



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND COMMUNITY WELLBEING

Mr Johnathan Davis (Chair), Mr James Milligan MLA (Deputy Chair),
Mr Michael Petterson MLA

Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into Recovery Plan for Nursing and Midwifery Workers

Submission Number: 05

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Subject:

Re: Midwives Need Help

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To whom it may (but probably won't) concern,

My name is Tori and I am a new graduate midwife working at The Canberra Hospital.

I knew I wanted to be a midwife from an early age. I studied a bachelor of science for three and a half years followed by a further, gruelling three years of midwifery. I am now undertaking my honours in midwifery which will take me to eight and a half years of tertiary education and a whopping \$70,000 HECS debt.

I am almost at the end of my graduate year as a midwife and what a year it has been. I have worked more double shifts (18 hours) and gone without breaks or a toilet trip more times than I can count... and I've been employed only 9 months. I am already completely burnt out and half of the midwives who graduated with me have either quit, or going back to the public service which we all know get paid oh so well.

I have been abused by women and families who have been sitting in a hospital bed waiting for an induction of labour, I have been screamed at by anxious fathers who say their wife hadn't been up and showered and are lying in a pool of blood. I have wiped the tears of new mothers who can't get their newborn to latch because there is simply not enough staff to accommodate teaching her. We are exhausted and fed up.

The current staffing ratios and pay is not good enough! What incentive is there for young people to want to choose this as a career? We are overworked and undervalued. I have spent the better half of my life studying and accumulating enormous debt because I desperately want to help women and families. What do I have to show for it? I don't get to see my own family, I am unable to save, and cannot see myself surviving within the current maternity system.

I keep telling the crying women that this is bigger than us. It isn't the midwives who are sacrificing their personal lives and mental health who are the problem, it's this broken system and empty promises that stems far above us that needs to change.

I have friends in the public service with absolutely no tertiary education, who work from home in their pajamas, who don't pay for parking or petrol, who get holidays when they want, who don't have the burden of someone else's life on their hands...who earn six figures! How is this happening?

The healthcare system was broken well and truly before COVID. And yet, in the world's most desperate and trying times, there is still no change in sight.

The change needs to be drastic and it needs to be now, before careers that have been fought for in the way of hundreds of hours of free labour, are abandoned. Or perhaps it will take lives being lost? Because that is what we are facing. That is the burden we carry.

We are drowning. We need help.

Sincerely,
Victoria Chard

[REDACTED]