

Submission  
No 1434

## INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

I experienced birth trauma due to unnecessary intervention stemming from a chaotic and fear based hospital environment. I was 23, first pregnancy, in rural nsw. This resulted in 4 years of intense mental health issues. I was diagnosed with ptsd and really struggled with my mental, family, financial and housing stability. Let alone being able to find work, or move forward with my life. The trauma I had experienced at the hands of the medical staff, and in unrecognised and untreated ptsd for 2 years resulted in my trauma response being passed onto my partner, child and family. There was no recognition of birth trauma from any of the medical professionals I sought care from in my home town. I had to move to a city to find the mental health resources that could assist me. As this all took time I timed out of accessing many services as my baby had grown older than the windows for care for many support services.

The initial trauma would have been avoided had there of been true patient led care that listened to what I wanted and needed rather than forcing me to conform to policy. End policy that takes high risk pregnancy out of continuity of care programs. It is punishment in a vulnerable situation when known and trusted midwives are removed, right when they are most needed.

I was bullied and belittled. Labeled the difficult patient, and told my baby would die if I went home. All of this was intended to support the physical well-being of myself and my baby, but the mental damage it created was far greater than any physical risk present.

The medical system present caused trauma resulting in suicidal depression in both myself and my partner. A medical system that causes such harm is not a safe place for pregnant or birthing people, or babies. This is the worst start to life as a family.

In my subsequent pregnancy I chose to freebirth and was able to have an empowering and healing birth. To achieve this, I was forced to lie to medical staff or else be caught in the web of policy and procedure that would have put me into an unsafe position again. It is integral that birthing people are not threatened with having their care discontinued, being reported, or being referred against their will. For birth to be safe, the medical system needs to trust and support women to come whenever they need to, not to threaten, belittle and punish.

Even after almost 9 years, it has been extremely hard for me to write this to you. Please know there will be many women who wanted to submit but just couldn't face the trauma trigger of going through with it. Even after years of counselling I still get triggered in hospital, and around pregnant and post-partum women. Birth trauma is real and needs to be attended to, not with more fear but with more care. Allow midwifery care to be personal, flexible and patient led. Stop risking women out of the care they need, personal, home-based care. Please support homebirth and make transfer to hospital safe physically, mentally and emotionally. Stop the witch-hunt on private homebirth midwives.

Both times I birthed there was no private homebirth midwife available within 3 hours of me.

Thank you for your care in this matter.

Feel free to contact me if you have further questions.

I don't want any other women to naively trust a system and have them leave and step into motherhood broken, as I was. Thank you for your attention to this matter.