

## INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

**Organisation:** Hygieia Health Ltd

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Partially  
Confidential

Subject: Submission on Birth Trauma

AUGUST 10 2023

Dear Members of the Committee,

I am writing to share my personal experiences and perspectives on behalf of women who have encountered birth trauma. As a woman who has personally experienced birth trauma I hope to shed light on the impact it can have on individuals and families.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have experienced birth trauma firsthand and also my partner who has gone through this distressing experience.

The specifics of my own encounter with birth trauma are as follows: my daughter was born at the \_\_\_\_\_ hospital on 21/06/2020. The whole labor/birthing experience for me was like a downward spiral that ended long after the birth of our daughter. During early labor my husband and I really enjoyed our time together and the contractions were manageable and timely. We patiently waited for a few days and when the contractions presented as 3 in a 10 minute period, as advised, we went to the hospital. This was at about midnight. As we arrived I was promptly examined to check my progression. The midwives on duty were unhappy with my state so they advised us return home. I was given some morphine to help with the pain of the contractions. By midnight the following night the pain in my lower back was unbearable and the contractions were presenting again as about a minute long and occurring every 3 minutes. We then went again to the hospital. As we arrived the second time the midwives noted that the baby was positioned as posterior. My knowledge at that time was very poor as I could not attend any prenatal classes due to covid. Midwife was not a great help to me. However I was determined to deliver naturally. I have since learnt that less than 1 percent of babies in the position that I presented are birthed naturally. I was in immense pain for hours. I'm the end I had to have an epidural that was only partially blocking the pain. However I was still determined to deliver naturally. My daughter was eventually birthed after an attempt at an instrumental assist by emergency C section. I'm total I was in active established labor in the hospital for about 11 hours. The surgery took less than 30 minutes and left my husband and I in a severe state of shock. This was mainly due to our inexperience and education surrounding the experience. An emergency C section is a violent and very physical operation and then when our daughter was finally born she had 2 little black eyes and 2 little cauliflower ears from the instrumental delivery attempt. This was very distressing for us as first time parents. After the surgery we went to the maternal ward which is an amazing facility in many regards but is found lacking in others. There is a big push among the birthing staff for the presence of male birthing partners but when it comes to the recovery facilities there is nothing to support them. My husband slept on a window sill for a week. Post birth I received an internal infection that took the nursing staff a few days to diagnose. I also struggled with milk supply and some of the midwives were a bit dismissive of my problems. However some were amazing. 3 days later I had a second surgery to remove some retained products from my uterus which was an operation that in itself presented many risks. After one very long week in hospital my baby and I were deemed healthy enough to return home. I was left in the care of the nurses from the \_\_\_\_\_ medical centre. One of the nurses gave me a very hard time because my milk supply was not enough for my baby so she told me to get on medication. I was so desperate but I didn't want to go on any more medication. I thought I was having a lot of medication and my body needed a rest. I also had a lot of pressure from the local GP and nurse about vaccinations. I felt that my child needed to recover from the trauma and head

damage before she went onto the vaccination schedule. This idea was met with skepticism and a lot of pressure. Ended up having post natal depression and going on medication for 3 months.

I stopped the visits with the nurses by choice and conducted my own research starting to eat foods that healed my body naturally. My milk supply was great after that and our baby grew healthily . This is what mattered most to m husband and I.

Needless to say there was a dark storm cloud over our lives for 12 months after the birth of our daughter. It was very traumatic for both of us and the compounding problems kept both our stress levels very high.

We had another baby 2 years later. Still Cesarean but a much better experience thanks to the knowledge I got through Hypnobirthing and prenatal classes.

Having reflected upon my experience, I believe that several factors contributed to my birth trauma. These factors may include : Covid-19 (fear of the virus), not having family support, not being able to attend any prenatal classes (knowledge is power).

Drawing from my personal journey, I would like to propose specific solutions and changes to enhance maternity care in Australia, with the aim of preventing future instances of birth trauma. The following are the changes I advocate for: girls should be taught in high schools on what birth actually is, strongly recommend hypnobirthing classes.

Also prenatal birthing information should have better content surrounding the emergency procedures. With accurate recounts of what takes place to reduce the traumatic effect that it poses to those who have to have them.

Thank you for considering my submission. I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute my experiences and viewpoints to the committee's ongoing inquiry. If necessary, I am willing to provide additional evidence during a hearing to further support my perspective.

With sincere appreciation,