

Submission  
No 1392

## INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

I'm a first time mum of a now 16 month old little girl who was living in the [redacted] when I was pregnant. We were in the last of several COVID lockdowns during the start of my pregnancy, and we were opened again when I was 16 weeks. This is when I finally had the chance to tell my loved ones in person that we were expecting.

I applied to the MGP program with my GP at 6 weeks, but did not hear a single thing back from [redacted] Hospital - which means of course I didn't get in and was shuffled straight into the GP shared care program without much more basic information. I was given the GP's version of protocols on an old photocopied piece of paper and sent on my way. I found the nurse and GP was not a good fit for me, I felt as though I wasn't given much information aside from print outs and appointments of 10-15 mins did not seem like enough time for my husband and I to learn more about our pregnancy and baby, so I decided to go direct to [redacted] hospital for their standard pregnancy care program.

I found the midwives to be lovely, although extremely overworked and stuck in a difficult situation due to COVID. I was paired with a nurse who did my health history intake over the phone, saw her for 1 session, she was absent for the next due to having COVID and then she was gone - left the program completely. Also the ability for my husband to attend appointments was gone at this time, due to rising restrictions. It was a terrible time for healthcare workers but unfortunately this added a high level of stress and concern during my pregnancy.

Around this time, the PM started to commentate through the media on restrictions for COVID in hospitals and it was outlined that birthing women would likely not be able to have their partners in the room if one of them had COVID. This blew my mind and broke my heart - I did not feel like the system was even considering what expecting families needed - only that they wanted to protect policies.

I started to then look into options for private midwife and the possibility of a home birth - which was very difficult due to both the cost (starting around \$5000) and availability of said private care. I was fortunate to attend a small business run hypobirthing class in my local area where the women running it put my husband and I in touch with a private midwife who had just started her business. Thank goodness, she had availability although I was now changing my chosen method of care when I was 6 months pregnant.

Meeting with her and hearing of her experience in both the public and private space, changed everything for us. The hospital system felt so broken, everything was so on edge and I just felt like I would have my needs met in the public system (i.e. access to a bath for a water birth or having my husband in the room).

To this day, I am honestly so glad that I made the informed choice to take on a private midwife even so late in my pregnancy. Our daughter was born at home on Sunday 27th March 2022 after a 29 hour labour, where I was not pressured into any examinations or interventions that I didn't want. The thing is, if I had gone through the public program - I feel like anything could have happened, considering the rate of interventions that are much too common.

I am one of the lucky ones who was financially able to go for a home birth and come out feeling supported (not to mention wonderful follow up care) - but only because I was steadfast knowing I had to create the boundaries and find my own support. I still had to then overcome the challenges of being a new mum, understanding everything about my body and the new human we had to take care of - but I did it my way and felt empowered and supported by those I needed.

Not everyone is so lucky and I hope that my perspective which is likely quite different from other submissions is helpful in guiding this inquiry.