

Hon Carmel Sepuloni
Minister for ACC
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

Tēnā koe Minister,

With your extensive knowledge of supporting our people in difficult times, I hope you receive this letter with great compassion and understanding.

As you are no doubt aware, becoming a new parent is one of the most wonderful, but also most challenging times in many people's lives. While whānau and friends often gather around to provide kai and help where they can, one of the more hidden needs of new parents is help coping with the suffering and pain of traumatic births and birth injuries.

Many birth parents don't speak about their injuries caused during childbirth. Some are severe, such as vaginal prolapse or a broken tailbone. Others are smaller but more common, such as perineal tears which affects around 85% of people who give birth vaginally. No matter the injury, it is an unintended consequence of childbirth and ignoring these injuries can cause further harm.

Families and babies suffer when the birth parent is hurt. It impacts on their ability to lift or bond with their new baby and can add another layer of stress in a time when our parents are at their most vulnerable. Looking after our birth parents is one of the most important things we can do to look after our babies.

Minister Sepuloni, I'm writing to you today because right now, most injuries caused during childbirth aren't covered by ACC, and data from ACC shows us that over the past few years it has become harder to get birth injuries covered. The suffering and pain of traumatic births and birth injuries are unintended consequences of childbirth and not receiving treatment can cause our birth parents to suffer as they nurture our young babies.

On a whole, women receive far less compensation from ACC annually than men - almost a billion dollars less per year [1]. For wāhine Māori, the difference in compensation is even wider, as Māori women tend to have more injuries than Pākehā and are less likely to be referred for an ACC claim by a healthcare professional. It is completely inequitable that ACC cover is readily available for an ACL tear on the rugby field but near impossible to get for a perineal tear after giving birth.

I ask that you prioritise making changes so all ACC can cover ALL pain and suffering caused by traumatic births and birth injuries.

Our new parents are tasked with one of the most challenging and important jobs out there - nurturing our babies. They deserve support for the unintended injuries caused while bringing a baby into the world.

I hope to see action from you on this matter soon.

Ngā mihi nui,

Jan Logie
Green MP
Spokesperson for ACC

Supported by Dr Naomi Simmonds, Dr Michelle Wise, Dr Dawn Duncan and the following organisations:



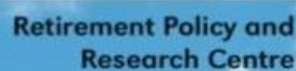
Advocating
for Pelvic
Health
Empowerment and
Rehabilitation
for Mothers



Māori Women's Welfare League



National Council of Women New Zealand



[1] https://www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/WQ_12974_2021/0057447583b00b704aa573e4c7e3945422a60206