

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to formally express my profound dissatisfaction with the maternity services I received at Royal Hobart Hospital during the birth of my child on [REDACTED]. My experience has highlighted several significant issues that I believe need urgent review and improvement.

I had an induced delivery which resulted in a natural birth. Unbeknownst to me, the Anaesthetist administering my epidural inadvertently punctured my spinal wall. This led to severe headaches in the days following the procedure. Despite advising maternity staff that I continued to experience strong headaches in the days after the delivery, I was simply advised to take over the counter headache tablets and discharged on the afternoon of the [REDACTED]. I was not advised of any symptoms to watch out for, nor potential causes to a severe post-partum headache. The inadequate response to my condition was distressing and unhelpful. Upon returning home, I felt so unwell that I could not feed my child, and whenever sitting upright or standing, I began vomiting. We made the decision to return that night due to the worsening pain and my inability to look after our newborn.

After being readmitted back into the hospital, I encountered significant challenges related to the assessment and diagnosis provided by the health professionals. The exact cause of the headaches was unknown and there was a clear lack of guidance from experienced professionals as to the best course of action, leaving me to make critical decisions about my care without adequate support. The absence of firm direction from the medical team exacerbated my stress and uncertainty during this critical time.

During my second admission, my experience in the maternity ward highlighted significant gaps in supporting mothers to successfully breastfeed. During my stay, I found that there was a lack of structured education on breastfeeding practices. The absence of dedicated lactation support further exacerbated the issue, while I occasionally received assistance from staff members, it was clear that there was no consistent or thorough approach to breastfeeding education. This lack of focus on breastfeeding education not only impacted my ability to successfully breastfeed but also contributed to a heightened level of stress during an already challenging time.

Furthermore, I found the midwives' focus on breastfeeding to be misaligned with my immediate health needs. As a very unwell first-time parent, I was instructed by a midwife to breastfeed while lying down. When I expressed concerns about the risk of smothering my baby due to my exhaustion, I was told that my husband would need to take responsibility for this aspect, even though he was also sick with worry and exhaustion. This approach failed to acknowledge the critical need for support and care for me as the new mother.

In addition to the above lack of care, I experienced a serious incident involving overdose of pain relief medications. A nurse administered medication without noting it on the chart. Later, on two occasions, my husband had to intervene to advise nursing staff the particular pain relief had been recently administered which prevented potential overdoses. No responsibility was taken for this oversight. This situation was handled with a concerning lack of accountability and attention to patient safety.

Given the inadequate guidance from the medical team about the ongoing headache, we had a large desire to expedite my discharge as I did not feel safe or supported. My husband and I made the decision to proceed with an epidural patch. Regrettably, at no point was I informed about the potential ongoing side effects associated with the epidural puncture. This lack of communication prevented me from making a fully informed choice about my treatment and its possible repercussions. Over the past 2.5 years, I have suffered from persistent lower back pain, mental health challenges, dermatitis and sinusitis, which I have since learned can all be side effects of an epidural puncture. Had I been informed of these risks, I could have managed my recovery more effectively, and our parenting experience would have been significantly improved.

As a result of the above, our family has spent significant money on extra supports including a lactation consultant, post-partum services from a GP, Counsellor, Dermatologist and the Lower Back Pain Clinic.

The combination of inadequate attention to my post-delivery health, poor communication about potential side effects of the epidural failure, and the mismanagement of support during breastfeeding has had a profound impact on my well-being and our family life. It is essential that these issues are thoroughly investigated to prevent similar occurrences and ensure better care for future patients.

A comprehensive review of the events surrounding my delivery and the subsequent handling of my condition is warranted. I also urge improvements in how patient concerns are addressed, and in ensuring that both maternal health and infant care are balanced appropriately.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I look forward to your prompt response.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted Signature]