

**Submission  
No 1466**

## **INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA**

**Name:** Mrs Kyomi Kobayashi

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I am a woman writing a submission for the birth trauma inquiry in order to address various parts of the terms of reference relevant to this inquiry, most significantly, those concerning barriers to the provision of continuity of care, whether current legal and regulatory settings are sufficient to protect women from birth trauma, legislative, policy and other reforms which could help prevent and reduce the prevalence of birth trauma and the physical, emotional, psychological and economic impacts of birth trauma.

Whilst preparing for the conception and birth of my first baby I had to make significant financial, energetic and time sacrifices because of the knowledge I had of the maternity care system in Australia. I had heard so many stories from vulnerable women of their own experiences within the system, and I wanted to ensure that I could protect myself and prepare for my pregnancy, birth and postpartum experience, ensuring that my family and I would be as supported as possible throughout this journey. It took a whole year to prepare for pregnancy, doing the research and assembling resources, as I knew the system wouldn't adequately support me throughout my birth and I knew I had to assemble the right team around me. I employed a Privately Practising Endorsed Midwife and a doula for my birth, to ensure I had the best opportunity at a physiological, supported birth, and this choice, accessing continuity of care with a known provider, came at a significant financial cost. My decisions meant that I was supported in my own autonomous decisions around the health and well-being of my baby and I, that my baby was born with no intervention and I had a positive, smooth birth, but I had to sacrifice an entire year of working and had significant psychological and relationship impacts because of this sacrifice, just so I was able to obtain the information and afford the birth experience that I knew would be best for my baby and I.

I feel that the issues with the current maternity system are that:

- Continuity of care with a known midwife, something that is known to improve outcomes for mothers and babies, is inaccessible for the vast majority of women in Australia.
- Homebirth with a known midwife is only available in most areas for those who are financially able to afford it, and also have the information and connections to be able to secure a midwife within the first month of their pregnancy (because they book out so quickly).
- Information about models of care, birthing options and supports available are extremely difficult to find and require so much investment of time and energy to obtain.

I believe the solutions to this would be to:

- Implement midwifery continuity of care models in more hospitals
- Provide Medicare rebatable care for Privately Practising Endorsed Midwives to ensure more affordability in this model of care
- Increase the accessibility of Publicly Funded Homebirth options
- Create bundled funding reform so that women are allocated money that they can choose to use as they please, whether that is to hire a private obstetrician or midwife or birth through the public system, as this would improve the services being provided by care providers
- Have more information freely available and ensure that care providers are offering this information readily, regardless of the model of care they work within.