

HOME BIRTH AOTEAROA

JUNE 2024

Dear beautiful homebirthing community,

As some of you will know, I (Lala), am currently pregnant with my 6th baby. After years of trying and loss, it feels particularly special to be so deep along in this journey. I am already in my third trimester and I suppose, counting the moons left until we meet this little person. I've observed this pregnancy, that some people feel as though, because this is my 6th pregnancy, I am experienced and I must be used to ALL the things. This pregnancy has taught me well that each pregnancy really feels like the first time. I have feelings of familiarity at times and my body sure remembers the stretch, but each new life, from the time of conception (often even before) has brought with it many differences, at times hard for me to understand and navigate. This pregnancy, has brought with it big lessons on re-learning a deep trust within myself. An absolute education in looking within for the answers and reassurance, rather than looking to others, to books, to professionals, to technology. This pregnancy has been a navigation through many firsts, at times feeling beyond overwhelming. A reminder to all, including myself to not assume that us multips are good just because we've done it before.

It's been over 6 years since my last baby. Something that has been hard for me this pregnancy and that I have noticed is quite different to before the pandemic, is the navigation (I use this word a lot) of the lack of midwives, the seeming lack of choice due to many reasons and the quick assumptions from some/most professionals who seem to be practising more defensively than ever. I'm also in a new region from last time and the system here feels quite different and foreign. I feel these are all things I have experienced in the past but they all seem quite heightened now. Now, quite confidently to opt out of routine 'interventions' feels harder, to feel a full sense of trust within the system feels harder. I also lost some very close birthy friends to me during the mandates, whom I was able to previously talk things through with. I knew where they stood and what they felt and vice versa, so I/we felt safe in those conversations. We now live quite far from any family or support systems and on top of that, have 5 children to journey this through with. So I ponder.....



Photo : Lala McCarthy, taken by Jackie O Photography

How do we as homebirthers, navigate and trust a system that assumes plans and answers about us without having had conversations with us or without knowing us. A system and a 'professional body' that we should be able to utilize when actually needed, without the feelings of shame and the 'I told you so's'. How do we opt out of routine 'interventions/procedures' etc, without being red flagged and labelled as difficult or dangerous..... when WE know the stats and figures that come from hospitals, when WE know that as the mother we ultimately hold the most stake in our pregnancy/birth/baby. How do we get them to see us as humans, not incubators, to be respected and to have our rights and choices upheld without having to fight and be on alert. To understand that we are worth more and truly NEED more than a live baby and live mother.

Some of us feel ok in not engaging at all and some of us struggle for many reasons, even to just have conversations about choice, and to trust we are indeed being given actual evidence-based information verse opinion. I personally feel good about my decisions in these things, even if they feel hard at the time, and after so many personal experiences (unnecessary caesareans, vbac, homebirth, hospital waterbirth, needed caesarean...), I feel strong in my ability to say what I need to say. But this is beside the point. The real question here is - Should we have to?! We all know the answer, but what are we to do about it.

With all this said, I'm not really sure what I am getting at/where I am going. Some thoughts to ponder I suppose. A chat with a friend as you sit with a coffee (how lovely that would be). For now though, I will say that I am doing well and my family and I are excited to meet our new, very long awaited addition. I am busy nesting, knitting, organizing, RESTING, flowing with my instincts, slowly withdrawing from society (haha) and navigating this entire journey as best I can - with deep trust – that still sometimes takes practice.

I will still be here but please expect some delays in replies. I'm grateful for the team we have here at HBAAT whom don't rush me, give gentle reminders and who will take up some of the reigns as I step back when/as I need to.

I am, as always deeply committed to this community. If you feel some mutual feelings about my thoughts, I'd love to hear from you and connect. Lots of love, Lala McCarthy – HBA co-chair and social media administrator.

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Happy June!

How fast this year is passing us by. The Trust has felt busy with numerous projects on the go.

During May/June we held interviews for the new admin position. It wasn't easy to choose someone as everyone was well qualified and passionate. It was great to meet the applicants via zoom and spend some time getting to know them. We are pleased to say that we have hired Cushla Richardson from Taranaki. Alesha and Cushla are currently working together and we look forward to introducing Cushla to you soon. To all of the applicants who didn't get chosen, please keep in touch, join your local groups and maybe sign up for trusteeship sometime?

We are also very happy to announce that our contract with the Ministry of Health is being renewed for another year. The contract provides us with the funding to employ our administrators, print and distribute resources, hold hui and events and give grants to support regional groups. Kia kaha Home Birth in Aotearoa!

We've been looking into getting some HBA merchandise created. Keep an eye out for t-shirts, totes and sweaters coming to our web store soon. All profits from sales go directly back into our regional groups by way of grants, birth pools etc. If you have any ideas for items you'd like to see, get in touch, we'd love to hear from you.

We have been putting some energy into new features on our website. We now have new regional groups added to our community map. It's a great way to help people find groups close to them. It helps too, if you as the regions can let us know when you have events etc coming up. We love to share them here and on our social media. We also have added a hui gallery. We try our best to have photographers at all hui/conference HBA events, so we have lots of lovely photos - too many to share in an Instagram post. Now you can go and have a good look, taking your time and hopefully finding yourself. - HBA

APPRENTICE TRUSTEE'S

Last newsletter we mentioned that we would have 2 apprentice trustee positions coming up due to some trustees stepping down. We are pleased to announce that we have received many amazing applications. We are currently in the process of gathering votes from regional reps, trustees and trust reps. We will be notifying the successful people shortly. We look forward to letting you all know soon.

HOME BIRTH AOTEAROA NATIONAL HUI 2024

With a lack of energy in the community to host an in person hui for 2024, we've decided to save funds and plant seeds by gathering online this year.

On Saturday 2nd November, trustees will meet in person for strategic planning, while on Sunday 3rd November we will hold an open zoom meeting. All regional reps are invited to attend for sharing and the AGM.

We are offering a \$100 grant for any regional groups to support them in gathering locally, getting some tasty kai and zooming in with us.

For those based in Auckland you are welcome to come along in person - we will be gathering at Nga Hau Birthing Centre in Auckland. More details will be emailed to regional group reps soon.

HUI AND CONFERENCE GOING FORWARD

Hui and conference can be a really beautiful way to showcase your region and homebirthing group to the rest of us and the community. A way for you to show everyone how special the way you do things can be. You find a theme that suits you, create some lovely relationships with other local groups and use it as a way to fundraise. The Trust is here to support you in your planning and we can't wait to hear from you with all your ideas.

We are looking for expressions of interest in hosts for hui 2025 and hui/conference in 2026.

Here is your chance to do things your way!

Please get in touch about hosting potential. We do try to alternate North and South Island, but don't hesitate to chat with us about your ideas.

ADVERTISING

This year we set out to try something new in order to get the word of homebirth out to more mainstream avenues. We have talked a bit about our decision to advertise with Natural Parent magazine. Feel free to let us you have seen any of our adverts.

If you know of any other worthwhile advertising opportunities that may fit HBA, we would love to hear from you.



REGIONAL FILM SCREENINGS

Thank you to all of the regions and volunteers who organized and took part in the film screenings of Born at Home on the International Day of the Midwife, May 5th. We did hear back from some of you as to how it went, we hope you made a little bit of money for your group and some beautiful connections.

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REGIONAL GROUPS

HBA acts as an umbrella for our numerous regional/local groups. We are here to offer support, advice, community. As such, we don't govern the regional groups as some may think. each group is able to work as best fits them.

GOLDEN BAY

FB page- Birth Wisdom- Empowered and Home Birth in Golden Bay
birthwisdomgb@gmail.com

We meet once a month in one another's homes. We share cups of tea, some kai and hold an informal circle for whomever needs/wants to share. This can sometimes be a birth story or just a check in about where we are at in our mātuatanga journeys. We have an awesome library of books that our members can borrow from, thanks to donations from our community. We have 2 birth pools and kits that can be hired. Our local midwives are incredibly supportive of homebirth, as it equates to about 50% of the births in our area. They often refer māmā to us for pool hire and connection with the group. We keep things really simple. Very little money or advertising involved, just word of mouth and a monthly email invite. It's small, special, strong and ticks along, providing connection and information to those that need/want it. A sustainable model for a small town homebirth community.

MANAWATU

FB page- Manawatu Home Birth Association FB group- Active Birth Manawatu
mhbanewsletter@hotmail.com

Manawatu Home Birth group is quietly starting back up with monthly community hangouts, see our FB page for details. Our pool and califont hire continues to be readily available, please send a message on FB or email us to get in touch.

COROMANDEL HAURAKI

FB page- Coromandel Hauraki Homebirth

We are a new group. We have a get together for Christmas/end of year on the 18th of December at 3.30pm, The Esplanade Tairua, opposite the Paku Lodge, BYO food and drink, everyone welcome. Beginning in the new year we plan to have monthly meet ups. We also have birth pools, a califont, a library of resources, tens machine and breast pumps for hire/use. Please send a message on Facebook to get in touch.

TAUPO

FB page- Taupo Home Birth
FB group- Taupo Home Birth Community
taupo.homebirth@gmail.com

Taupo home birth group is currently quiet but has birth pool hire available. We are hoping to build our community up in the new year. Please email or send a message on Facebook to get in touch.

SOUTH CANTERBURY

Private FB Group- South Canterbury Homebirth Support Group
We have a thriving and growing group that meets once a month, usually at Gleniti Baptist Church as it has a great space for us and they are very welcoming. We have 6-10 families represented at most meet ups and discuss all manners of topics. Our goal is to be encouraging and uplifting, and a safe space to discuss pregnancy, birth and motherhood. We warmly welcome you to come along. We have a library full of helpful books and great skills within the group including, babywearing, breastfeeding and birth doula support.

AUCKLAND

FB group- AHBA Closed Group- Auckland Home Birth Association
<https://ahba.org.nz>
hello@ahba.org.nz
Auckland Home Birth Association

We have recently changed our name from Auckland Home Birth Community, to Association and are currently in the process of becoming a registered charity. We still offer all the same services- information, support, pool hire and an online Facebook support group. In person meetings will recommence in 2023. Keep in touch via our email or social media for more info..

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[HTTPS://HOMEBIRTH.ORG.NZ](https://homebirth.org.nz)

WEST COAST

FB page- West Coast Home Birth
westcoasthomebirth@gmail.com

West Coast Homebirth group meet on the second Wednesday of each month at the Junction Cafe - this may change as summer approaches so follow our fb for updates. We are still revitalising the group but are growing. We currently have 1 birth pool for hire and our library of beautiful books to read.

FB page- Whare Manaaki o te Tai Poutini
Email - manager@wharemanaaki.com

Whare Manaaki in Mawhera (Greymouth) run Hapū Wānanga and also offer Mirimiri and Romiromi from local practitioners. Please contact via FB page or email.

WAIKATO

B- Waikato Home Birth Association
IG- @waikatohomebirth
www.whba.org.nz

Waikato Home Birth Association. We have multiple birth pools available for hire. We also have tens machines, and a double breast pump for hire. You can access these via our website or send us a message and we can help you. We provide pēpi packs to local whānau. Our most frequent sale via our website is our pool liners. Our committee aims to meet monthly but usually these ends up being bi-monthly. We are DESPERATELY looking for new members to bring fresh energy and ideas!

WELLINGTON

FB page- Wellington Home Birth Association
FB group- Wellington Home Birth Community
whbaweb@gmail.com

<http://wellingtonhomebirth.weebly.com/>

WHBA has been quiet since lockdown but are currently looking for a suitable time/date for their AGM so they are able to get things up and running again. Library books and dvd's are able to be borrowed. We also hire birth pools and califonts so please get in touch to organize.

TAURANGA

FB group- Trust Home Birth Tauranga
Tauranga Homebirth Association

Our most important focus has been to support our midwives who were abruptly mandated out of work and to support our women who were abruptly left without the care for homebirth from the midwife of their choice. We have held approximately 5 meetings in Tauranga at a midwives home to offer emotional support for those affected. In September we attended the Hui organized by Aku Huia Kaimanawa midwives and shared some of the Herstory of homebirth in Aotearoa. In October we attended the HBA hui and AGM. We have pledged money towards a Hui in planning for 2023 for all of the mandated midwives and consumer families to address this urgent matter.

We are working to revive our homebirthing community to get involved again by means of more regular meetings. We continue to hire out the birth pools and califonts. We have had to buy 3 new califonts to meet the increased demand. This is directly due to aspects of the covid19 response since early 2021. For hire enquiries- sharplintaylor@hotmail.com

SELWYN

FB page- Te Whare Tangata Home Birth Selwyn
IG- @homebirthselwyn

We have recently created this home birth group. A resource and connection point for birthing people planning a homebirth or wanting to support birthing families in Selwyn and neighbouring areas. The space has been created by midwife and Trustee Ali Woodhouse in 2022. We have birth pool and califont hire. We are looking forward to more activity in 2023.

CANTERBURY

FB page- Home Birth Canterbury
FB group- Home Birth Canterbury Community
IG- @homebirthcanterbury
www.canterburyhomebirth.org.nz/
info@canterburyhomebirth.org.nz
We meet once a month on the first Monday of the month. We have seen an increase in new women and birthing people attending our catch ups and it's been great to see their partners attend as well. We are organizing a weekend casual catch up in a bid to reach more people. We have 2 birth pools for hire and have recently purchased a califont to hire out also. We provide hampers to midwives who are members with us and currently have some amazing local companies who kindly donate their products for this. The hampers are then given to new māmā after their pepi enter the world in a homebirth setting.
HBC were lucky enough to attend HBA's conference and hui in October. We look forward to connecting with other committees and to keep providing this safe space to empower women and their births.

NELSON

Choice baby natural parenting and homebirth meetings are on every last Tuesday of the month. We meet at the lovely Kindred studio between 11.15-1pm. Each meeting we have a topic and/or guest speaker who is normally working within the perinatal field or with young families and whanau. Our aim is to build community and help mums to connect with each other whilst learning about the support network and local services available to enhance their motherhood journey. This is a free baby and toddler friendly event. Everyone is welcome.

OAMARU

FB- Oamaru Home Birth Support Group
Our small but growing group was established at the end of 2022. We have now had a couple of get togethers and have new members joining daily.

WANT TO SEE YOUR REGION HERE? SEND US AN EMAIL.



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DUNEDIN

Positive Birth Dunedin is a NFP group of four volunteers who dedicate their spare time to their passion for birth work in our community. PBD works with the vision of the former Dunedin Homebirth Association and a drive toward the inclusion of all birthing whanau and improving the outcomes for birth through a social justice lens. We are a student nurse, a midwife and two Birth Educators (one in training). Currently we have a beautiful new birth pool for hire! The very popular Birth Pool in a Box- be the first to give it a go! \$130 including accessories. The pool is priced as cheaply as possible in order to ensure equitable access for all whānau.

We also have a series of exciting classes for our March course. These classes are crucial education for Whanau who are hapu/pregnant. Our classes will be held at the Fred Hollows Room, The Valley project for 2 weekends: the 1st 2nd & 8th and 9th of June 9:30 -12:30 pm. The cost is \$130 and includes both weekends and your support partner. All of the content we will be covering will be aimed at supporting you to have an empowered birth, whether at home or navigating the hospital system. In our classes we will cover: • the hormones of labour • positional techniques • relaxation methods/pregnancy yoga session • caring for your emotional well-being and your body after birth • breastfeeding • self advocacy • navigating unexpected outcomes • birth pool set up • curating your birth space • how we can weigh up our options in pregnancy, birth & postpartum. The next set of classes will be in approx. 3 months, so the March set of classes is perfect for those whānau expecting their babies in the next 3-4 months. For more information on our classes, payment plans, services or general queries on how we can support your birthing journey please check out our Facebook page
Positive Birth Dunedin or email :
dunedinpositivebirth@gmail.com or text 0273766790.

For a full list of regions and their contact details please head to our website, search for regional groups.

WEBSITE-STORE

Our beautiful website now has a store feature. Here you will be able to see what we have on offer including magazines written by us, free resources, affirmation cards. You will also be able to donate a koha for us to be able to give back to our communities by way of regional group grants, birth pools etc. If you are a midwife and would like to bulk buy some of our magazines for your clients, please get in touch to see how we could help, as we would love to get these out and into the hands of our community and birthing women.

ANTENATAL EDUCATION SERIES

Last year we introduced to you our greatly anticipated homebirth focused antenatal series. This is a 4 part video series that anyone can access from anywhere and watch at their leisure. Our main focus of this was to make sure it was as accessible as possible so no-one was left out of vital education. We have the option for people to donate what they feel they can afford, if that feels good for them.

We hope this resource has proved valuable for your clients and friends.