

adaptation

AUTUMN 2023 ISSUE 146

Birthings



Acknowledgement of Country

The Homebirth NSW Committee acknowledges the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation as the traditional custodians of the country on which we share birthings from.

We acknowledge the traditional owners of all the lands on which we all birth.

We recognise the continuing connection to the land and pay our respects to all Elders past and present, and extend that respect to all First Nations people.

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Editor's Letter

Welcome to the Autumn edition of Birthings.

I hope this finds you warmly welcoming another season in your life as a parent, as you gaze towards the autumn leaves, may you also gaze inwards to reflect on your own experience of Adaption as a mother.

What a word. What a theme. What an experience. Can anything sum up motherhood and the evolution of ourselves, more than the adaption of becoming a mother, growing your family, increasing your responsibilities and finally, adapting to your heart living outside of your body?

Motherhood asks, or rather, demands, of us to shed our old selves and step into an unknown world. No matter how many babies you have birthed or mothered, each and every experience is packed with its own nuances, challenges, fears and opportunities to evolve. It doesn't ever slow down, instead I think we adapt to just sitting in the moments, grasping at them, even their hardness and absurdity, more aware with each and every phase, how quickly, "this too shall pass".

Three years ago, while my own newborn



was snuggled into my arms, I applied to be the editor of Birthings Magazine. Since then, my tiny has grown into a thriving, exploring, jumping, jiving, and dressing himself human who I never could have anticipated having conversations with daily.

He now has a brother, who is almost two and still, I am not able to imagine having conversations with, and to be honest, nothing makes me happier. To stay in this season, without wishing it away but recognising how quickly it will be over and we will be in the next, is my greatest learning of motherhood. That adaption is inevitable and sometimes bittersweet. Knowing that we'll never be the person we were before we became parents but knowing that our lives exist for so much more than that now, and again, as we evolve and adapt, so too will their needs and ours, is both humbling and terrifying.

The next season of my own life doesn't involve editing this wonderful, community led, driven, and created magazine as I move into and pursue other projects, mainly being there for my two tiny men as they learn to navigate the world. Thank you for sharing your stories with me and giving me the honour of witnessing your journeys and experiences of birth, and often beyond. It has been an enormous privilege and I wouldn't have homebirthed my second, without you all generously sharing your wisdom and joy with me.

I hope you enjoy this edition as much as we loved putting it together, thanks as always, to the great team and committee who make this happen each and every edition. Much like raising children, it takes a village.

LOVE, BONNIE

President's Report

Welcome to the slightly belated Autumn edition of Birthings magazine.

This is my first report since I took over as President, and I'm delighted and honoured to share with you things that have been happening for Homebirth in NSW lately.

Our local meet-ups have been flourishing, and we have seen the addition and growth of many. The Blue Mountains group has expanded to have three different meets now: lower, mid and upper Mountains, which is amazing. The Hawkesbury group has seen the addition of an extra meet each month, and we have had a Hornsby and Newcastle group added to the fray as well. If you know of a local group that isn't listed on our website or if you'd like to start one in your area, get in touch (president@homebirthnsw.org.au) and I'd be happy to help you organise it.

In advocacy news, it seems the battle against GP referrals has been won! It's still early days, however in the Labor budget announcement, it was shared that Privately Practicing Midwives will no longer need a collaborative arrangement in order for women to claim Medicare rebates from their services. This means that no referrals will be necessary for women to claim the rebates. It's a huge deal, and although it may be a little while before it is actually through, and we are yet to see how it will work in practice, it does feel like a



very big win that has been fought for over a long period. So watch this space!

We are really excited about the Homebirth Australia Conference (HCA) happening in Sydney in November this year! Its the first in-person conference since the pandemic and there is an incredible line-up. I'm especially looking forward to the dinner on Saturday night which is themed "Radical Thrift Store Ball" - I need to get hunting for my outfit in the op shops. I encourage you to get your tickets - this is absolutely an event for homebirth consumers as well as birthworkers and those that work in maternal healthcare, it will have something for everyone.

We celebrated International Day of the Midwife this year with gifts donated from Superfeast, Freshwater Farm, and True Protein - big thanks to these businesses for helping us treat our gorgeous midwives!

We also welcomed some new members to the committee: Amy Tyson and Jenna Nicholas have joined as co-secretaries after we farewelled Maddie Kovac. Georgia Slee has also come on board as our Events/Fundraising Coordinator,. We'll be saying goodbye to Emma Burke who has been our Memberships Coordinator and Midwife Liaison for some time, and a longstanding member of the committee and our wonderful Birthings Editor, Bonnie Hook, will be stepping down from the Editor role, handing over to incoming Editor, Sasha Murray! To these wonderful committee members who we are farewelling, we appreciate you so much and are so grateful for the time and energy you have given to this organisation - thank you!

I think that's about all I have to share for now; until the next edition!

KATELYN

DANIELA EKMAN

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Latest News

BIRTHING A BETTER WAY

ABC News | 5 Nov 2022

Statistically, Australia is a very safe place to give birth, but the care families receive is a lottery. Three women who live less than 90 minutes apart had very different experiences, by choice, chance and necessity. Their stories reveal a complicated system crying out for change.

[Read here](#)

HOME BIRTH SERVICES COME TO GYMPIE (QLD)

Gympie Today | 20 Nov 2022

A meet and greet for new business Genesis Midwifery at The Lifehouse on Wednesday, 9 November, was very well received by expectant and new mums and bubs.

[Read here](#)

THE POWER OF STORYTELLING AUSTRALIAN BIRTH STORIES

Kiddo Magazine | 11 Apr 2023

Sophie Walker might not be a household name, but to the millions of women on the birth journey, her voice is one of the most recognisable in the industry.

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No Two People Are The Same

BY KATE LONGOBARDI

You have likely heard the phrase that “no two people are the same”. Every person is born with something that makes them uniquely different from everyone else. That certain thing is known as “temperament”. Like a person’s eye colour, blood type, and metabolism - temperament is genetic. Although environmental and situational factors have the ability to impact a person’s personality - nothing can change their innate nature.

So what does temperament have to do with anything?

Temperament determines how a person will respond and react to certain actions, events, situations and environments. The term ‘temperament’ collectively outlines how distractible, adaptable, approachable, predictable, and persistent they may be. When parents accept the innate nature of their children, they can focus their attention and

intentionality towards what they can control: their own reaction and responses. The result in this shift in mindset is that pressure will be released from both parent and child.

Like birth, navigating the unknown waters of parenting is wild.

So much of how we parent stems from the experiences

and relationships we were exposed to as children. From my own experience of becoming a mother, and something I see so often when working with Mamas, is that in the first few years of life we are not only mothering our babies - we are also mothering the child within ourselves. We grow and evolve as quickly as our children do.





As a first time Mama, I leapt eagerly into my new role with the intent to heal the pain caused by past generations, to parent in a kinder and less authoritarian manner. I was shocked to discover how deep the pressure and expectations of a parent who didn't understand the nature of their child truly were. I found myself subconsciously holding expectations for my sons that my parents had, had of me.

Simply stating that I would parent differently was not enough, I quickly learned that to truly be the parent I wanted to be - I needed first to innately know each of my sons. This was when I stumbled across the term 'temperament'.

Two psychologists, Alexander Thomas and Stella Chess

developed the theory that children thrive best when their temperament matches their environment. The way in which I interpreted this was that I needed to adjust my expectations and my parenting style to match the temperamental needs of my sons. This was not a "quick fix", this process took time,



patience, and intentionality. I read deeply into the three different temperament types: easy going, slow to warm, and highly sensitive. I learned about the expected traits of each temperament type and the best way to approach and support them. Along the way I discovered things about my own temperament. I gained the confidence and curiosity to explore who I am at my core.

This was life changing; I now suddenly understood my triggers and reactions on a much deeper level. This knowledge alone gave me the tools and resources to not only know why I felt triggered in certain situations, but also allowed me to acknowledge them and strategise more effective ways of managing the situation.

From here I found my expectations were so much more realistic and achievable. I stripped myself of the pressure to be the perfect parent and nestled comfortably into being the Mama my boys' needed me to be: understanding, empathetic, loving.

Interestingly, had my own childhood experiences been different, I may never have come across the concept of adapting myself to meet the needs of my child. Heading into parenthood, it was my expectation that my child would simply

adapt to our life - now that I look back at how much it was me that adapted, my initial expectation makes me laugh.

As I learned more about the different temperament types, the phrase "no two people are the same" rang truer and truer in my mind. I often would say my two eldest sons were total opposites, and wondered how two such different souls could come from the same two people. The answer was temperament. The bond between myself and each of my sons is unique, as are my



expectations, and approach towards them. Again, another beautiful representation of how I have adapted myself to suit the needs of my son.

I challenge you Mama, to let go of pressures and expectation... surrender to the wild, and grow to innately know your little one. Like myself, I am sure you will find this internal and maternal transformation to be truly fulfilling.

My name is Kate Longobardi. I am a Mama to three precious boys and a wife to Jake. I became a Mama right in the thick of Covid and discovered just how lonely motherhood could be. A combination of sleep deprivation and a refusal to accept that there was nothing to alter and improve my situation, sent me on my journey of personal & professional growth. I became a certified Child & Infant Holistic Sleep Coach and launched a small business with the motive to help and support other Mamas to feel rested and in control of their situations.

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Adjusting the Narrative of Birth

BY JAMIE DIMECH

When a woman falls pregnant, she has two options. She can uphold a narrative of fear associated with birth, the storyline of many generations before her that is influenced by themes of overwhelm and distress. Alternatively, she can adapt.

Adjusting our mindset takes repetition and commitment, especially when many women share stories and information that does not align with positive birth values. Furthermore, what makes this process of adaption more complex is the mind and body connection.

From a biological perspective, adaptation involves an organism making changes to better suit its environment, for the purpose of survival. In a culture where birth is perceived as painful and something to be feared, women have to proactively seek knowledge and tools that offers them

an alternative to the status quo. Exploring how to have an empowering and positive birth can assist women not only during birth, but in the fourth trimester, setting the tone for their parenting journey.

Researchers such as Stephen Porges and Deb Dana are known for their work in Polyvagal Theory. In simple terms, this theory suggests that humans are subconsciously scanning and assessing for safety and risk in their surroundings and relationships to adapt their response for the purposes

of survival (Porges, 2017 & Dana, 2022).

When we feel safe, we can be social, regulated and find joy and fulfillment when connecting with others. However, when we experience threat or fear, we respond by implementing a fight, flight or freeze defence mechanism, in an attempt to keep us safe. This can look like anger, anxiety, shut down or burn out.

When we think about polyvagal theory and the fear often associated with birth, we can see how many





women often experience a fight, flight, or freeze response, well before labour has even started. These responses to threat or danger activate the production of the stress hormone, cortisol. Cortisol increases heart rate, blood pressure, and muscle tension. Whilst this is a brief overview, we can start to understand how this would impede the natural process of birth. Birth requires the production of hormones such as endorphins and oxytocin, which are produced when humans are experiencing relational safety. When women are hearing birth stories that are influenced by themes of fear and danger, there is an invisible process occurring in their mind and body. This shapes their birth experience and their view of themselves as mothers, as they begin

the most important journey of their lives, parenthood.

Choosing to adjust the often negative birth narrative that Western society inadvertently projects onto women is tricky. Women have to think about the type of birth story they want to share with their children one day. They have to know how they hope to feel before, during and after the birth of their child. They have to create their own storyline that encompasses letting go of fear and trusting that their body is designed to birth. They have to take notice of what they think, their emotions and how they feel in their body that may indicate they are experiencing safety (socially engaged) or lack of safety (fight, flight or freeze) in relation to birth.

We know that language plays an important role in the human experience. Words and the meaning attached to them, influences how we feel, what we think, our decisions, and how we behave. Being pregnant is an exciting and joyful time for many, however when birth stories filled with negativity are shared, women can experience apprehension. In an attempt to adjust and oppose the narrative, pregnant women can be mindful of language and explore what boundaries they may need to set with others, to ensure that the stories they are exposed to are supportive and align with a positive birth experience.

Resistance against any negative associations attached to birth is an empowering process in itself. When we explore tools and ways to create our own narrative of birth, we open the door to new ways of thinking, feeling and behaving, that will set the tone for our parenting journey. Researcher Dan Siegel shared the visual tool known as the Hand Model of the Brain. The model states that when we 'flip our lid', often when we experience stress, our 'thinking brain' goes offline. This means we cannot rationalise, problem

solve, or think logically. Our emotional centre comes online, and our reptilian brain is in control. Similar to birth, we turn inwards and trust in our body to instinctively do what it is designed to do, our thinking brain goes offline. However, when we experience fear and threat during birth, this natural process of turning inwards shifts to “flipping our lid”, as fear and stress can consume our body.

Rationalising fears by exploring evidence and research relating to birth is helpful when adjusting our mindset. It not only gives you strong data to alleviate distress but reinforces the physiology of birth as a natural process. When we can rationalise and calm our “thinking brain”, we can tap into our “reptilian brain” and trusting the process of birth, knowing that any turn our birth takes will be met with calm, as we have prepared

our thinking brain with the evidence and practices for a positive birth.

Furthermore, the process of adaptation involves not only the mother but her birth partner and support people. Everyone must be on the same page and know what the mother needs and wants for a positive, calm birth. When we are all ‘singing the same song’, mothers can feel held and at ease, knowing that their wishes will be heard and respected. This is particularly important during birth, when the mother’s thinking brain is offline, and she has turned inwards. The support team must adjust the way they engage with the mother, to ensure that they do not impede or interrupt the natural process of birth, by expecting the mother to rationalise, make decisions and problem solve. The support team can also be mindful of noticing when the mother has ‘flipped her



lid’, as to ensure they make the necessary adjustments to ensure she feels safe and at ease.

Adapting the narrative of birth takes time but is possible. Knowledge is power. By exploring the mind, body connection as well as thinking about practical ways we can resist negative birth associations, we can recreate our own storylines of hope and positivity.

My name is Jamie Dimech and I am a registered counsellor and Hypnobirthing Australia Positive Birth Practitioner. I am knowledgeable about supporting people to feel safe in their bodies, to recover from trauma, grief and loss and to move towards hope and trust in their relationships. I discovered my passion for Hypnobirthing when I became a Mother. I love supporting parents to have the knowledge and tools to advocate for themselves and their baby during the most vulnerable experience of their lives, birth. I am passionate about supporting women and their birth partners to be empowered to make informed decisions about their body and baby. I believe a calm, gentle birth paves the way for a positive and hopeful parenting journey.

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The Birth of Finley

BY AIMEE-LEE DRUETT

At 9am on Thursday 2nd Feb (40+5) I started feeling what felt like mild period cramps. I checked the clock, and they were coming about every ten minutes. Instinct told me that I was in early labour, but I managed to calm the adrenalin by not telling my partner just yet!

A couple of hours went by, and the surges became slightly more intense. I started to use some of my hypnobirthing breathing techniques 'in for 4, out for 8'. I used this one throughout the whole 32-hour labour to help me manage my overwhelm and avoid going into shock. My partner had gone out so when he returned, I acknowledged that I was in early labour. We just did what we normally do and streamed something while

I continued breathing through the gentle surges.

At 11am my partner started timing the surges which were 7 minutes apart. They stayed that way for most of the day until the late afternoon when they increased to 5 minutes. At that point I decided to run myself a bath. I had originally planned to hold off getting into water for as long as possible as I was told it can slow down labour but at the time it's what I needed and I'm glad I did. Breathwork was no longer working for me, so I started groaning which then became a proper 'moo'.

These vocalisations enabled me to release the energy whirling around my uterus as well as any tension in my body. I remained





there, by myself (how I wanted it!), for about 15 hours – no joke! Mooing my way through the night.

At 10am Friday morning we called our doula, Amy who only lives two minutes away. She came and sat beside me for a couple of hours as my surges ramped up. At no point did I feel that they weren't manageable. What I was doing was working well for me. We decided a change in atmosphere might be good as my skin was a pruney mess, so I got out and Amy set up a pillow fort on the bed for me to hug my body into. She made sure I had sips of hydralyte between surges as I was being very vocal, and my throat was drying out. A few times, in between regular surges I would have a really intense one that built to a point where I almost felt the need to bear down, and I thought it was odd that I was getting these at random. After witnessing one, Amy said, "those are the kinds of surges that get a baby out but we're not quite ready for that yet." I figured I had more of those to come later.

My vocalisations had become more like a "mmaaahhh" and I was well and truly in

"labour land." As a surge would build to its peak my brain went foggy and then as I came down, I would start talking gibberish. It was quite funny. I then had a surge that peaked with the release of a thick liquid which was mostly amniotic fluid. I was a bit worried when we checked the pad there was also some of what I recognised as meconium. Amy kept me calm by saying it's likely just mucus, but we kept the pad to show my midwife, Ashlee when she came (I found out later that it was meconium but was thankful that Amy had kept that from me as it wasn't necessary information and would only have scared me). Amy called Ashlee and when she arrived, she checked bubs heart rate between surges and told me it was perfect. Hearing this and knowing he was doing ok gave me a real boost of confidence. This was the only thing Ashlee did during my labour to interrupt the process. She was very much a background resource which was exactly what I needed.

I spent the day on the bed as the surges grew stronger and I had to change up my vocalisations to match their intensity. I focused on keeping my body relaxed and

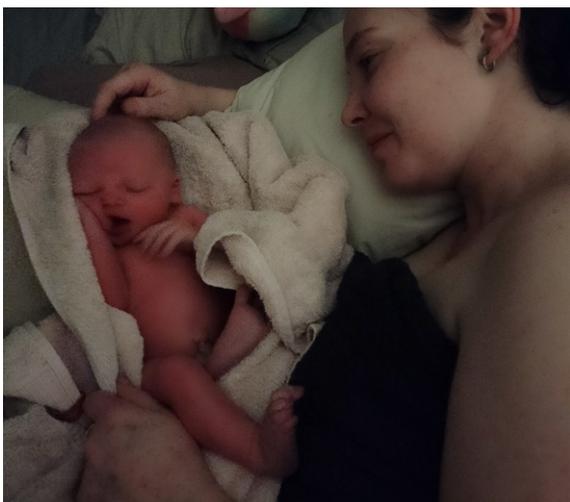


surrendering but I was tensing my legs a lot. At one point Amy put her hand gently but firmly on my leg to remind me to relax. I also kept my favourite affirmations/mantras running through my mind which I had started utilising while in the bath. These worked really well for me and were one of the best tools for managing my surges.

It was about 6pm when Amy suggested I move to the pool. It was set up in front of my birth altar which was covered in candles, affirmations, and gifts. At this point, there were times where I wasn't getting my nice little breaks between surges. Sometimes two or three would come before I had a break. I remember wanting to yell out, "Amy! Where's my break?!" as if she could somehow give it to me. I managed to haul my ass to the pool when I had a moment, and upon entering the warm water felt just amazing on my body. I sat on my knees curled over and holding the side of the pool. Ashlee checked bub's heart rate and told me it was slowing down, and bub was getting a bit squished because of the position I was in. I flipped over onto my back with my legs relaxed and floating out in front of me. Amy held my left hand with my



partner on my right. This was the only time my partner was physically close to me during labour despite all the hypnobirthing and calm birth exercises we learned together! I only wanted one person up in my space. He curated the atmosphere like a boss though, putting on relaxing music and changing to the hypnobirthing affirmations track during the peak of my labour which was just what I needed.



I was now roaring my way through the surges, keeping up with my body. It felt right. It felt powerful. During one surge I felt my cervix completely crack open (thanks to a bit of a burning sensation!) I then felt three distinctive lumps drop down through the birth canal and land at the opening of my vagina where he was now crowning about an inch. Ashlee told me to put my hand down and feel my baby, saying that I would start to feel some pressure. But at the peak of the next surge my body pushed him out completely and I scooped him up in my arms. I then heard Ashlee say, "Well that's one way to do it!" I caught the little squirt – we named him Finley – and pulled him up to my chest to find he had no vernix or mucus

Pregnancy, Birth and Beyond



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on him, and he smelled just divine. Ashlee suggested I move into a squat to assist with the birth of the placenta. I did so and it was out within about 20 minutes.

I was so happy with the experience. I had a fear that I would feel trapped in a process I couldn't escape from and be in distress wondering when it would all end, but this didn't happen – not even close! The length of my labour (32 hours) allowed me to process the gradually growing intensity of the surges and made the whole thing feel gentle and manageable. During early and established labour, I made sure I kept my mind and body

relaxed (affirmations!) to try to avoid going into shock during 'transition.' I didn't really experience transition the way I thought I would... his journey down the birth canal took all of three seconds! I also utilised foetal ejection and allowed my body to do the work until I had to start pushing. I'd heard many women say how they regretted pushing too early, so I took note and let my body do it all. I only consciously pushed a few times at the end to get him down the canal and out my vagina.

No checks were necessary, the sound of his healthy heartbeat was all I needed to know we were ok and to keep going. No one in my carefully curated birth space was concerned either. It took as long as it did, and everyone was committed to that. Having the right people in my space and an atmosphere where I felt safe was how I am able to look back on the experience with so much joy. I'm proud of myself too because I've always held a lot of fear around childbirth. What I came to learn about hospital births in addition to my own past hospital related trauma meant there was no question that a homebirth was right for us. Upon mentioning having one, I usually get the same response, "weren't you scared something would go wrong?" But I never was. I had a wonderful team, I educated myself and I trusted my body.

My name is Aimee and I am 33, living in the Blue Mountains. This was our first baby and he was conceived via IVF using Adora Fertility in Surry Hills. Their services are bulk billed which not enough people are aware is available. I want to shout it from the rooftops so that something as petty as money is no longer a reason why people can't start a family. I had tried for years to fall pregnant, also experiencing miscarriage. Because of this my GP advised against homebirth, assuming that hospital was the best place for us. She could not have been more wrong. I had the most beautiful birth experience I could have imagined and felt safe and in control the entire time. I actually can't wait to do it again!

Photographer:
Amy Tyson and Eiran (Partner)

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The Birth of Madeleine Rose

BY DANIELLE GRAYSON

Madeleine's pregnancy was beautifully boring. We had fallen pregnant on the first cycle and some of our family and friends had joked that it was the 2021 delta lockdowns that had done it, but we had hoped for a close gap with our babies. I had some morning sickness, but nothing particularly significant. I had a pre-existing liver condition, but as with my first, it behaved itself beautifully throughout the pregnancy.

At 41 weeks and 2 days, my husband Peter and I took our 22-month-old for a walk along the Nepean River. Along the way, I had noticed somewhat regular tightenings, but as I didn't really feel any Braxton hicks during my first pregnancy, I assumed this was what I was feeling. It never occurred to me that somewhat regular tightenings might be the start of something more exciting!

We played in the autumn leaves and made our last memories as a family of three. We went about with normal life at home that night.

Shortly after midnight, I went to get out of bed to go to the toilet and felt a large gush. My waters had broken, in quite a spectacular way. I couldn't stop laughing because it just seemed so funny to me. With every belly

laugh came more, which in turn made me laugh more. Without thinking, I grabbed a hanky and held it to myself and ran to the ensuite. Of course, it didn't hold much, and I left a trail, which made me laugh more. I went back to bed with occasional tightenings still happening. I was so excited that we would be meeting our little baby soon, but eventually drifted off to sleep.

We went along to a combined midwife/obstetrician appointment in the morning, and by this time I was having light, regular surges. I don't know why, but I never actually thought to let Emma (my amazing midwife) know my waters had broken or to cancel the appointment. She seemed surprised when I casually told her in conversation. Emma had suggested for Peter to cancel work for the rest of the day, and to go home and build our oxytocin.

We made arrangements for our daughter. My poor beautiful girl, I couldn't bear having her near me so when her grandparents collected her it was a huge relief for me. I felt a tinge of sadness saying goodbye to her, knowing her life was about to change, but I also felt that we were about to give her the best gift possible.



By early afternoon, I had to stand, sway and breathe through each surge. We spent the rest of the day watching my favourite movies and eating Chinese takeaway.

The surges had become stronger as night fell. Peter worked so hard to maintain a beautiful, calm, and dark space. My labour with my first daughter went on for four days and slowed with each sunrise, so this was a huge priority. I felt really challenged with each surge. Peter reminded me to use my breathing techniques with each one, as we had learned during the Calmbirth course. He had been in contact with Emma, and they eventually decided it was time for her to come, which was about 1am.

Emma gently encouraged me to work through each 'squeeze' and for some reason, I felt much more in control when she reminded me, rather than Peter. I suppose it felt like he was the annoying nagging husband, and I was struggling to follow his guidance. I moved between the pool, shower, standing at my bed, leaning on Peter, leaning on the birth ball, and eventually started to use the TENS machine. As I hadn't eaten in a while

(and had brought up my beloved Chinese), Peter offered me some crackers, which I refused. Emma also offered them to me, and I just took them and ate them. Poor guy, he just wanted to help me!

As Tuesday morning came, I remember noticing daylight seeping in from around the blinds. My brain recognised what this light may have meant for me, but I went to a magical place where I was able to ignore what I had seen, put that thought right away and not let it get to me. I was so deep in the world of labour and birth and could not let daylight get in the way this time. I am proud of myself for this.

I had felt the urge to push so intensely for quite a while, but things just continued on. Emma requested consent to check how things were progressing as so many hours had passed. I asked her not to tell me any information from this. She knew me so well. So she checked and we continued on.

I don't specifically recall transition occurring, but I did have what felt like a very big, theatrical cry with big ugly sobs. I remember



thinking I couldn't keep going and asking how much longer it would take (it seems so silly now reflecting, I am not sure what I was expecting to be told!). Peter had noticed me starting to make some very slightly different sounds and was suspicious I was in the pushing phase, so he had some idea that perhaps it may have been closer than I realised.

Teena, my second midwife, had gone to get a new cool face washer for me, but before she came back, I had birthed the head. As I leant over the side of the pool, I had such a strong urge to push that I could not control. It just happened! I remember thinking, "I've just got to do this poo and then we can get back to the baby". My body had taken over and without me even knowing, had just pushed the head out in one go. I put my hands down and was very surprised to feel my baby's entire head, which is a feeling I will never forget.

I relaxed back into the side of the pool and waited for the next surge to come. I had completely forgotten about the ring of fire and asked why it felt like it burned. I hadn't



felt this when her head was born so it surprised me. The next surge came, and my beautiful baby was born. This felt so much more intense than the head, as I didn't really know the head was coming.



At 11.19am on 24 May 2022, we welcomed our beautiful girl earthside. The seconds between birthing her and Peter passing her to me felt like hours, but in no time, she was in my arms. I could not believe I had done it, and it was (mostly) over. We did it!

Just like her sister, Madeleine had a short cord, so the pool wasn't hugely comfortable. We had kept the gender a surprise and were so excited to find out we had another baby girl. It felt like the universe had given our first daughter the best gift imaginable, a baby sister. After losing my mother to cancer



only a handful of years before becoming a mother myself, I was extraordinarily excited to welcome another little soul to share the mother-daughter relationship with.

With the excitement of birthing our beautiful baby girl, I had almost forgotten that it was her placenta's turn. Eventually, it greeted us into an ice cream bucket in the toilet. I am sure it felt like birthing a jellyfish! Teena took some time to show us the placenta and the different parts. Later on that day, we admired and gave thanks to it for growing and nourishing our beautiful baby.

Shortly after, I got into my bed with my beautiful Madeleine. Emma took her measurements and checked me. A healthy 4kg, 56cm long and not even a graze for me. Madeleine had a beautiful first feed while Peter heated up some Chinese leftovers. I cuddled my baby, ate my food and made some of the most beautiful memories. It was so perfect.

I just couldn't believe it had happened. My first was a planned homebirth but had to transfer. The beauty of a garden variety, amazing birth was not lost on me. It was long, tiring, raw, ugly, and yet so beautiful. I still sometimes tear up when I think about how special and beautiful her birth day was.



My name is Danielle and I am a mother of two beautiful girls. Peter and I are childhood sweethearts and knew we'd one day have a family together. I am also a Mum to two goofy but loving dogs who were my first babies. We live in Sydney and I am a speech pathologist, working with children and families with disability. I love all things food related, cooking for family and friends, learning new techniques, trying new foods and enjoying old favourites. When I find the time, I love all things craft related and although not hugely successful, I also enjoy gardening. I am passionate about equity of access to midwifery and homebirth and will chew anyone and everyone's ears off about these!

Photographer:
Peter Grayson and
midwife, Emma Fitzpatrick.

The Birth of Heidi

BY EDEN GROENEVELD

I birthed our beautiful second daughter, Heidi, in October 2022. Our first birth was through midwife caseload at Northern Beaches Hospital, completely physiological and beautiful but with the hype of covid and wanting a family centred birth I decided to birth our second baby at home. My first daughter, Yolanda, was a very psychedelic and orgasmic birth. We practised hypnobirthing techniques and I was entirely in my zone. I was comfortable and only experienced the “intensity” rather than pain. I listened to my body and knew how to move and what to do. Within 6 hours Yolanda was earthside. To say I was overconfident going into my second birth is an understatement!

In the lead up to Heidi’s labour I was feeling good, but busy being a pregnant mumma to my toddler. I did all the same pre-labour preparation I did for Yolanda- acupuncture, massage, dates, perineal massage, walking, spinning babies, so was feeling content with how I could help this little baby enter this world. When labour started, I expected to find my comfortable quiet space and to zone out like I did in my first labour but being day time, having extra noises around and mostly being aware of my toddlers movements around me I couldn’t switch my mind off which prevented me from going into that same psychedelic place I was in with Yolanda’s birth. This threw me in that





in the ideal position she could have been. But unfortunately, because I didn't adapt to Heidi's birth as well as I should have, I wanted to rest and lay down like I did with Yolanda's labour because this is what gave me relief 2 years ago. Labour kept on progressing, but it wasn't helping Heidi move down my birth canal with me being stationary. I didn't have any internal checks, but I believed and felt I was fully dilated and effaced for at least one and a half hours, but Heidi was struggling to move down. Again, I was aware of this but didn't adapt and this prolonged my pushing stage. My midwife was in tune with this and told me it's time to get up into the bath. Once in the bath I went into a more upright position and started to feel the need to push Heidi out. Between pushing my midwife was checking Heidi's heartbeat but she kept turning to the other side of my belly, she was not in distress at all but just needing to find

first hour as I was feeling the intensity of my contractions more and more.

As labour progressed and surges came closer together, I just couldn't find a groove or get comfortable until I remembered learning about elephants swaying to relieve pressure from feeling so heavy (we went to the zoo the Monday before and this visualisation was so clear in my mind). So, I swayed through contractions mimicking the elephant and this helped my thinking mind detach from my body which was an amazing relief. I never expected to use this visualisation for my birth, but I am so grateful to learn from nature. I had to let go so much to allow my mind to turn off and just think of this elephant, but it was the most effective form of relief I had.

Labour was getting more uncomfortable and looking back now I believe Heidi was not



the direction and way she wanted to come out. With time, (20 minutes and flipping sides of my belly approximately eight times) Heidi found her groove and came out perfectly into the water and into her family's arms. Three hours total active labour and 20 minutes of pushing.

Looking back there were so many factors that made this birth so different. Being a daytime birth and having my daughter there made me so much more aware of my surroundings and unable to tune out of my thinking mind and feel the intensity of everything so much more. I feel honoured to have experienced both births and appreciate the lesson of adapting because it has set me up for mothering my second and understanding they're different beings and need me to adapt to how they want me to mother them.



I have had two beautiful completely physiological and natural births to my two girls, Yolanda and Heidi. Our first birth was through Midwife led care and a beautiful psychedelic and "orgasmic" birth but having a two year old daughter I wanted her to experience the birth of her sister so we opted for a homebirth.

The birth of Heidi was quick, intense and due to me not being in the right mental space, could not have been a lot more "psychedelic" like it was with my first birth. I would never change a detail for a second because feeling that power come through my body was phenomenal and having my daughter witness that is something I am so proud of.

Photographer:
Partner and Midwife

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Image: Erica Massingham Photography



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The Birth of Ezra

BY ELIZABETH WHITE

I was fortunate to be able to birth my first two babies in the hospital where I work as a midwife, amongst colleagues in a publicly funded caseload model of care, and I was really happy with these experiences. Since training as a midwife, I'd maintained an interest in birthing at home but lacked the confidence in myself to make this decision for my first birth. I carried too much self-doubt and negativity from my experiences working in a high-risk birth unit setting, witnessing many interventions and emergencies which I could only envision occurring safely in a hospital setting.

By the time I was pregnant with my third, my experience and mindset had shifted – I

now feared birthing in hospital. Realising that my nagging unease was not due to doubt surrounding women's ability to birth their babies unassisted, but doubt in the hospital's ability to leave women alone to do just that! Knowing this would be my last baby, I also saw an opportunity to experience the 'consumer perspective' on a career path I consider pursuing in the future. So, I engaged a private midwife early in my pregnancy, much to the shock of my colleagues and most of my friends and family.

Fast forward to the birth story!

I was quite uncomfortable with pelvic pain and sciatica towards the end of pregnancy,





so I was trying all the natural remedies to get into labour. My first two babies were born at 38+6 and 39+2 gestation, so when I reached these milestones, I felt 'overdue', even though I hadn't even reached the due date!

As it happened, at 39+2 my regular tightenings were getting stronger much earlier in the day than normal, so I thought 'this has to be the day!' and went on a long walk, expressed, did lots of squats (picking up toys), and even shaved my legs (just in case!).



I made dinner for the family but didn't feel like eating it and was still in denial due to the many false starts, but when I saw my 3yr old mimicking me breathing through tightenings at the dinner table I thought, 'if that's what I look like, then this is promising!'

I tucked the kids into bed at 7:30pm and then made the poor decision to finish watching an action-packed movie – the adrenaline scared off the uterine activity! After that I thought I might as well lay on the lounge and have a snooze before labour. However, with the stressful movie resolved, the contractions picked up and by 9pm my husband Matt and I were setting up the pool.

I enjoyed having something to do in this early stage of labour and embracing the feeling of excitement and anticipation instead of constantly gauging when to leave for hospital was perfect. I laboured for some time standing at the kitchen bench, until I felt I was establishing around 10:30pm, so we called our midwife and I jumped in the shower.

At 11pm people arrived: midwives Jacqui and Aisha, my parents to collect the kids (given my history of very screamy labours we decided not to have them there for the birth) and my friend to take photos.

I emerged from the shower about 11:45pm, when the hot water ran out... from which point the midwives started filling the pool with the kettle and pots on the stove! The contractions were coming hard and fast, and I was having some little vomits, so they were thinking they might not get the pool filled in time. However, I knew I wasn't transitional yet, and could feel this baby taking its time to descend. My second born was 4.05kg, and

I expected a similar weight for this baby.

I got into the pool at midnight, which was lovely and relaxing between contractions, but out again at 1am when there was no baby action. I moved into the bathroom, where I stayed to transition – being a private person this dark enclosed space has helped every labour! The contractions reached that point where they were just all-consuming and overwhelming, stretching me up to and beyond where I felt I could cope. I started to feel just a hint of pressure with them, so hopped back in the pool at 1:50am.

Hanging forwards over the edge of the pool I did what I thought was a sneaky vaginal examination on myself, only to hear from Jacqui, 'what did you feel love?' – in photos after I saw a ring of people watching from behind with a mirror and torch, keen to know the answer! I could feel an anterior lip and bulging membranes, and a big relief as I knew it was almost over.

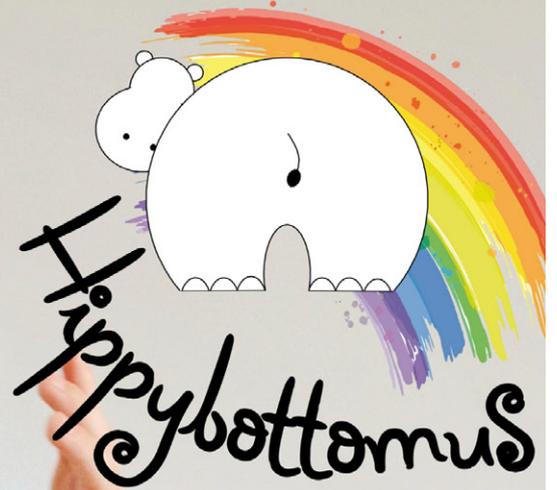
I started pushing at 2am, with my fingers on his head as feeling him moving down during pushes was really encouraging. When I started to feel 'the burn' I slowed right down. In pregnancy I did a lot of mental work around taking this bit slow, visualising my ability to stretch and open, as I was keen to avoid suturing this time. I mostly breathed, with tiny pushes if he stopped moving, my fingers still on his head until it was all the way out. At one point I felt a pop and thought 'bummer, a tear', but it was just his little nose popping out!

With his head out at 2:16am I was so relieved, but his shoulders did not follow, and although I felt I had given all I had to get this far, I had to rally, and the midwives had



to work to finish this birth. When he didn't come after a few pushes and some internal manoeuvres, they helped me to stand in the pool and delivered his posterior arm and body at 2:19am. I sat straight back down in the water, and he was passed onto my chest. He needed some resuscitation which was done swiftly and effectively in the pool. We had a few moments of quiet together before the placenta came physiologically just 5 minutes later.





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After the placenta was born, I was assisted to the lounge, where I was excited to hear my perineum was intact! However, a PPH followed, and I required some medication, a urinary catheter, and some intravenous fluids. Everything settled quickly and I was happy with how things were managed. In fact, with my experience of management of emergencies in hospital, I was glad that these events unfolded in the homebirth setting, where expert emergency care can be so beautifully coupled with privacy and emotional safety, with the option of transfer to hospital readily available if required.

In the first few weeks postpartum, I struggled with processing the events of my birth, which was confusing as I was happy with all aspects of my care, including through the unexpected events. Upon reflection, I had unrealistic expectations of what a 'homebirth' needed to be – calm, quiet, comfortable. Whilst the environment certainly was all those things, there was nothing quiet about how I laboured, or comfortable about a perineum that has just stretched around a baby's head (no matter how intact). And whilst a calm environment is most conducive to a smooth

birth, there is no amount of calm (for me personally) that can override the intense feelings of transition and pushing. I was reminded that there is no 'right and wrong' with birth, no matter the setting, and being loud and feeling overwhelmed and having a shoulder dystocia and PPH doesn't mean the birth didn't go to plan, but that for me, the babies are big, and birth is noisy and I'm in control of nothing, but capable of anything, including the birthing of a beautiful 4.67kg baby at home!

My husband, Matt and I live in Sydney with our three kids. I've been a midwife for 9 years and absolutely love working with women and their families in such a special time of life. After my first homebirth I am even more committed to moving my career path towards the continuity of care model and the homebirth setting, as I know from evidence and from personal and professional experiences, that the choices of care provided and available for women and the setting is an extremely important and valuable decision in setting their trajectory for a safe and empowering birth.

Photographer:
Sally Dennes

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The Birth of Kai

BY JULIANA SALGADO

I have been meaning to write these words for a while now...

I've looked over and over again into the timeline I built to make sense of our story and watched countless times the video of Kai coming to the earthside, and yet, it seems like there are no words to fully describe how I felt, and how I feel. It wasn't a straightforward birth, and it will probably take some time to integrate all that it was, but the more I write and share about it, the more I heal and embrace this beyond-imaginable experience.

Early labour contractions started at around 7:30pm on Thursday, 5th May. When contractions were coming closer together, we let our birth team know. I spent all that

night, the following day and night, labouring at home. On my hands and knees, on the toilet, standing anywhere when a surge came, in the pool, in bed, in the shower...

During the day it seemed like the contractions slowed down and over the second night, things picked up again and we thought "this is it"! The sun was almost out again, and I knew it was a patience game, but it had been 2 and a half days already, we've tried many different things to progress labour.

My team and I had a chat and I decided to transfer to hospital. Deep inside I was comfortable with this decision, but at the same time, I couldn't help but feel sad that it was happening.



The hospital midwife put me on fluids straight away and I was introduced to the “happy gas”. Must say... big fan!!

I felt ready to keep on going like that, so I cancelled the epidural and got into the zone once more. For the first couple of hours in hospital we felt the move was a great decision for us! We were happy with the midwife that was caring for us, the setting of the room, the gas... it felt like we were supposed to be there, and things were looking positive! Contractions picking up and the change in scenery combined with regaining my energy made a huge impact on my mind and how I was perceiving the moments to come. I felt strong again - I can do this! Unfortunately, that didn't last very long.

At 9am the hospital midwife checked me, and I was still at 7cm. I was not too concerned and just followed the flow of my energy and contractions. But then, at 10am, a doctor burst into the room, speaking loudly and fast



about how my labour wasn't looking safe - that it was taking too long, not “normal”. I was in the middle of a strong surge, and she kept going on and on about interventions and pressuring me to get my waters broken right there and then. It seemed so disrespectful on so many levels.



After that, I made the decision to wait until 1:30pm for some progress. After this I was open to having my waters broken in the hope bub would move to a better position and get things going. At 1:30pm, I was 7.5cm. I had my waters broken and we got some news - baby had pooped in my womb and there was a potential risk of him swallowing meconium. We were told that in this instance, a doctor should be present at time of birth.

I kept going ... surges were different, and I began to feel the urge to push. These surges felt better to navigate. I could do something with the energy and felt good! It seemed like



I was progressing!

Around 2pm there was a change in the shift of the hospital staff and a new midwife and doctor arrived. I hadn't been able to pee the whole day and for the second time we needed to do a urinary catheterisation.

It was about 4pm when the new doctor came into the room - I was in the zone sitting on the toilet and they wanted to chat about my "lack of progression". Again, it felt disruptive and disrespectful. They asked our private midwife, Kira, to leave the room (they said she was influencing our decisions, which made us feel very uncomfortable).

Long story short, they wanted to give me an epidural and induce labour. The way they communicated that was by a very threatening and fear-based language. I consented to do an ultrasound to make sure bub was in a good position - all was

well - and I compromised and agreed to have the CTO monitoring. Baby's heartbeat was good! After that, I was extremely down and feeling defeated. All that negative talk made my contractions stop and I was done. In front of the hospital staff I was confident, but between me, Honza (my husband) and Kira I was asking for a caesarean! I went into the shower and told Honza that I couldn't do it anymore and I wanted a c-section...

"THERE IS A TIPPING POINT IN BIRTH WHERE YOU HAVE TO MAKE A DECISION - EITHER YOU RUN AWAY FROM YOUR BODY'S WAVES OF POWER OR YOU DIVE INTO THEM."
- UNKNOWN AUTHOR

In the most loving way, while Honza held the shower on my back, he reminded me that I was so close, and we would soon be meeting our baby. He brought me back to the zone. So much love and oxytocin pumping! It was about 5:30pm, I was navigating the waves on the toilet and Kira invited me to



check myself and see if I could feel baby's head. I could feel it, bub was coming! When I looked around, I couldn't believe how many people there were in the room. I understood the doctor would be there, but there were at least 10 people. I decided to ignore them. It wasn't long and bub's head was out. It took so much control, focus, and connection to my body and breathing! Honza was cheering by my side.

At 7:03pm, almost 72h later, I was birthing our baby on hands and knees and the next thing I heard was Honza screaming, a happy and emotional, "IT'S A BOY!". Best surprise ever! We did it!

This part is the most emotional for me - and the reason why it took me so long to summon the courage to relive it and integrate as part of the experience. Kira managed to film the birth but also the moments following that - and it breaks my heart to watch. I turned and laid on my back to hold our beautiful baby Kai in my arms. He felt very floppy. He was struggling to give us a good cry and the staff quickly became very intense with the rubbing trying to make him cry. I said several times "please, be gentle". They clamped the cord

straight away and made Honza cut it rather quickly - not giving much chance for Kai to get the oxygen that was still pumping. A few moments after, the doctor asked to bring baby to the table to help him breathe. His lungs had a lot of fluids and he was working really hard to breathe. Kai went straight to the nursery as he still needed help breathing. Honza went with Kai and Kira stayed with me while I had a controlled cord traction (a shot to pull the placenta out) to prevent the risk of haemorrhage and get a couple of stitches - I had a second-degree tear. It was only Kira, Honza and I in the room, and I remember holding their hands, crying, and saying thank you! I couldn't have done it without them. The gates of happy tears opened for all of us.

I'm slowly coming to terms with the intensity and turn our birth took. I hope one day I look back and feel an empowered strong mama! I am not there just yet. For now, I focus on the transition to motherhood. Once the wildness of birth ends, a wilder one starts - without a break. But I look at Kai and my heart melts! I feel so lucky he has chosen me. I'm so grateful that, even though we had a bumpy start, he is healthy, strong, and soooooo loved. This story is only the beginning.

Hello, I'm Juliana, a mother to Kai, a counsellor, and yoga teacher. I was born and raised in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. In 2016, I booked a one-way ticket to Sydney and never looked back. I'm a camper, a lover of nature, and the ocean is home to me. Now after giving birth to Kai, I have also become a passionate advocate for women's health and developed a deep love for supporting pregnancy and postpartum journeys through my practice - AwakenLife Yoga. Giving birth is a life-changing experience, incredibly transformative. Our amazing resilience to navigate pregnancy, labour, birth, postpartum, and the beautiful and crazy waves of motherhood, is magical. I truly hope and wish our system will evolve to be able to provide women from all walks of life, a safe, nurturing, gentle, respectful, caring environment so women can birth without fear. Birth with joy. Birth wholeheartedly.

awakenlifeyoga.com.au

Photographer:
[Natural Beginnings](#)

The Birth of Tommy

BY KATE MCINTOSH

My first son, William, was born in hospital after a very long, but intervention and drug free labour, with almost 2 hours of coached pushing, and a 2nd degree tear. While his birth had been very straightforward, I had experienced a lot of pressure to speed things up and had been told numerous times throughout labour that I'd "need a caesarean anyway" and we "may as well just do it now". We were so thankful for our amazing doula who nurtured us and helped advocate for the birth we wanted, or I am certain it would have taken a very different path!

Three years later when we began trying for baby number two, I floated the idea of a homebirth with my partner, Cob, who was unsure on the idea and a little scared but open to learning more before deciding. We agreed that when the time came, we would meet with a midwife and express any concerns and see how we felt from there. We initially struggled to find a midwife available in our area and at around 20 weeks when I was pretty sure there was no hope, we were put in touch with Courtney Stevens. We had a Zoom meeting one night and immediately afterwards we both felt so supported and happy, we knew straight away we would be having this baby at home and that beautiful Courtney would be our midwife. I had also connected with a lovely doula, Cara Burns, who supported us during pregnancy and birth and would also be there to take photos.

My pregnancy was very straightforward, even so we kept our homebirth plans a secret from most of our family and friends. We did not feel comfortable sharing the idea as most people we knew were against the idea and felt it was dangerous. We didn't want people attempting to talk us out of it or telling us why it was wrong, so we decided to keep it to ourselves. From about 36 weeks I began feeling tightening's that could sometimes come and go for a few hours and then dwindle away. I remember being worried that I would go into labour before 37 weeks and our plans of birthing at home would be ruined, it was a bit of a shock that I then made it to 40 weeks!

On 1st September Cob was due to go onto nightshift and we had just finished lunch and





I said I thought I may be in labour because I was having some light cramping, he said he thought I'd just overeaten - haha! So, he went off to work and I got myself and William ready for bed. At around midnight I woke up to more intense tightening's and was unable to sleep any longer. Cob works underground and can be hard to get in contact with, so I sent him a text asking him to come home which he received a few hours later. He arrived home at about 4am and I was no longer comfortable laying down, so he went to bed, and I got up and started moving around the house. I tried to have a bath but found it to be the most uncomfortable place to be at that point in time, so I hopped out and attached the TENS machine which was so effective that I fell asleep and woke up again after 8am! I can remember feeling disappointed when I woke up, thinking labour had halted but soon after I felt another mild contraction coming on. I

was able to go about my day and left Cob to catch up on some sleep, I thought we'd be labouring right through that night too, so I wasn't too concerned and wanted him to be rested to help with William when things did start to ramp up. Willy and I spent most of the morning colouring in and cooking, watching tv and just relaxing together. I tried to make the most of my final day with just one kiddo. At around 1:30pm I asked Cob to take Willy out because I thought things just were not progressing and I wanted to be alone to really get in the zone. By 2:30pm it was as though someone flicked a switch and we were 'on'. I rang Cob and asked him to make his way home and notified Courtney and Cara that things were starting to happen. I remember saying to Cara that I was worried about wasting her time but 'the baby should be here within the next 12 hours I reckon' and I really wanted some labour photos too. Cara was about 40 minutes' drive away and Courtney just over an hour so they both started to get ready to come. Our second midwife Robyn was about an hour away too I think.



By the time Cob and Willy arrived home at 3pm I was having very intense contractions, vomiting and shaking and I asked him to help me get the TENS off because I thought it was causing the shaking. I also asked Cob to start blowing up the birth pool. I asked him to come and be with me during a contraction. Then I asked him to leave me alone. Then I cried because he walked away. To my indecisive demands he said 'you're being hard work!' We both thought I was still in early labour at this stage and had no idea I was actually in transition!

I went off to our bedroom and as another contraction came on I knelt on the floor leaning against the bed. Cara came through our front door at 3:30pm and saw me there and came straight to my side, she seemed to know what was happening and rang Courtney to say I was getting close. I told Cara I needed to use the toilet and I can remember feeling so awkward because she did not leave the room, I really thought I just needed to poo! With the next contraction my waters broke into the toilet bowl and the contraction after



that I put my hand down and could feel baby's head. We both started yelling out for Cob who was still having dramas getting air into the birth pool and not paying attention to us. Thankfully, he eventually heard the urgency and came running in time to see the head descend. Cara had her hands out ready and then indicated for Cob to take over. She had Courtney on the phone and was trying to call an ambulance too as Courtney would not be arriving in time. The very next contraction our baby was born, into his dad's arms, pink and screaming. We were all so excited to see that we had had another boy and having Willy there when we found out was the most amazing experience.



We ended up not needing an ambulance to attend and soon after Robyn arrived and checked us both over to make sure all was well. Courtney arrived soon after that and



It was 4pm when Tommy was born, and although it had been 24 hours since the first tightening it felt like I'd only had intense contractions for around 90 minutes. My body ejected our baby without me doing any real pushing which was such a contrast from my first birth!

It was such a transformative and empowering birth, and I am so incredibly grateful for our amazing midwives and doula for helping us to have this dream birth, also for making both the prenatal and postpartum experiences so wonderful.

I'm not sure how much time passed before I birthed the placenta. We were then both tucked up in bed with a cup of tea and some snacks and we all just started to laugh in disbelief at the path the birth had taken.

Courtney and Robyn set about weighing and measuring Thomas, and Willy was right there with them. He was beaming with pride at being a big brother and being included in the whole process.

A few hours later everyone had cleaned up and left and we sat in our bed as a family of four and marvelled at our little boy.



Hi, I'm Katie, a mum of two wonderfully energetic sons. I live in Mount Annan with my partner Cob, our two boys, Willy and Tommy, and our two crazy boxers, Charlie and Lamb. In my non-mumming time, I am working toward completing my Bachelor of Health Science, Clinical Nutrition, which allows me to combine my passions for food and health, and plan to one day use my degree to support new mums to nourish their bodies postpartum. I also enjoy being outdoors as much as possible and I have loved the last few years of going on adventures with Willy and am excited for Tommy to be a part of it as he grows older too.

Photographer:
[@caraburns_](https://www.instagram.com/caraburns_)

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0438 862 178
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