

**CHILDREN'S
RIGHTS
ALLIANCE** AOTEAROA
NEW ZEALAND

Annual Report
2022/23

27 September 2023

Karakia

*Kia tau ngā manaakitanga a te mea ngaro ki runga ki tēnā, ki tēnā
o tātou*

*Kia mahea te hua mākihikihi kia toi te kupu, toi te mana, toi te
aroha, toi te reo Māori kia tūturu*

Ka whakamaua kia tīna, tīna

Haumi e hui e, tāiki e.

*Let the strength and life force of our ancestors be with each and
every one of us*

*Freeing our path from obstruction so that our words, spiritual
power, love and language are upheld*

Permanently fixed, established and understood

Forward together.

The Children's Rights Alliance Aotearoa New Zealand is a civil society coalition committed to protecting and promoting children's rights in Aotearoa New Zealand. Our work builds on the work of many who have come before us.

Our vision is an Aotearoa that actively respects and realises the rights of all children.

Dedication

Our 2022/23 Annual Report is dedicated to the memory of Mereana Ruri, our treasured friend and colleague, and long-standing former member of the Alliance (and formerly Action for Children & Youth Aotearoa) Steering Committee. Mereana died unexpectedly on 15 April 2023, at age 50.

We cherish Mereana's memory; she was a deeply dedicated and wise advocate of children's rights, who shared her experience and maatauranga generously.

A role model for many, including through her long service in the public sector, the Children's Rights Alliance Aotearoa New Zealand has been enriched through Mereana's many contributions over many years. More importantly, the tamariki of Aotearoa New Zealand have benefitted from Mereana's powerful advocacy and mahi on their behalf, both in Aotearoa and abroad, while representing the Alliance at the United Nations.

Mereana now shines amongst the whetū; the Alliance will continue to be guided by her example.

May she shine and soar for always.

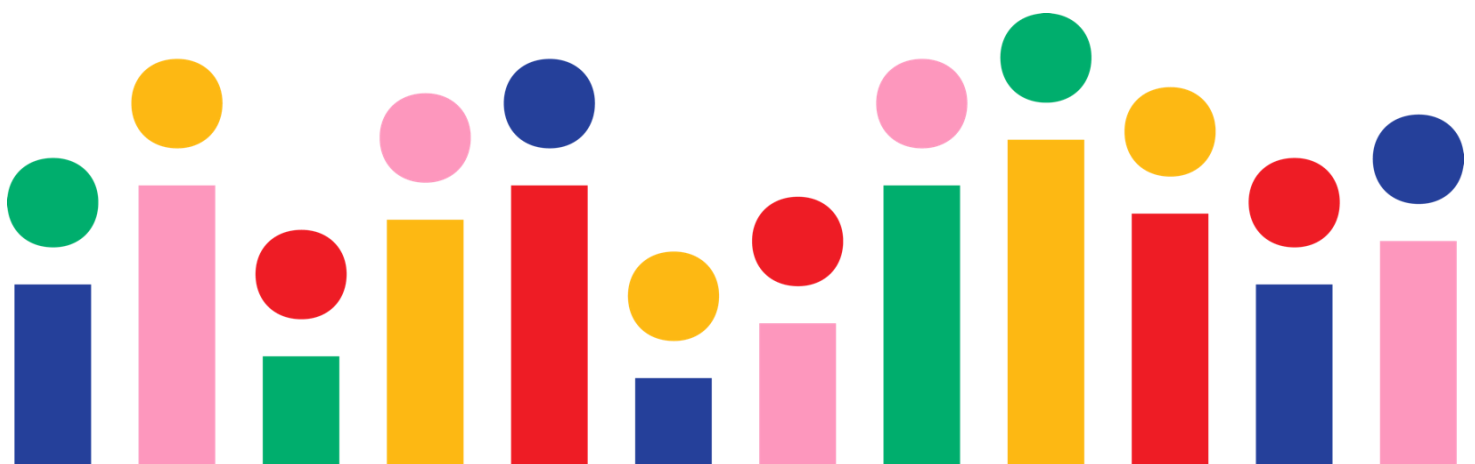
Moe mai rā, e hoa ataahua, Mereana. We will always remember you with aroha and the deepest of affection.

Arohanui ki tō whānau tonu.

Children’s Rights Alliance Aotearoa New Zealand Annual Report 2022-2023

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Chairperson's report

E ngā iwi, e ngā waka, e ngā mana, e ngā reo, e ngā hau e wha,
Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa.

Ngā mihi maioha ki te whānau o te kaupapa o te mana o ngā tamariki o Aotearoa katoa.

This past year has been a momentous one for the Children's Rights Alliance Aotearoa New Zealand (the Alliance), as it saw us successfully complete another cycle of children's rights reporting to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, fulfilling our core role to advance, promote and report on children's rights in Aotearoa New Zealand under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Our involvement in this sixth reporting cycle under the Children's Convention saw the Alliance over the past year back up its comprehensive written reporting to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child with direct advocacy engagement through the pre-session with the Committee in September 2022, facilitating an Aotearoa New Zealand children's hui with the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child to inform its Review of New Zealand under the Convention, and representing Aotearoa New Zealand civil society at the Review of New Zealand at the Committee session in January 2023 at the UN's human rights headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.

This reporting and advocacy resulted in a strong set of Concluding Observations from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. This outcome, and the Alliance's efforts to advocate, report and hold the New Zealand Government accountable through the children's rights review process under the Children's Convention would not have been possible without the collaborative, collective effort of Alliance members and friends. We are proud of the mahi achieved by such a committed group of organisations and individuals throughout Aotearoa New Zealand, which has included children's rights organisations, children's social service organisations, youth-led advocacy organisations, kaupapa and Iwi Māori organisations, academic organisations and scholars, human rights and justice organisations.

The process to reach the outcome of the Concluding Observations issued in February 2023 has been long, spanning over multiple years, and we are grateful to everyone who has persevered on this collective journey with us – ngā mihi nui ki a koutou katoa mō tō mahi ki te whakakaha te kaupapa o te mana o ngā tamariki o Aotearoa katoa. I particularly acknowledge the incredible children and rangatahi who have directly contributed to this process. You are advocates for and defenders of your own human rights and those of your fellow children and rangatahi, a significant contribution that has made a difference to shaping the Concluding Observations, and which will continue to have impact for children in Aotearoa New Zealand. You can read more details about our reporting and advocacy at the UN, the Concluding Observations and what comes next, at pages 15-19 of this Annual Report.

I also extend our gratitude to JR McKenzie Trust for the decision to fund the Alliance over the past five years; your funding and support has made our mahi and reporting on children's rights possible. Ngā mihi nunui ki te whānau o JR McKenzie for the mahi you do, and the awhi you have shown the Alliance.

We have also been incredibly supported by the highly professional and dedicated work of the team at Child Rights Connect, the international Geneva-based NGO that supports the realisation of children's rights through the UN human rights system. Special thanks in particular to Fanny Chappuis and Ilaria Paolazzi for all the practical support provided and for the warm welcome in Geneva! The Alliance is proud to have officially re-joined as a member of Child Rights Connect in 2023, making us a member of a global network of over 100 non-profit regional and international organisations working on the kaupapa of children's rights.

Alongside this big mahi, the past year has been one of change for our organisation, owing to us saying Mā te wā to some of our key Children's Rights Alliance Aotearoa New Zealand people.

We farewelled our wonderful Executive Director, Andy Jamison, who took up the role of Manager, Advocacy and Rights at the Office of the Children's Commissioner in early 2023 (now Mana Mokopuna, Children and Young People's Commission). Andy was the driving force behind all of the Alliance's children's rights reporting mahi, and it was fitting that her last mahi for the Alliance was as part of the Alliance's delegation to the UN in January.

We also farewelled our long-serving Alliance Steering Committee Chairperson, Jennifer Braithwaite, who has led our Steering Committee through the reporting cycle and been generous with her time and expertise over many years.

The final Steering Committee to depart this year was Heidi Coetzee, who has added value through the ever-important Treasurer role, serving in this capacity for a number of years to tautoko the Alliance kaupapa. We wish Jen, Andy and Heidi so well for the future, knowing that our paths will continue to cross and present new opportunities for collaboration on the kaupapa of children's rights again down the track!

I extend my heartfelt thanks to all my fellow Steering Committee members, who have volunteered many hours of their time, as well as their energy and expertise and experience, over the course of this past year. You can read more about them at pages 11-14 of this Report. I extend an extra big thanks to our hugely dedicated Steering Committee Secretary, Jacqui Southey, who has again worked tirelessly in this essential Alliance role over the past year, to ensure our Steering Committee runs smoothly and our members are well-served.

I also extend my sincere thanks to Karen Davis of Common Cents Accounting, who we have been fortunate to have working with us for a number of years. Thank you, Karen, for your service to the Alliance, it is so much appreciated.

As we look ahead, more changes are on the horizon for the Children's Rights Alliance Aotearoa New Zealand. Personally, I will greatly miss working as part of the Alliance's Steering Committee, a place where I have had the privilege of working alongside an incredible rōpū of people for many years. However, I am confident that due to the steadfast efforts of Aotearoa New Zealand's amazing children's rights advocates, friends, supporters, and our generous funders over the years that have led us to this point, the Alliance will continue to go from

strength to strength in its important work. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child's latest Concluding Observations strongly reflect the Alliance's collective reporting and advocacy, and the opportunity is collectively ahead now to advocate strongly for their implementation, so that all children in Aotearoa New Zealand can experience all their rights, in all circumstances.

Kia kaha te mahi tonu, kia mahi tahi – let's continue to keep this mahi strong, together.

Ngā manaakitanga



Dr Claire Achmad

Chairperson



Treasurer's report

The report is for **the period ending 30 June 2023**. A copy of the Children's Rights Alliance Aotearoa New Zealand (the Alliance) financial report is available to members at the AGM and will also be available on the Alliance's website.

Income

The Alliance remains most appreciative of the generous 5-year grant from the JR McKenzie Trust and our budget for the period 2017-2023 has been structured accordingly.

An amount of **\$570** (2022: \$690; 2021: \$210) was generated from donations and memberships paid to the Alliance by organisation and individual members.

Total income for the year ending 30 June 2023 amounted to **\$570** (2022: \$845; 2021: \$61,260) **solely generated from donations and membership fees**.

The Alliance would like to acknowledge and thank **every volunteer** for their input into the governance and work programme of the organisation. Your support remains a huge and highly important resource to the Alliance.

Expenditure

Total **expenditure** for the year ending 30 June 2023 amounted to **\$59,385** (2022: \$37,691; 2021: \$50,678).

Projects and strategy

Total expenditure of \$59,385 (2022: \$35,920; 2021: \$44,340) was comprised of:

- Leading the coordination of the CRC Pre-session of civil society participants and national human rights instruments, including the Human Rights Commission and Office of the Children's Commissioner.
- Presenting the 6th consolidated non-government, civil society report to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child.
- Sending an Alliance delegation to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child 92nd Session, Geneva, January 2023.
- Holding three online presentations reporting back on the delegation's trip to Geneva to observe New Zealand's hearing at the CRC during the 92nd session and advocacy that influenced the 6th set of Concluding Observations to New Zealand.
- Re-establishing our Child Rights Connect membership.

- Continuing our work giving effect to our commitments to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and children's participation.
- Actively contributing to ongoing monitoring of Aotearoa New Zealand's progress on children's rights via the Children's Convention Monitoring Group.
- Contributing to consultation led by MSD on the implementation of OP3.

Meetings

- **2023: \$nil** (2022: \$nil; 2021 \$4,461) for steering committee meetings – only one meeting was held in person this year (a Steering Committee Planning Hui on 21 June 2023). The rest of the fortnightly meetings were held online.
- **2023 AGM: \$nil** (2022 AGM: \$345; 2021 AGM: no costs were incurred as the 2023 AGM was again held online.

Operating expenses

- **2023 \$932** (2022: 1,161; 2021: \$1,375). \$670 for Accounting services and package, bank fees (\$40) and Xero subscription (\$223);
- **2023 \$nil** (2022: \$174; 2021: \$320) for the CRAANZ website hosting as this was supported by Ocean Design Group.

Current Financial Position

This year the Children's Rights Alliance is reporting a **deficit** of **\$59,682** and **retained earnings** of **\$36,670**.

The retained earnings comprise cash funds of **\$36,670** held in the ASB account. The retained earnings will be utilised for continued advocacy for children's rights implementation in Aotearoa, including through action on the recommendations from the Concluding Observations and Recommendations of the UN Committee (6 February 2023). We will also continue our work to strengthen the organisation and build our membership to ensure that the Alliance is well placed to continue our work to monitor, report on, and advocate for children's rights throughout the next children's rights reporting cycle (the 7th), which began in January 2023 (noting this will now be an 8-year reporting cycle with a 4-year mid-term review of progress).

I move that **Children's Rights Alliance Aotearoa New Zealand's Financial report and Tier 4 Performance Report** for the year ended 30 June 2023 be formally adopted.



Jacqui Southey, Acting Treasurer

About us – our Strategic Framework

Our Strategic Framework outlines the Alliance’s purpose, vision values and our strategic focus and priorities. You can see a summary of this below.



Strategic Framework 2021-2023 - Executive Summary

Purpose	We work as an Alliance to advance, promote and report on children’s rights, so that all children in Aotearoa actively experience all their rights, in all circumstances.
What we want to see	An Aotearoa that actively respects and realises the rights of all children.
How we will get there	<p>Together, we work to make a difference for children by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing understanding about children’s rights • Working to put children’s rights into practice • Reporting on progress on children’s rights • Working so all children can actively participate in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their own lives • the things that matter to them. <p>All rights. All children. All circumstances.</p>
Values	<p>Our values guide the work we do and the ways we work together. They are:</p> <p>Aroha Te ira tangata Tika Pono Whanaungatanga Manaakitanga</p>
Strategic Objectives 2021- 2023	<p>The current strategic objectives of the Children’s Rights Alliance are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the Children’s Convention reporting cycle to advance and protect children’s rights in Aotearoa. • Build our profile and capacity through our online presence, membership and relationships with allies. • Strengthen our organisational infrastructure.
Priority for 2021-2022	To develop and present the 6th consolidated non-government, civil society report to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (due January 2022) and to advocate for action on the Committee’s recommendations.



Our team

The Children's Rights Alliance is run by a volunteer Steering Committee which is elected at our AGM and meets on-line fortnightly during the year, with occasional kanohi ki te kanohi meetings. The Steering Committee is comprised of at least 7 people with a mix of expertise on a range of children's issues: justice, law, education, disability, health, child participation, social services and more. Members of the Steering Committee are well connected in the children's sector and can draw on a diverse range of experiences and networks throughout Aotearoa New Zealand and internationally.

From time to time, the Steering Committee co-opts new members to access a particular sector or to fill a knowledge gap. There is also capacity to establish sub-committees, working groups and branches to further the Alliance's aims and objectives.

Dr Claire Achmad, Chairperson

Dr Claire Achmad has served on the Steering Committee of the Children's Rights Alliance Aotearoa New Zealand since 2018, and held the Deputy Chair role since 2019, assuming the Chairperson role during the 2022/23 year. She is an international children's rights law and policy expert and child rights advocate. Claire was previously Chief Executive Officer of Social Service Providers Te Pai Ora o Aotearoa, and is committed to advancing and protecting the rights of children and tamariki in Aotearoa and globally. Claire holds a PhD in international children's rights law from the Child Law Department, Leiden University, and continues to hold a guest lectureship there. Claire represents the Alliance on the Children's Convention Monitoring Group, a role she has played for the Alliance since 2018. She lives in Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington and grew up amongst kauri and kereru in the Waitākere Ranges of Tamaki Makaurau. Claire will depart the Alliance at the 2023 AGM, and from 01 November 2023 takes up her appointment as Chief Children's Commissioner and Chair of Mana Mokopuna, The Children and Young People's Commission.



Jacqui Southey, Secretary

Jacqui Southey is the Child Rights Advocacy, Strategy and Research Director at Save the Children New Zealand. She is fully committed to a positive and nurturing world for children, today and every day into the future. Her focus is systemic and cultural change that will see children's rights understood, respected and upheld for all children in our everyday lives.



Jacqui has a background in children's rights – with a particular interest in children's participation and empowering children's agency, child rights education, speaking up with and for children on issues important to children now and in the future, and teaching. Jacqui holds a Master of Education focusing on child engagement, children's social and emotional development, and has authored a significant research report on the positive discipline practices of parents of children under five years of age.

Prior to beginning her role at Save the Children, Jacqui led the child rights education and participation programme at UNICEF New Zealand for seven years and was a primary school teacher for ten years before her role at UNICEF. Jacqui lives in the Wairarapa, is mother to three adult children, and four beautiful grandchildren.

Dr John Waldon - Tūhoe (Ngāti Koura, Te Urewera), Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Pōrou

Dr John Waldon has long-term interest in the rights and well-being of children. Born and educated in Whakatāne, John has whānau connections with Papakainga and Te Tōtara marae at Ruātoki, as well as Te Tira Hou in Auckland.

John has held the Tamariki Māori portfolio on the Steering Committee for many years and attended the 2003 session of the United Nations Committee for the Rights of the Child and the 2010 pre-session on behalf of the Alliance (then known as ACYA).

John holds a Bachelor of Science degree (Waikato), a Master of Public Health (Otago) and a Doctor of Philosophy (Massey). He has worked with the Hepatitis Research Unit at Whakatāne, where his whānau mandate was to carry out this research to protect children from hepatitis B, and with Te Pūmanawa Hauora at Massey University. John is currently a Restorative Justice Facilitator, contract researcher and has an appointment as a conjoint lecturer at the University of Sydney. He is also a Board member of the Midcentral District Health Board. John has presented papers on Māori health and wellbeing internationally, is a life member of the Cancer Society and has served on the boards of the Public Health Association, the NZ Drug Foundation and currently Chair and President of the Manawatū Centre of the Cancer Society.



Nicola Taylor

Professor Nicola Taylor is Director of the Children's Issues Centre in the Faculty of Law at the University of Otago. She also holds the Alexander McMillan Chair in Childhood Studies. She has qualifications in both law and social work, a PhD, and has been admitted as a Barrister and Solicitor of the High Court of New Zealand. Nicola is a leading socio-legal researcher and has undertaken many studies with children, parents and professionals on family law, cross-border and children's rights issues. She was the founding Treasurer of ACYA and has been involved with ACYA and the Children's Rights Alliance for many years.



Sarah Te One

Sarah Te One is the Senior Researcher at CORE Education | Tātāi Aho Rau. She has a background in early years education where she has been a lecturer, professional development facilitator and researcher in several organisations including the Office of the Children's Commissioner. In her roles in tertiary education, Sarah used the Children's Convention as a platform for discussing current issues facing children and introducing the role of advocates in education. Sarah's PhD investigated perceptions of children's rights in early learning services, and she continues to promote a child rights framework in her current research projects, not all of which are in education. Sarah has been a long-standing member of the Alliance and contributed thematic papers and sections on education to the main reports to the UN Committee. She was the Chair of AYCA during the 2015/2016 reporting period. Sarah remains an interested and committed advocate for all children's rights.



Belinda Tuari-Toma

He uri ahau no Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Tūwharetoa me Te whenua Moemoea hoki.

Belinda is an advocate for tamariki and rangatahi oranga, hauora Māori whānau, hapū policy, and kaitiaki of rongoā Māori mātauranga. Her contributions include as kaiarahi for Tū Kotahi Māori Asthma and Research Trust Keriana Olsen Kokiri Marae, support advisor for New Zealand Breastfeeding Alliance and rongoā Māori director for Te Pūtoiora Trust. Belinda's previous mahi has included working as a policy analyst focusing on health advice for nurses with the New Zealand Nurses Organisation, as a policy analyst at Te Puni Kōkiri, and as the Māori tamariki advocate and policy advisor for UNICEF New Zealand.



Natania Katene

Ko Tainui te Waka

Ko Whitiorea te Maunga

Ko Raukawakawa te Moana

Ko Takapuwahia te Marae

Ko Ngāti Toa Rangatira te Iwi me Kahunhungu ki Wairoa, Ngaruahine ki Taranaki, Tuwharetoa ki Taupo-nui-a-tia

Ko Natania Katena toku ingoa

Kei noho au ki Tāmaki Makaurau.



Natania has had an exciting career so far supporting iwi, whānau and communities through health, education and social services across Aotearoa. She is passionate about ensuring our rangatahi have a voice in decisions that impact them, their whānau, their community and their future. Natania is also mindful that at times the voice of tamariki and rangatahi is missing and they need people who can advocate on their behalf, and this is what has drawn her to the kaupapa of the Children's Rights Alliance. Natania enjoys to help in whatever capacity the Steering Committee needs.

Natania is a Māmā to her beautiful daughter, and to her whānau is Aunty Nat, a.k.a Nanny McPhee. She currently resides in Tāmaki Makaurau.



Reporting on Children's Rights

Our 2022 reporting to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

As outlined in last year's annual report, the Alliance's 2022 Children's Rights Report was provided to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in August 2022. Our 6th alternative children's rights report from the Alliance set out, from an Aotearoa New Zealand civil society point of view, what is going well for children in our country, and where we believe changes are needed to advance and protect their rights.

Alongside our comprehensive alternative report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Alliance invested significant mahi into coordinating and supporting the development of a range of thematic reports from a variety of Aotearoa New Zealand organisations working in spaces connected to, and kaupapa of relevance to children's rights. Alongside the Alliance report, these thematic reports ensured that the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child was well-informed about the children's rights situation in Aotearoa New Zealand, and taken together, the reports provide a wealth of information to underpin continued children's rights advocacy in our country.

In September 2022, as part of the reporting cycle, the Alliance coordinated an online pre-session meeting between Aotearoa New Zealand civil society organisations and the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. This was well attended by a range of civil society organisations, including many Alliance members and organisations that had contributed to the Alliance report and to the thematic reports to the Committee, as well as the Children's Commissioner and the Human Rights Commission. The pre-session enabled the Committee on the Rights of the Child taskforce assigned to the New Zealand Review to engage in a dialogue with Aotearoa civil society representatives, to inform its thinking prior to the Review of the State in January 2023.

In September 2022 the Alliance also coordinated a range of children's organisations and groups to meet in a dedicated, children-only meeting with the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. This online meeting was a great chance for a range of children from Aotearoa New Zealand to meet directly with the members of the Committee taskforce and share their experiences and views. Feedback from the children and rangatahi involved in this process and meeting reported that it was a positive opportunity to actively participate in the advancement of their rights under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and bring forward the specific issues, challenges and solutions they face and want to see the Government taking action on under the Convention.

Rounding out our reporting mahi in 2022, the Alliance submitted supplementary written information to the UN Committee in December 2022, which updated the Committee on developments in children's rights in Aotearoa New Zealand since the pre-session took place in September 2022.

The Alliance's 2022 Report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, together with the range of thematic reports and the supplementary information provided to the Committee can be found [here](#).

Advocating at the United Nations in January 2023

In January 2023 a Children's Rights Alliance Aotearoa New Zealand delegation attended the 92nd Session of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child at UN Geneva Headquarters, Palais Wilson, Geneva, Switzerland. The delegation was made up of Andrea Jamison, Jacqui Southey and Dr Claire Achmad.

The Alliance delegation attended and observed the Review in full, and also participated in a civil society meeting with the members of the Committee taskforce leading the Review of New Zealand. Being present in Geneva enabled the Alliance to have a direct advocacy

and lobbying presence during and around the Review of New Zealand, build relationships with the Committee (including through a number of one-to-one meetings with Committee members who were very generous with their time) and have further influence into the final Concluding Observations, on behalf of civil society. While in Geneva, the delegation was wonderfully supported by the Alliance whānau back home, benefitting from the knowledge able to be shared to support the advocacy process across the different time zones.



Jacqui, Andy and Claire representing the Alliance at the UN in Geneva.

The Review of New Zealand at the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child was livestreamed on UN TV and the Day One recording is available [here](#), and the Day Two recording is available [here](#). While in Geneva the Alliance delegation also was able to strengthen relationships with the Children’s Commissioner and Human Rights Commission, both of which were represented, and with the New Zealand Government delegation, made up of officials from Oranga Tamariki, Manatū Hauora, the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Development, and Te Puni Kōkiri. Alongside this, the Alliance delegation had the chance to renew friendships with long-standing friends to the Alliance who were in attendance at the Review of New Zealand, Justice Vui Clarence Nelson of Samoa, a member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and Justice of the Supreme Court of Samoa, and Bruce Adamson, Scottish Children and Young People’s Commissioner, who have both previously participated in Alliance events in Aotearoa New Zealand in 2018.

While in Geneva, the Alliance delegation also actively built relationships in the intergovernmental institutions and international NGO spaces, through meetings with the following people and organisations, which provided further opportunities to raise awareness of the children’s rights situation in Aotearoa New Zealand and the particular challenges and needs at this moment in time:

- The UN Special Rapporteur on the Sale and Sexual Exploitation of Children, Ms. Mama Fatimah Singhateh, and her colleagues at the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights;
- The Co-Chair of the Working Group on the General Comment on Children’s Rights and the Environment, Constanza Martinez (also Climate and Child Rights Advisor, Save the Children International);
- Colleagues at [Child Rights Connect](#), our membership-based organisation based in Geneva, who were instrumental in supporting the Alliance through the reporting process;

- Children’s Rights Alliance Ireland colleagues, who were attending the Review of Ireland at the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in the same week as New Zealand’s Review.

In addition to the above, the Alliance delegation also participated together with the Children’s Commissioner, Human Rights Commission and New Zealand Government delegation in a Roundtable at the New Zealand Permanent Mission to the UN in Geneva, which provided a chance to meet with a range of international children’s rights organisations and share briefings on current work.



Top left to right: The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in session reviewing New Zealand; whole group photo with the UN Committee; Palais Wilson; Claire, Andy and Jacqui outside Palais Wilson; Claire and Chappie Te Kani, Te Tumu Whakarae Oranga Tamariki and Head of New Zealand Government delegation; with friends from around the world at the Review at the United Nations; with Aotearoa friends and Professor Anne Skelton.



The Concluding Observations issued in February 2023

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child issued its Concluding Observations on New Zealand in February 2023. The Concluding Observations can be read in full [here](#).

The Alliance is of the view that this is a strong set of Concluding Observations, which in many respects reflects the issues and views set out in the Alliance's report to the Committee. Priority issues have been picked up and given prominence, with the Committee emphasising the indivisibility and interdependence of all rights under the Children's Convention, and recommending the New Zealand Government take urgent measures in relation to:

- Non-discrimination
- Violence against children
- Children deprived of a family environment
- Children with disabilities
- Standard of living
- Children belonging to minority or indigenous groups
- Administration of child justice.

The Alliance welcomes the fact that the Concluding Observations highlight the inequities being experienced by children in Aotearoa, in particular by tamariki Māori, with the Committee stating that it:

“notes with appreciation the progress made in establishing measures for the full enjoyment by Māori and Pasifika children of their rights, also demonstrated through the increased funding allocated through the Wellbeing Budget particularly to health and social services. It is deeply concerned, however, about the inequitable survival and development outcomes for Māori children including the disproportionate mortality rate for Māori infants and the suicide rate of Māori youth, the overrepresentation of Māori children that are victims of homicide, family violence, child abuse and neglect, and the number of Māori children in State care and in conflict with the criminal justice system.” (paragraph 39 of the Concluding Observations 2023).

Looking back and looking forward ahead

Reflecting on the reporting process, including the Alliance's attendance at the Review in January 2023, our key insights are:

- The collective impact of the reporting process has been significant in shaping the Concluding Observations, and this was strengthened by the direct involvement of children and rangatahi, and the contributions from many Alliance members and friends;
- The role of the Alliance in carrying these collective experiences, maatauranga and voices into the Review process in Geneva made a difference and helped to shape the final Concluding Observations;
- The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child places value on the role and contributions of civil society, and the time and effort taken by Committee members resulted in a comprehensive set of Concluding Observations;
- The Review process was a learning process for all involved, and a constructive dialogue between the Committee of experts and the Government delegation;

- The reporting process strengthened relationships between the Alliance and its members, and the Alliance and the Children’s Commissioner, Human Rights Commission, and the New Zealand government officials working on children’s rights kaupapa; and
- The international human rights reporting process under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child has relevance and impact for children’s rights advancement in Aotearoa New Zealand, as a way to shine a light on children’s rights in Aotearoa at the international level, in order to influence outcomes at the domestic level.

With New Zealand’s 6th reporting cycle under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child now completed, the Alliance’s mahi is already underway to advocate to Government for the implementation of the Concluding Observations in practice. This work is continuing, both in partnership with the Government Deputy Chief Executives Group for the Children’s Convention (through the Alliance’s membership of the Children’s Convention Monitoring Group), and in our role to hold the Government accountable for the implementation of the Convention and the Committee’s Concluding Observations.

The next Review of New Zealand under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child will not take place for another eight years, given the move to a longer reporting cycle under this Convention. This increases the need to ensure the Alliance remains strong and sustainable as an organisation, to advocate for and track implementation of the Concluding Observations over time, and to be ready to report on children’s rights on behalf of civil society and working closely with our Alliance members and friends through the 7th reporting cycle next decade.

Over the coming years, the Alliance will continue to build on our reporting mahi, including to convene and coordinate our members and friends around children’s rights kaupapa, and draw on the range of expertise and skills across our membership. This will underpin our continued monitoring and advocacy mahi in relation to the rights of all children, in all circumstances, at all times.



Children’s Convention Monitoring Group

As a member of the Children’s Convention Monitoring Group (CMG), the Alliance has again this year contributed to progressing children’s rights monitoring and implementation through this key rōpū. The mahi we have undertaken with and through the CMG has formed a key element of the Alliance’s activity during the 2022/23 year.

Background to the CMG

Convened by the Children’s Commissioner, under the Commissioner’s statutory mandate to advance and monitor the application of the Children’s Convention, the CMG’s members include the Independent Crown entities monitoring children’s and human rights in Aotearoa New Zealand, alongside the international children’s organisations represented in New Zealand and the Alliance as the group representing civil society. The Alliance has been a member of the CMG since its establishment in 2011, alongside Te Kāhui Tika Tangata the New Zealand Human Rights Commission, Save the Children New Zealand and UNICEF New Zealand.

The CMG monitors the New Zealand Government’s implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Optional Protocols to the CRC and the Government’s response to recommendations from the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. The CMG functions under a Terms of Reference and meets regularly throughout the year to monitor and review New Zealand’s progress towards implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in New Zealand. The CMG also meets twice a year with the Children’s Convention Deputy Chief Executives Group (the DCEs Group). The DCEs Group is the coordinating mechanism for the Government with regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Meetings between the CMG and the DCEs Group provide a standing forum for discussing how the Government is advancing the rights of children in line with the Convention. The Monitoring Group and the DCEs Group signed a Terms of Engagement in March 2018.

Key CMG activities during 2022/23 and the Alliance’s contribution and involvement

Over the course of the year, the CMG has undertaken some key activities and initiatives to monitor and progress implementation of children’s rights in Aotearoa New Zealand. Of particular note have been the following activities and initiatives:

- Contributing to the development of the New Zealand State report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, by way of feedback processes;
- Liaising with the DCE’s Group and keeping the Group briefed on a no-surprises basis in relation to the Alliance’s civil society reporting to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child;
- Contributing expert advisory to consultation on the implementation of the third Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on a Communications Procedure;
- Keeping the DCE’s Group briefed on emerging children’s rights issues from the perspective of CMG members.

Looking ahead

The CMG continues to be an important forum through which the Children's Rights Alliance contributes to the monitoring and promotion of children's rights implementation and progress in Aotearoa, on behalf of civil society.

We envisage that a key focus of the CMG over the coming year will be continuing to work together to shape a roadmap to implementing the Concluding Observations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Following on from this, as a CMG member, the Alliance looks forward to constructively working with the DCE's Group as we monitor the Government's implementation these Concluding Observations in practice for Aotearoa New Zealand's children and tamariki.



Ngā mihi nunui to our funders, members and supporters!

The Children's Rights Alliance would like to thank all those who have contributed to and supported our work over this year.

We would particularly like to acknowledge the generous support of the JR McKenzie Trust, who have provided funding, guidance and, through meeting their other *kaikōkiri*, connections and inspiration over this year and the entire five years of our grant. We are particularly grateful to have been able to apply a portion of this funding to enabling the Alliance's attendance at the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in January 2023, to further *tautoko* our reporting and advocacy for the rights of Aotearoa New Zealand's children and *tamariki*.

We would also like to acknowledge the continued support of Save the Children who, in addition to administrative support, continue to share their people, expertise and insights with us.

Thank you to the many *kaimahi* at the Office of the Children's Commissioner, and now *Mana Mokopuna*, Children and Young People's Commission, who have continued to steer the CMG forward with warmth, energy and professionalism, working collaboratively and in partnership with the Alliance and our fellow Children's Convention Monitoring Group members. We also acknowledge Simon Macpherson, DCE Policy at the Ministry of Social Development, for his continued leadership of the UNCROC Deputy Chief Executives (Government) Group.

Many thanks to the organisations and individuals who have given their time and expertise to support our *mahi* over the last year, especially in support of and contributing to our efforts to report and advocate on children's rights in Aotearoa New Zealand to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. This *mahi* has been collective and it could not have been achieved without the efforts and *maatauranga* that every organisation and individual has brought to the shared effort. *Ka nunui te mihi ki a koutou katoa*.

Ngā mihi nui to all of our Alliance members, past and present. Our work builds on the work of many, over successive years, to advance and uphold children's rights. It is a privilege to continue to work together on this shared *kaupapa*, and we look forward to what we can continue to achieve together, so that all children in Aotearoa New Zealand experience all their rights, in all circumstances, at all times.



Get in touch with the Children's Rights Alliance Aotearoa

To find out more about being involved in the reporting process and joining the Children's Rights Alliance please get in touch in one of the following ways:

Email us: info@childrensrightsalliance.org.nz

Visit our website: <https://www.childrensrightsalliance.org.nz>

Nau mai, haere mai, ki te tautoko te kaupapa o ngā tamariki o Aotearoa.

