

Introducing our Young Neurodiversity Champions



**Young
Neurodiversity
Champions**

Did you know:

An estimated 20% of New Zealand's young people are neurodiverse. They have brains wired to think, learn, perceive the world and feel differently from neurotypical people.



Right now, far too few of our neurodiverse young people are identified by teachers or their parents, with significant lack of awareness and stereotypes about what neurodiversity looks like. Even if they are identified, too many go undiagnosed because of cost and long waiting lists. And too many, once diagnosed, go unsupported because the programmes and professional help they need are not freely accessible within our education system.

For far too many neurodiverse young people - particularly girls, Māori and

Pasifika students, students from other minority backgrounds, and from lower income backgrounds - the reality is educational underachievement, disengagement and significant social and emotional challenges.

In Election Year 2023, our Young Neurodiversity Champions are standing up so that all future neurodiverse rangatahi get the support they need to thrive in our education system. The Neurodiversity in Education Coalition is proud to be backing these young leaders to drive the change they want to see.



**Neurodiversity
in Education
Coalition**

Supported by:

With grateful
thanks to:



Meet our 15 Young Neurodiversity Champions

1
Annabelle March,
18, Victoria University
of Wellington

4
Elliot Jones, 18,
Whanganui

7
Kartini Clarke,
21, University of
Auckland

10
Maria Walker-Kinnell,
14, Orewa College

13
Sankhya Pandey,
17, Henderson
High School

2
Charlotte Billings,
16, Whakatane

5
Jas McIntosh, 22,
University of
Otago

8
**Katie-Rose
Pemberton, 16,**
Howick College

11
Nellie McKegg,
20, Victoria University
of Wellington

14
Scarlet Shannon,
17, Waitaha
School

3
Christina Gera, 21,
University of
Canterbury

6
Jasper Poole,
22, University of
Auckland

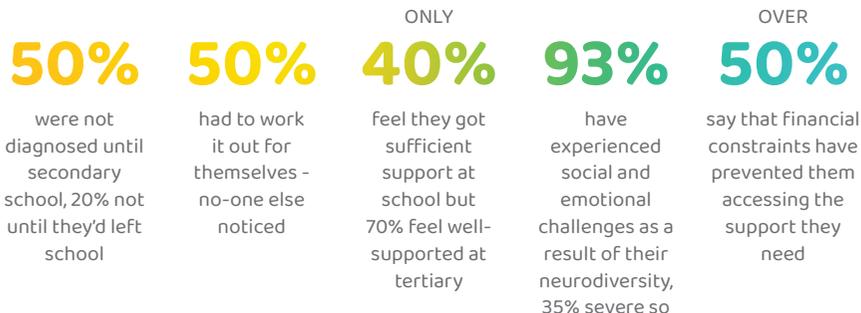
9
Maia Penhey, 17,
Logan Park High
School

12
Riley Dearlove,
15, Crimson Global
Academy

15
Tom Little, 17,
Taradale High
School

Our Champions were selected in February 2023 after a national social media campaign calling for applications.

The reality for our Young Neurodiversity Champions



The Facts on Young People & Neurodiversity

An estimated
320,000
neurodiverse children
and young people in NZ.



10% are dyslexic.
5% have ADHD.
5% are gifted.
2% have autism.
Many have multiple
neurodiversities.

Supported

Well-supported neurodiverse young
people build superpowers like:



"Creative, out-of-the-box thinking"



"Highly empathetic"

"Great problem-solver"

"The ability to learn new skills and adapt
to new environments very fast"

"It allows me to notice small
details in the world, see patterns,
and find unique perspectives"

"Strong moral compass"

"A lot of energy!"



"Entrepreneurial"

"Spatial and visual
awareness"

Unsupported

Unsupported neurodiverse young
people are at significant risk.

50%

of unsupported gifted young people
underachieve and disengage.



1 in 4 women with ADHD has
attempted suicide.

1 in 3

autistic people are
unemployed.



At least 50% of prison
inmates have dyslexia
and 25% ADHD.



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