

Submission  
No 1409

## INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

**Name:** Name suppressed

**Date Received:** 12 August 2023

---

Partially  
Confidential

Due to COVID the support which I was given throughout my second pregnancy was considerably lacking compared to that of my first pre-covid pregnancy. I felt isolated, unsupported by the healthcare system and sad that important milestones could not be shared with my husband, nor could I have him come to support me. I struggled with perinatal depression and anxiety, but this was left undiagnosed until many months after birth. The birth of my child is still difficult for me to think about because it brings me great sadness that it transpired the way it did. I believe that if I had of been provided with more checkups and care during my pregnancy I may have been better supported and prepared for the birth. The birth itself was quick, too quick and the care team did not identify the speed of which I was progressing to act quickly enough when I requested an epidural. This left me feeling even more unsupported when I look to my care team to provide the expertise and support. After the birth I was feeling overwhelmed, emotional and withdrawn, but again no further support was provided to me.

In the middle of the night on the first night of my baby being born he was taken to special care nursery for an infection causing breathing difficulties, the infection was likely caused by the birth. There wasn't a lot of information or communication provided at this time and this was further distressing. I will acknowledge that in the following days as my baby needed extra care, the hospital made arrangements for me to stay longer so I could be there to breastfeed and care for my baby. This arrangement is not always possible, and I'd like to mention that if I wasn't permitted to stay, this would have been extremely distressing.

In the week/s after birth, there is a scheduled check-in with the hospital care team, but because we reside on the area cusp between 2 hospitals and went to the closest hospital (but the one that is NOT allocated to our postcode), we were denied a home visit like everyone else and had to have video calls or drive the hour return trip and wait to see someone. When you are struggling after a traumatic birth, have undiagnosed perinatal depression have experienced having a baby in the special care nursery, this lack of support and extra hoops to get support can really make it feel more overwhelming.

This is a vulnerable time for women and their new babies, not feeling supported by the healthcare industry can cause trauma in itself.

Furthermore, after discharging from the hospital system, I continued to struggle with the trauma from both the birth and depression, I reached out for assistance from the Child and Family health offices and other support avenues such as \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ on COUNTLESS occasions, I was constantly let down and despite begging for help, couldn't get the help I needed quick enough. I'm just relieved that I had the perseverance and resilience to continuing to ask for help until eventually after months I started to make progress. Not everyone has the strength to ask for help or to persevere to get it. This was one of the biggest contributors to me feeling traumatised by this whole pregnancy/birth/newborn process - Begging for help every day to the services that are designed to help, but being knocked back or not being listened to/prioritised. I felt failed by the 'system'.

I'd like to disclose that all care was provided by the NSW public health system. Whilst I don't believe there was any individual in particular that did anything wrong or act poorly, the system itself, processes and resources collectively contributed to my traumatic experience.