

Submission  
No 1361

## INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

The culture within midwifery is worse than that of any other role I've ever been in.

During my midwifery training I realised what a beautiful profession I could be but mostly how damaging it can be. So much so that I left it.

I witnessed lots of trauma within the walls of the hospital and left every shift in the birth unit defeated for women.

I particularly remember one incident where a doctor was attempting to do fetal blood sampling during labour. The mother had consented due to concerns about her baby but what followed was awful. She contracted through the whole process and eventually begged them to stop. The junior doctor continued despite her pleading with him to stop and the woman began to yell "you're pinching me". The clamp was pinching the woman's labia and even with the woman yelling stop and the midwife requesting a break from the procedure, the senior doctor instructed the junior doctor to continue.

When the procedure was finished, I left the room and the midwife said to me, "it's not always that bad". In that moment as a student midwife I felt that I couldn't speak up and advocate for my patients, something I had always done so well in my role as a registered nurse. I felt powerless as a student midwife and so ashamed that I didn't speak up and continued my training really disheartened as I continued to witness incidents like this. I also realised that the midwife was powerless in this situation. Which made me think, who is on the side of the woman? Who is listening to her and advocating for her? Because nobody in that room (myself included) helped her. And as she was yelling stop, nobody helped. And that is shameful. And it is something I would have always been confident enough to stand up to in my previous roles as an RN. My confidence had been pulled from under me.

I knew when I had my first baby that I could not birth in the hospital. I was petrified of the system and had seen the poor outcomes that came from fragmented care.

I planned a homebirth and engaged with a privately practising midwife. The financial outlay for a homebirth was the only barrier to having a PPM.

In an already complicated economic climate, coming up with \$7000 was not easy for my husband and I. And while I can wholeheartedly see the value in that money and will pay it for every subsequent pregnancy, there should absolutely be better rebates available for women who are engaging in this model of care.

A snippet of my birth story that I shared on social media:

"My wish for every woman is to receive the care I have received

Because planning a homebirth isn't just about birthing at home

It's about the support from a known midwife

Who is truly with woman

Surgical birth

Vaginal birth

Home birth

Hospital birth

Whichever path my birth took, I was supported

Held

Heard

Safe

The care wasn't just for me and my baby, but my husband. Our family unit

And I am forever grateful".

I have decided that following my maternity leave I will return to midwifery. Because if I can provide just one woman with the care that I received, I can be apart of change.

But this decision comes with big feelings to overcome because the trauma that I saw within the system are still very much with me.