

# HOME BIRTH AOTEAROA

Kia ora community,  
Spring is in the air and we are so happy because it means that hui is nearly upon us. Whilst hui this year will look different to how we usually gather, we will still get to see your faces, hear your stories and connect via zoom. For those hosting their own gathering within your regions, we would love to know what you are doing. Remember that HBA is offering each region a koha to help you gather, however that looks best for you. Make sure you get in touch before the end of October to organize this. Those in Auckland who are planning to join with us in person at the Nga Hau Mangere birthing centre, please make sure you let Alesha know. We can't wait to see you! As a Trust we have been busy behind the scenes, sowing seeds. We feel this year is a planning and organizing year which is exactly what we plan on doing this November 2nd, before hui. We have organized with a facilitator to get some strategic planning underway.

If you have any ideas, please let us know!

We have decided to put together some giveaways for December/Summer, end of year celebrations. If you have a business and would like to donate towards this in exchange for some publicity on our social media pages please get in touch asap. And those hoping to win some goodies, make sure you are following our pages! Our online store is very slow, which feels a shame, as all of our profits go directly back in to our regional groups. We have been trying to come up with cost effective and affordable ways to get more traffic there and more income flowing. We have just launched our new t-shirts to coincide with homebirth awareness week. They are for sale on our website now. We are hoping you love them as much as we do! Sorry for the current delay in this newsletter, with Lala recently having had her 6th baby, its been a slow process. How exciting to finally get it out to you all. If you would ever like to contribute something for the December issue, or social media/website content please get in touch!

We are grateful to have such a strong and flourishing community, to see our groups growing and homebirth being such a beautiful and accessible option for more and more women and whānau.

## REMINDER -

**Hui, AGM, Regional sharing November 3rd.**



**@HOMEBIRTHAOTEAROA**  
**ADMIN@HOMEBIRTH.ORG.NZ**  
**HTTPS://HOMEBIRTH.ORG.NZ**

Photo above of the Tauranga homebirth group who meet monthly at the Welcome Bay Community centre.

## HOME BIRTH AWARENESS WEEK OCTOBER 28- NOVEMBER 3

Please tag us in any events that your regional group has happening for homebirth awareness week so we can see and share.



# WELCOME TO THE HBA TRUST



## Cushla Richardson

Ko Mākeo toku maunga  
Ko Waiaua toku awa  
Ko Opōtiki ahau  
Kei Ngāmotu Kainga Inaianei  
Ko Richardson toku whanau  
Ko Athol toku matua  
Ko Patricia toku whaea  
Ko Cushla toku ingoa  
No reira tena koutou katoa

As Contract Administrator my role involves working alongside the inspiring and passionate wāhine who are currently serving on the trust, providing support and taking care of the day-to-day activities.

I'm a māmā to three tamariki – I have a curious 7 year old, expressive 5 year old, and a mischief 2 year old. My journey into motherhood has been empowering, with my first birth a water birth in a birthing centre, the second a positive induction in hospital, and my third an intense and powerful homebirth.

It feels very aligned for me to work alongside a charitable organisation dedicated to supporting women and whānau in birthing at home. I facilitate the monthly coffee groups for our local homebirthing group Active Birth Taranaki and enjoy offering my time and encouraging connection and community.

Alongside mothering and my mahi in this space I also offer my time to another charitable organisation close to my heart focused around mothers wellbeing, and run a humble online store earth + soul mama which aims to nurture mothers through the rites of passage that is pregnancy, birth, and postpartum.

I believe that every wāhine deserves to choose where they bring new life into the world. I advocate for informed consent and the importance of having access to a variety of choices. I hold a heartfelt belief that homebirth is a safe and honored option and that each path is beautiful and individual.

As a whānau, we find joy in spending time at the beach and in nature, embracing a full, busy and vibrant life in New Plymouth, under the beautiful maunga.



## Jessica Craik

Kia ora, ko Jessica tōku ingoa  
Hello, I am Jessica  
Nō Hertfordshire me Rānana,  
Ingarangi ōku tipuna  
My ancestors come from  
Hertfordshire and London,  
England  
Ke to noho au ki Whakatū  
I now live in Nelson  
He ākongā kaiwhakawhānau au  
I am a student midwife

I have been honoured to join the trust of Homebirth Aotearoa this year as an apprentice trustee. I have always held strong views that pregnancy and birth are normal life events and feel strongly that every hapū person should be given the space and respect to make their own informed decisions surrounding pregnancy and birth. My life currently looks like lots of study, placements and meetings, but in some of the gaps between this you'll find me wandering the beautiful Tahunanui shore with my partner, trying to find balance on my paddle board or enjoying a cosy coffee with friends.



## Renee Regal

Kia ora! I'm Renee Regal and I am a mum to my beautiful daughter, with another wee girl on the way! As a first time mum I was very overwhelmed with information about birth, how it should be and where to birth. Talking with my midwife, I chose to listen to my body, and trust it.

I had the most wonderful experience of home birth for my first and I'm planning on a home birth with my second. My midwife empowered me to be informed but make the choices I wanted to for myself and my baby. I had such a positive experience, and I take every opportunity to share this with others.

Being a part of the trust will enable me to learn and grow but also share my personal experience and give back to women on their birthing journey. I work full time for a government agency, engaging and supporting various communities across the central north island. I live on the Kapiti Coast with my family and when I'm not working, you'll catch me active at the beach, or at the gym, where I teach spin classes.



[@HOMEBIRTHAOTEAROA](mailto:ADMIN@HOMEBIRTH.ORG.NZ)  
[ADMIN@HOMEBIRTH.ORG.NZ](mailto:ADMIN@HOMEBIRTH.ORG.NZ)  
[HTTPS://HOMEBIRTH.ORG.NZ](https://homebirth.org.nz)

# THE HOME BIRTH OF POEM

Co-chair of HBAT, Lala, tells us about her recent homebirth after 3 caesareans.

It took two years to conceive and get to keep this pregnancy. It was a hard, lonely road that my husband, Dan and I chose to keep quiet about. We are the proud parents of 5 children, (now 6). After such a long gap (6.5yrs) we were worried about others judgements and comments. 2023 brought a lot of heartache, with four early pregnancy losses. We weren't sure how much we could endure with the toll it was taking on us, our marriage and our children. Then in December we fell pregnant, and this time, this baby was choosing to stay. I chose to do everything I could to try and keep the faith and to not let anxiety and worry take over. Easier said than done, and with the onset of Hyperemesis in the first trimester and then some support and guidance via our amazing GP, amazing therapist and amazing midwife, we found some medication and routines to help and things started to settle for me, I was able to function as a mama and wife again. Whilst we chose to have a dating scan, we opted out of a 20 week scan and any blood tests or GD tests etc. I truly felt deep down that everything was healthy and well, baby was good and strong and if that changed or I changed my mind, that we would re-evaluate. This was a lesson in absolute and deep trust for me which was hard after my last pregnancy ended in a prem baby, emergency caesarean and SCBU journey. I was thankful to have a husband who trusted me and my choices/decisions when it came to the pregnancy and the baby. This made it much easier to make some of the 'alternative' choices I was making. I also had a midwife who truly trusts in women, physiological birth and home birth.

Near the middle of my pregnancy I was also offered the opportunity to have support from a doula. I was thankful to Home Birth Aotearoa Trust because with the way they support women, homebirthing women and small businesses, I have held the social media contract for a number of years and this money alone made it at all possible for me to say yes to having a doula. I felt like I had the dream birth team. This didn't always stop the doubts I had though and it really took work to get through these. I am forever grateful for the strong birthy women in my life that I was able to lean upon during those hard times.



My obstetric history is extensive and always makes future births more complicated. This pregnancy, as with others, I tend to get a bit 'harrassed' by the local OB's. Due to having previous caesareans, I am classed as high risk, along with a few other factors and this pregnancy I turned 35, so I was also classed as advanced maternal age.

For context my birth history -  
2007, em c/s at 41+5 (unnecesary), 9lb 12oz.  
2010, em c/s at 36+5 (again unnecesary), 6lb 9oz.  
2012, hospital waterbirth at 41+1, 9lb 13oz.  
2015, homebirth at 40w, 11lb posterior and brow.  
2018, em c/s at 34w, prom, distress, 6lb 6oz.  
2024, homebirth at 41w, 9lb.

We moved house on Friday August 30th, nearly one week over my due date. It was a hard day and we were all exhausted. The one job I knew I needed to do was blow up the birth pool just incase. Thankfully I had lots of helpers!

That night I lay in bed close to tears at the thought of going in to labor. I spent time talking to my baby and asking them to wait until the morning, and fell in to a deep sleep. Next morning I awoke thankful for a little bit more time with this baby in my belly. We were all so busy Saturday, some of us at the old house cleaning and some of us and the kids at the new house trying to get it in a state of being usable. My parents had made it up to help us all the way from Taranaki (6ish hours away). Such a Godsend with being so pregnant.

By 3pm I decided that I should have a rest, so after eating I went to have a lie down. Around 3.15ish, I started feeling some tightenings. They definatley weren't stopping and each one was stronger and longer than the last.

From the get go these tightenings/contractions were every 2-3 minutes and each one was longer. I started timing them to see how long they were and was surprised when they were 40-50seconds each. I was doing my best to potter in my room, trying my best to get the baby things and postpartum things for me out. Before long I called my husband up to be with me as I was craving his presence and support. During contractions with him standing and I would hang from him and leaning down to my left felt best. We decided to try the tens machine and it was amazing! The 'boost' button on there was truly magnificent!

Things, very quickly, were getting intense and I asked Dan to call our doula, Nell and our midwife, Raigan. I was feeling ready to have them with me and knew that their commute time was 20-30mins, maybe longer with bad traffic. I didn't notice them pop in they were so quiet and unobtrusive. A few times we listened to baby and they were happy in there. During contractions Dan said he could feel the baby moving.

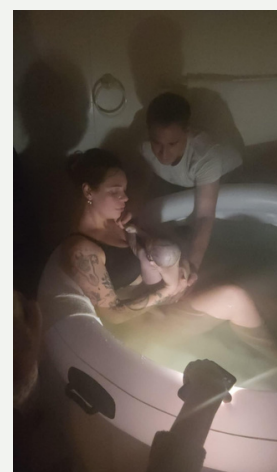
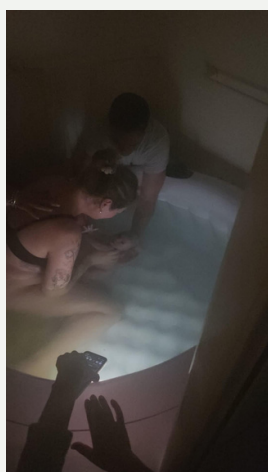
My children and parents were downstairs, preparing dinner and playing, between things I could hear them. My mum helping my girls cook.

I remember starting to say things like I wished my husband could have a turn etc, and Nell suggested we head down to the pool. The kids managed to set up the pool in our new bathroom downstairs, it squeezed in perfectly and they had already got it full and ready to go. Around 7ish-pm we made our way down the stairs with a good contraction hitting as I got to the bottom. In the pool I was leaning over the side resting and during a pain Dan and Nell would put good pressure on the middle of my back.

My children stood off and on, in the doorway watching and encouraging me. My 16year old son stood the entire labor with a camera, filming and taking photos.



I have always pushed for long times with my previous babies. This time I could feel my body doing something but couldn't understand what. I didn't have an urge to push and if I tried to, it felt.. strange. (7 weeks since the birth I am still processing and trying to understand this.) The intensity of my contractions were overwhelming here, unlike what I had experienced before. I asked for help numerous times and was met with, 'we are here'. Dan, Nell, Raigan and myself - quite the team. I felt the urge that I needed to change position, I needed leverage. I got up on my knees and hung off Dan, knees far apart and started pushing down. Now I could feel my baby just inside me. Despite the contraction stopping, the baby wasn't stopping and I could feel them moving fast down. In desperation I called "Help, Help" and Raigan answered "I'm here what do you need?", I replied "Hold it". Getting words out let alone full sentences at this point was too hard. Raigan had one hand on my lower back and the other near mine on my vulva, but not really. I held my babies head with my right hand and even through the pain I was feeling I remember thinking how little her head felt compared to my others. Raigan said, "Get your baby when you are ready."





*I looked up to Dan and kissed him. Taking a moment to just take a breath. Very slowly I sat back, my baby still half inside me. I reached down and took them under the arms, slowly, slowly lifting my baby from within me. 20 seconds looking at them, under the water, as they, with their eyes open, reached up with their arms.*

I pulled my baby to my chest, in awe of what we had done together. No crying but looking around. I blew on their little face a few times to help bring them earthside. I could hear my children in the doorway and my mum, tears and aww's. They took turns coming closer to see the baby. After a little while I decided to look and see what we had... a beautiful little girl. Our 5th daughter. How special. I knew her name, Poem. We waited a long time for you Poem. I didn't stay long in the pool, I decided to get out. I stood and tried a few pushes to see if my placenta was ready to come. I felt like I needed to sit, so was helped from the pool with a plan to walk to the lounge but chose to sit on the floor. I could see that I was loosing blood, was I feeling a bit woozy from the heat of the water, blood loss or just from having a baby? As I sat I could feel warm blood and see it pooling further and further around me.

I worked hard to birth my placenta, pulling slightly on my cord, still attached to my daughter. I asked Raigan how she felt about my bleeding and we discussed how I felt. I made the decision to choose intervention by way of homeopathics and then synthetic oxytocin.

I felt that my goal was vaginal birth, it was an absolute bonus that I got a homebirth and I didn't want to risk potentially transferring. A decision I still feel was right for me.

We moved to the lounge where we got settled as a family. Looking at and getting to know Poem. Watching her learning about the world. She was already suckling from me. The children were in awe. My dad and son began sorting out the pool, Nell sorted out the blood. Raigan watched over us. I felt so supported and safe.

Poem is now 7 weeks old and she has just slotted in to our family so beautifully. She is happy and content, enjoying so much love and snuggles from all of us all the time. I am beyond grateful for breastfeeding (even when it is so so hard), for co-sleeping and for babywearing. Our new home was christened by our family in the most perfect way and not only do I get to live and see the space where Poem was born every day, I am so happy to know that I have given all of my children the absolute gift of witnessing how natural and normal birth can be.



## Poem Heavenly, 31st August 2024, 9lb

I am incredibly grateful to have been able to have a homebirth lmc fully support me and my family's choices. I am based in the Bay of Plenty and my midwife is on findyourmidwife, Raigan Hodgson.

My doula, Nell Hurst is also based in the Bay of Plenty. You can find her on instagram - @nurturing\_mamas22

Both of these amazing women are doing incredible things in the world of homebirth and I am so grateful to not only know them, but to have had them involved in such a special journey.

Also, what a ride FER (fetal ejection reflex) is! We need to talk about this more! Maybe a topic for the next newsletter?! Lala.



**@HOMEBIRTHAOTEAROA**  
**ADMIN@HOMEBIRTH.ORG.NZ**  
**HTTPS://HOMEBIRTH.ORG.NZ**

# 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.

## WEST COAST

### 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..

## WAIKATO

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.

## WELLINGTON

B- Waikato Home Birth Association  
IG- @waikatohomebirth  
[www.whba.org.nz](http://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.

**@HOMEBIRTHAOTEAROA**  
**ADMIN@HOMEBIRTH.ORG.NZ**  
**HTTPS://HOMEBIRTH.ORG.NZ**

## 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.

## 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 whānau 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 Whānau 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.

## 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.

**@HOMEBIRTHAOTEAROA**  
**ADMIN@HOMEBIRTH.ORG.NZ**  
**HTTPS://HOMEBIRTH.ORG.NZ**

## 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 whānau. 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.

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

## REGIONAL GRANTS

Recently HBA put out the call for our September round of regional grants. We are pleased to say that the following grants were accepted:

**Waikato.** They will purchase a new TENS unit and breast pump.

**West Coast.** To purchase a califont for the birth pool hire.

**Auckland.** For a banner/flag to use at events.

**Canterbury.** To host some day events to ensure more women and families can attend their gatherings.

**The next round will be in March 2025.**

We would love some updated info on your regions please.

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



Photo above of the Queenstown and Central Lakes Homebirth support group at their September gathering.