The most afraid I felt was when my slightly higher risk of birth injury nearly disqualified me from receiving continuity of care with a midwife, which is the one actual proven protective factor.

The care and lack of balanced information I received from doctors at has ruined my confidence in the system and caused me to consider who they are actually serving.

If I could legislate change it would be for access to continuity of care with a midwife for all women. What would revolutionise the whole birthing culture and outcomes for families would be to make home births publicly funded.