

Your Name: [REDACTED]

Your City/Town: [REDACTED]

Your postcode: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

I fell pregnant unexpectedly in August 2020 in the middle of COVID. Despite having held private health cover for several years, I did not have pregnancy cover. Due to some issues with my pregnancy, I was sent by my GP to a private obstetrician for my pre natal care. He as a doctor was good, but a sad combination of events and circumstances led to multiple issues in my care.

Options for Delivery were given as being referred to the Royal, or paying privately to deliver in hobart private. No other options were discussed with us early on in the pregnancy. WE had been told the maternity unit at the royal had just been redone and was very well equipped. You'll be fine to deliver at the royal, we were told.

He was late in his referral of me back to the Royal hospital for delivery. When I rang to discuss making appointments, they had no spaces available for me in the birthing classes, and only one available breastfeeding class. I had one phone appointment with a midwife after this to collect my history. I visited my OB every few weeks and then weekly, and he said just to visit on the opposite week to my midwife appointments. I had one midwife appointment in person. They were running late, didnt realise it was my first and only appointment, and she had no time. She took a urine sample, and ran through some things, and then said to finish, "I wish we had more time, there's so much to tell you".

As I started to get closer to delivery, I asked my OB, so they will call you if something happens? He said no they wont they will call who ever is on call. I didnt realise that he wouldnt have come in to the royal. He said dont stress, try not to plan too much and go with the flow.

I had one appointment with an OB in Wellington clinics late term. He didnt say or do much, because I was being looked after elsewhere, and booked me in for induction at 40+10 as was "standard" they said, but assured me i'd be fine, and probably deliver before hand and he wouldnt have to see me again.

I started feeling uncomfortable 39+5 (7th May [REDACTED]) and started having some discharge, by that night i was having fairly uncomfortable contractions quite close together. They petered out around 2-3am, and that was what happened for all the next 10 nights following.

We rang on the Sunday 9th to go in, as the contractions were getting stronger and closer together and they said yes come in. The midwife that saw us said I wasnt very far along, everything seemed fine and suggested we go home and continue there as it was very busy and it would be difficult to find a bed. She also gave me some panadiene forte and said when that couldnt control the pain i would know it was time.

We went home and kept going - contractions that would intensify over the course of the day into the night, then stop around 3-4 AM. The contractions had been daily since the 7th.

We saw the private OB on the Tuesday 11th May. His scan said baby is fine but your fluid levels are decreasing, still not very far along, please go up to the hospital for a CTG. at the hospital, they said the CTG was fine, and levels were decreasing but still within normal ranges, your only in mild/early labour- go home your fine.

We went home again, for another couple of nights of just the two of us with contractions that would start in the afternoon, increase throughout the evening and over the night, then stop around 4-5 am. We are both getting minimal sleep. We have no family nearby to support us, and the border is closed.

I had another appointment with the wellington clinics OB on the 14th May. still uncomfortable and mild contractions in the morning. I had to push to get him to do a vaginal exam. I had to push to request a stretch and sweep, as I wanted something done after over a week of this. He didnt do an ultrasound to check my fluids, as my water still hadnt broken he said I'd be fine, and I probably wouldnt see him for my induction date, but it was there if needed.

██████████ in the afternoon I told my partner I didnt feel right and we called and said we were coming in. It was busy, they put a CTG on and left us there for awhile. They didnt really explain what was going on, but they admitted us after several hours, around 6pm, saying it's time to have your baby, as the contractions were getting worse again.

While they sent my partner to move the car, The nurse pushed a button during my contractions and they got me on the bed. Someone said why havent her membranes been ruptured yet, and I remember screaming in pain while they did things to me and stuck cords on the babies head. They didnt really explain what they were doing or ask me if it was ok. I know they were intervening because of the emergency of it all, but they took my pants off and did all that without my partner in the room and without me really understanding or knowing what they were doing to me, or why.

There was meconium staining in the fluid and baby is having decels i remember them saying after.

When my partner came back within 30 mins, i was in real labour with strong contractions and brief periods in between. They said the decels were continuing and i might need a c section - I said in that case I want an epidural.

I had to wait for the anaesthetist who was with another patient. She placed my epidural, and it didnt work. The midwives inserted a urinary catheter, but I could feel it, and it made my contractions worse, I was screaming at them to take it out, and they did after awhile.

The anaesthetist came back and tried again - the epidural still didn't work, and then the decels were continuing, until during a strong one, the room flooded with people and they gave me some meds to stop my labour.

They told me that I needed a C section. We had to wait for a theatre and people as they were already doing one, and said it would be ok to wait a bit since the baby HR was ok since they stopped the labour..

6 hours from being admitted, I was in theatre.

The same anaesthetist then gave me a spinal anaesthesia. It was very slow and didn't work very well. They were able to start and do the c section, but i could feel them pulling. My partner was with me and they dropped the drape so we could see the baby but it was covered in brown and they were shaking him. They then resuscitated him nearby as he was not responding. My partner watched it. My partner asked if it was ok, and they said yes and rushed the baby off to do things.

I was still feeling things and i said that to my anaesthetist. She offered to anaesthetise me and i said yes so my partner left to go to NICU. they actually made him wait in the hall. After he left, she didn't anaesthetise me she said i'm just going to try some other medications. I went to sleep, and then woke up again. I heard someone say, "she was asleep and now she's not, give her some more"

When i woke up next i was in recovery. My partner wasn't there. He came and eventually they took us to see the baby in NICU. He was on a ventilator after he had got a pneumothorax during labour. I could touch the hand in the crib, but I couldn't hold him and i never heard his first cry.

They took me down to wards and made my partner go home - at 3 or 4 am in the morning.

There was never enough nurses while i was in wards, my partner had to help me eat, dress, toilet, and I didn't get to shower for 2 days. I had to be weaned off my pain relief drip early as they wouldn't allow me to be moved between wards and Nicu with the drip and they wanted me to do skin to skin asap. One night in wards my oral meds were late and i had to keep asking for pain relief as they had 2 nurses to cover the whole maternity ward floor.

After 3 nights in wards, I could barely walk and my baby still in NICU, and no one but my partner to support me, they discharged me from hospital as they needed the bed. We then came to the hospital every day from morning until night, then we had to go home for the night. I had to take breast pumps home and wake up throughout the night to pump.

Our little boy was in NICU 10 days. He had trouble breathing most of the first year of his life. Thankfully he has grown out of it, he has a small scar from his chest tube, and so far, seems to have no lasting effects from the delivery.

I suffered nightmares for months, and the pain after delivery/surgery never went away. I have PTSD and anxiety, pelvic floor pain and dysfunction, and it has had many roll on effects into my

life. I was referred by my GP to a different obstetrician, a different psych, and a different pelvic physio to the ones I saw for my pre-natal care. I have also tried acupuncture, naturopathy, and went to a lot of chiropractic consults. I have had two rounds of botox in my pelvic floor to improve my pain, and I still have chronic pain to this day.

I have been seeing multiple health care professionals on a regular basis for the last 2 and a half years, at significant expense, time and effort. I don't know what could have happened if I hadn't had the determination to keep going through it. I am a lot better than I was, but I put in the work to get better. I also can't stop any of my medications yet. I have just turned to medical cannabis to help with the transition off my medications, and hopefully solidify further into a healthier mental and physical place.

I have reduced my work capacity significantly. I had almost 18 months off of working. I have a part time work from home job now. Until recently, I have struggled to keep up with work and day to day chores and parenting due to the pain and fatigue.

My relationship with my partner has been very strained over the last few years. He believes that a lot of it is our own fault, because we made the choices. I believe that I slipped through the cracks in the system. This has caused a lot of anger and resentment in our relationship which we are still working through.

I once tried to raise a complaint with the hospital. I said I would like the incident investigated. They rang and said I would need to write more specific questions. At that time, I was unable to write anything. I have yet to follow up on this further. I have not requested my medical records as I am not sure I can stomach what they might say.

I have discussed with two different lawyers as to if there is a case - one says yes, one says no. I cannot take that further if it is not going to achieve much, as it is too difficult to pin down who is at fault in my case.

I very nearly went into the mother baby unit. But it was very busy, and I think if they'd had a bed when I first said yes, I would have gone in. When they said it was a few weeks between booking and getting in, I held out and didn't go, thinking I would be fine once I got to the next visit to the inlaws.

The same week as the stadium was announced, the news also announced they were closing the mother baby unit.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-05-09/tas-mother-and-baby-in-the-royal-st-helens-healthscope/102320322>

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-04-29/pm-announces-funding-for-tas-afl-stadium-at-macquarie-point/102209420>

This part of the hospital has since closed and the buildings are up for sale.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-06-13/st-helens-private-hospital-site-goes-on-the-market/102473734>

[https://midwives.org.au/Web/Web/About-ACM/Whats\\_a\\_midwife.aspx#:~:text=Midwifery%20care%20is%20the%20best,now%20know%20well%20and%20trust.](https://midwives.org.au/Web/Web/About-ACM/Whats_a_midwife.aspx#:~:text=Midwifery%20care%20is%20the%20best,now%20know%20well%20and%20trust.)

I was never offered any options of having my own midwife, in any form, by any of the doctors or people I came across during my pregnancy. The preferred gold standard is midwifery led continuity of care. I don't understand why they didn't ensure that I had this super important thing that is recommended for all pregnant women as the gold standard when I was having so many issues. They all knew I was in a stressful situation with no family support, not thinking clearly, and yet no one mentioned it to me. I never got offered Midwifery Group Practice by my GP, and my private OB did not explain anything about the importance of a midwife or offer me any solutions to have one either through his practice or any other ways. Nobody suggested a doula either.

Because I had no midwife centered care and no one had continuity of care over me and my pregnancy and delivery, I believe I was mishandled as a patient between a private OB and RHH, and I was overlooked during a vulnerable time. I fell into a grey area, where I saw a different person every time and I seemed 'fine' so they just told me I'd be 'fine', when clearly I wasn't. I wasn't their problem to solve apart from triage, give a reassuring message and assume nature will take its course on the next shift. A mismanaged, prolonged (10 days), early labour with no support directly led to me needing an emergency caesarean and my baby requiring resuscitation after delivery. This gave my son a pneumothorax and he was on a ventilator for 24 hours followed by 10 days in NICU in Royal Hobart Hospital..

As a result of the inadequate pre-natal care I received, I have been undergoing specialist treatment for ongoing physical and psychological illness that resulted from these events, with ongoing time commitments and financial costs associated with working on and treating these issues.

This is my first written version of my story, as of the 28th Jan 2024. I wrote this all from memory, and I could answer many more specific questions about the care I received before, during and after my pregnancy given more time. Also, given access to my psychologist and doctors notes, I could start to cross reference my memories of my story in more detail and give context around the treating clinicians observations. My life has been very tough over the last 3 years, and I don't think we as a family could have done any better than what we did, given what we were served with. It's not the worst horror story ever that it easily could have been, and for that I am grateful.