

Submission  
No 1340

## INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

**Name:** Name suppressed

**Date Received:** 4 August 2023

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Partially  
Confidential

I gave birth to my son on 19/02/2021 at [redacted] in Sydney. I went into labour spontaneously at home and when my contractions became closer together I went to hospital with my husband. I was admitted and taken to a labour and delivery suite with a midwife assigned to me, I was checked and was told I was 4cm dilated. I began labouring on the toilet but starting bleeding heavily. When my husband told the midwife she said 'that's normal'. I asked for an epidural and the anaesthetist was quickly in my room, preparing me for it. During this time the regular contractions became worse and I started receiving no breaks between contractions. I told the midwife something was wrong but she dismissed me again. I started screaming and shaking so violently that it took almost an hour for the anaesthetist to place the spinal block. As I turned onto the bed to lie down once it was in I felt the pain retreat but a huge gush of blood spilled out of me. The midwife finally looked concerned and hit a button. Within seconds the room was filled with staff, the doctor on call asked me if he could do an emergency c-section but he would have to put me under general anaesthetic in order to get the baby out quickly. I agreed. He told me I was haemorrhaging and that the baby's heartbeat had plummeted and baby had lost oxygen. Everyone was touching my body, I was naked and being rushed through a public hall on a bed whilst someone was yelling for my husband to be taken care of. I kept pleading with my midwife for her not to let go of my baby and for her to save my baby. In the operating room they put me under quickly. When I woke up my baby wasn't with me and I was alone apart from a nurse who was very cold and rude. I thought my baby had died because she wouldn't tell me anything when I finally asked her outright if my baby was dead she said these exact words 'what kind of a question is that? Of course he's alive!'. I was reunited with him two hours after he was born. I had had an uncomplicated, completely normal pregnancy and the labour was an utter shock. I was told I had had a placental abruption during labour and lost 1 litre of blood during those few hours. I was never given a reason why this happened. Due to this experience I had to receive counselling and therapy and feel that my trust in the Australian public health system has been irrevocably damaged. I have been unable to return to work because I have felt so guilty for not being with my son for those first few hours of his life and my body almost killing him. He is by my side 24/7 and I'm still working through my complicated feelings towards this all. I feel had my or my husband's concerns about my bleeding been validated by the midwife initially this could have been avoided.