



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, AGEING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES
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Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into Maternity Services in the ACT

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From:
To:
Subject: Att: labour and delivery evidence for inquiry
Date: Monday, 7 October 2019

Good evening

I know the committee is no longer taking submissions but thought this should be raised.

I gave birth at the Canberra hospital at 5am Sunday 14 August 2017 after a 60 hour labour. My waters broke at home but the hospital would only admit me on my third presentation. My husband became visibly emotional and demanded that we be seen by a doctor - he was almost removed from the hospital by staff as he was so upset. When we finally had a doctor come see us, our baby (now 2) was so tired and distressed that I was rushed into an emergency Caesarean after I was finally admitted only to be parked in the hallway before I was operated on as there was a more urgent case before me. My epidural failed four times and I waited over 2 hours for it, I was later told the tubing was bent (see the needle pricks on my back that my husband took the following day).

After the caesarean was so exhausted she failed to latch for three days. She lost over 15% of her body weight and my husband was so distressed that he went to the supermarket and mixed the formula in the hospital bathroom. was so hungry at this stage she drank the whole thing in about 30 seconds. We both cried. The midwives told us to keep trying to breastfeed and it wasn't until maybe the 4th day they offered formula.

I'm a pretty tough person so I'm fine today, but looking back, the experience was so traumatic. I asked for a doctor to see me about why my labour was let to go for 60+ hours and they told me that I 'failed to progress' and they didn't know why.

In summary, I believe my labour was totally mismanaged, there was not the required staff (theatre and anaesthesia doctors) to cope with the level of demand - most likely because it was a Sunday - and I believe I was repeatedly turned away because they were at capacity.

I hope this helps to inform the committee's final report and recommendations.

Kind regards,