

Supporting young people to lead climate action

Social Change Collective

Young people will inherit the long-term consequences of climate change and decisions made today. Through events and advocacy, the Social Change Collective encourages young people to learn and lead in climate action.



Around 40,000 Wellington teenagers took part in New Zealand's first School Strike 4 Climate in 2019, with growing numbers of young people continuing to call for action. The Social Change Collective formed to help people aged 18-30 influence and lead change in social and environmental issues they care about.

In October 2024, the group received funding through the Climate and Sustainability Fund to deliver a climate action activation event in Wellington in 2025. The event is designed to empower young people to engage in social and environmental change by providing them with knowledge, tools and connections.

Younger generations are often looked to as motivation for making a better world. Ethan Reille, Chair of the Social Change Collective, says it's important young people are also involved in the processes, decisions, and solutions that shape responses to a changing climate.

"Decisions made today will impact young people the most. We encourage young people to lead the conversation, and let everyone else listen and learn, and be part of that." *-Ethan Reille, Social Change Collective*

With teams in Tāmaki Makaurau | Auckland and Te Whanganui-a-Tara | Wellington, the Social Change Collective is run by and for young people. They host regular events themed around issues important to their audience. Past events have focused on topics like food security, fast fashion, youth in governance, designing cities for population growth, and how to maintain wellbeing for people and the natural environment.

Events feature expert speakers and community leaders, with breakout discussions for attendees to kōrero about how their lives and communities are affected by key issues. Depending on the topic, there might be opportunities to work on a submission to government or sign a petition. Participant-driven events like 'unconference' gatherings give young people a chance to share their expertise, learn from others and strategise together.

Ethan Reille says Social Change Collective events have a strong focus on helping young people decide on actions they will take to make a difference.

"We do need systemic change for the issues we're talking about. But a lot of times you also need individuals to change, to build up a community of people to be challenging that status quo." *-Ethan Reille, Social Change Collective*

The group views climate change as a crisis with multiple challenges that need attention and action from all generations. People aged 18-30 years old lead the conversation, but anyone is welcome to join, contribute and learn with the Collective. Events are designed to create lasting impact beyond by equipping participants to lead change in their own communities.

The Social Change Collective also functions as a bridge for groups or initiatives wanting to understand the perspectives and priorities of young people in relation to specific issues. Most recently, they joined with other charities and community organisations to advocate for the Right to Repair Bill. The Bill is designed to extend the lifespan of products, reduce household expenses, and minimise waste.

Empowering young people to connect, be informed and be ready to act will always be the core focus of the Social Change Collective. The group is building a movement where young people in Wellington not only have a voice but are helping to lead change.

Ethan Reille says young people can do incredible things when they are trusted with the resources and decision-making power to take an active role in addressing issues that matter to them.



"It's important for us to come together as a community and tell the city 'This is the vision we have. If you support that, then come and be a part of this conversation." *-Ethan Reille, Social Change Collective*

Young people are driving bold change in our communities. Whether it's launching a project, joining a movement, or sparking conversations, their leadership is key to building a fairer, more sustainable future.

To learn more visit **socialchangecollectivenz.com**