

# ANNUAL REPORT 2023 - 2024

UNNATURAL BREEDS

CAUSE CHICKEN  
SUFFERING



# Letter from Executive Director

Another year and here we are again. At this time I always look forward to the opportunity to reflect on the past year and the advances we have made together in our mission to end animal suffering. I am excited to share some of the highlights with you.

As New Zealand's primary charity focussed on improving the welfare of chickens bred for meat, with an overall mission to end the suffering of farmed animals, we've taken every opportunity to reach a widening network of people to show them the appalling suffering of the birds reared and killed for meat. At the same time, we've worked hard to push for tangible commitments from food brands to stop the worst causes of this suffering. These businesses will help create transformational changes in the chicken industry.

One personal highlight this year was connecting with like-minded colleagues from around the world, all advocating for chickens.

Mona, our Campaign Director, and I were sponsored by the Open Wing Alliance to attend their Global Summit in Europe.

We spent three days in Prague meeting, strategising and collaborating with activists from dozens of countries. We were also invited to present to the delegates about our work here in New Zealand; specifically how we use language and messaging to help people care about chickens.

Knowing that people are working in so many different countries, (some with even less legal protection for animals than we have here), all with the goal to end chicken suffering, makes it easier for me to sleep at night.

In our ongoing mission to expose the realities of chicken farming in New Zealand, we commissioned a poll on chicken meat labelling.

As we suspected, the poll showed Kiwis are being duped in the grocery aisle. It was covered in Newsroom, and by our online ads and billboards across Auckland.

Our caring community continues to grow stronger each day, now

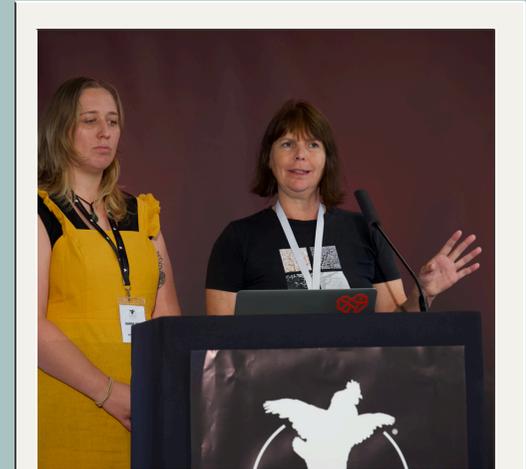
with a strong supporter base of over 10,000 passionate individuals. Your unwavering support and advocacy are a big part of our success in helping chickens.

Another highlight was releasing our first recipe booklet featuring dishes traditionally containing chicken meat, now made modern and plant-based. And we are giving it away for free! I must confess I'm not the most confident cook myself, but even I can manage them. My favourite is the Black Bean, Kūmara & Vegan Chick'n Enchiladas. This local resource has been well received, inspiring Kiwis to explore compassionate and delicious foods. This year, it's also been nice to be selling tote bags so people can carry their support for Animals Aotearoa out and about with them.

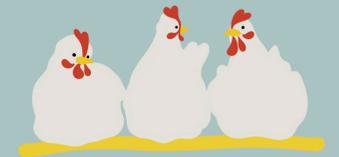
I know that with your continued support, we will make even greater strides in the coming year. Thank you for being part of our journey.



*M Macdonald*  
**Marianne Macdonald**  
Executive Director



*Presenting in Prague*



# An update on Corporate Engagement

While our mission here at Animals Aotearoa is to end the suffering of farmed animals, our immediate focus is to address the most significant suffering of chickens bred for meat. Through introducing strategic improvements to healthier, more naturally growing breeds developed overseas, as well as thoughtful environmental upgrades, we can transform the way chickens are treated in the food industry and meaningfully impact the lives of millions of sentient birds.

This last year, we zeroed in on big name café chains. We released a benchmarking report “The Unfiltered Truth” which ranked ten of the most well-known local café brands on their chicken welfare. The report revealed some clear leaders and laggards.

We’re thrilled that through this negotiation process, we added four new signatories to the domestic market, two nationwide cafés and two Quick Service Restaurants (QSRs).

We worked alongside The Coffee Club, Bird On A Wire, Columbus Coffee and Mexico to increase

their brand standards to align with the Better Chicken Commitment.

Columbus Coffee and The Coffee Club are two giants in the Kiwi café scene. Both topped the report as “BCC-Leaders – Signed the BCC”, having adopted the most progressive chicken welfare policy. Columbus Coffee has 75 café locations, many inside Mitre 10s, and The Coffee Club has 65 outlets across the country.

Big names like Robert Harris and Coffee Culture were rated positively in the report, categorised as “BCC- Friendly – Not yet signed the BCC but engaging in active discussion”. Brands trailing behind with the worst chicken welfare policy included Hollywood Espresso Bakery and Starbucks. Starbucks’ failure to sign, so far, has been highlighted in the ranking report as a distasteful double standard, considering Starbucks overseas has signed the BCC in the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada, but not yet in New Zealand.

Outside of the QSR scope, we also continued to meet with a diverse range of players within the sector - from big name grocery, to wholesale, to catering. Engaging representatives from across the full spectrum of food service is essential to building momentum on this complicated issue, as

significant education is needed.

**We don’t have a compassion problem, but we do have a visibility one**, as the suffering of chickens bred for meat is well hidden.

The transition away from cage eggs is still rolling out domestically, so we’re aiming to have a shift to healthier breeds of chickens as the next key social responsibility issue for food brands to address.

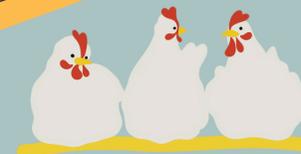
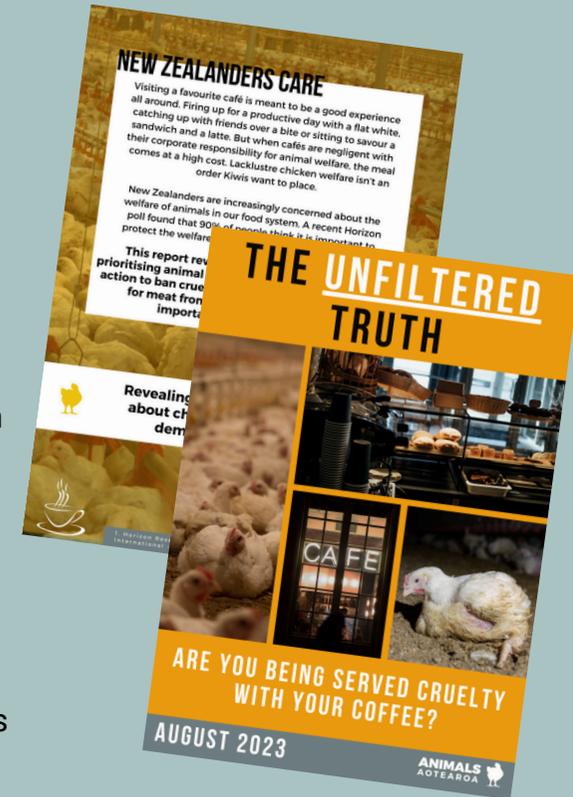
In addition, we helped continue to build the Better Chicken Commitment Working Group for food businesses to collaborate on overcoming the challenges of implementing the Better Chicken Commitment in their supply chains. Convened by the SPCA, they’ve had expert guest presenters from various backgrounds, including animal welfare perspectives and breeders of healthier genetics.

Expanding our reach beyond our border, we have helped secure funding for a full-time campaigner based in Australia. This new role is focussing on advancing welfare standards for chickens bred for meat over the ditch, leveraging our strategies and experiences to drive change across our shared region.

We’re keen to see the new partnerships and progress that the rest of 2024 is going to bring.



*J Dutton*  
**Jennifer Dutton**  
Corporate Engagement Specialist



# Campaign Update

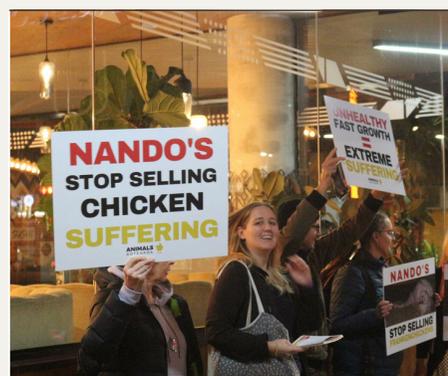
Over the course of 2023, we ramped up our campaign against the New Zealand branch of Nando's. Volunteers in Auckland, Hamilton, Porirua, Wellington and Christchurch staged peaceful protests outside Nando's stores. Our goal was to raise awareness of the company's treatment of chickens and demand better.

Across the country, Animals Aotearoa supporters have felt motivated to host and attend these protests, with some specifically getting in touch to organise one in their neighbourhood. Our online petition rapidly gained 11,000 signatures in support. We're not surprised, given most New Zealanders care about the welfare of farmed animals and expect companies to do the same.

Nando's claims they care about chicken welfare but, in reality, their standards in New Zealand are much lower than what they accept for stores in the UK and Ireland.

The message of the campaign is clear: Nando's needs to sign the Better Chicken Commitment.

The pressure caught the attention of Nando's executives, flying in from Australia to crisis manage the situation. While the public-facing campaign has been on hold for a few months, we are ramping up to re-start it when it's most strategic.



# Jollibee Cage-Free Campaign

Coordinated at a global level by the Open Wing Alliance, we supported this campaign alongside organisations around the world with a mix of online and in-person actions. In the photo below, you can see one of the campaign actions showing Jollibee's mascot's evil twin, a dark spinoff of their brand character.

Together we demanded that Jollibee announce a cage-free policy for their entire global egg supply – and we won!

The impact of this policy is huge. While we may not so be familiar with their name here in NZ, Jollibee Foods Corporation is the largest restaurant group in all of Asia. It's estimated that Jollibee has a global egg usage north of 600 million eggs per year. In fact, Jollibee is the third-ranking global company for estimated egg usage outside the West. A gigantic number of hens will be positively affected by this win.



# Campaign Update Cont.

Pivoting to another chicken-centric issue, this time about eggs. We launched a campaign to counter misinformation in early 2023 when it came to our attention that the egg industry was repeatedly lying about their farming conditions, and the misinformation was being repeated in the media. The industry was labelling eggs from a cage system (known as colony cages) as simply “colony laid”, omitting the word ‘cage’ altogether. They also stated on the egg industry website that all cages had been banned when, in fact, only old-fashioned battery cages were outlawed. The other version - the colony cage - remains legal. Whatever name is given to the cage, hens suffer terribly.

We coordinated an Open Letter to New Zealand to reveal the false information about eggs. Signed by the Aotearoa Liberation League, Helping You Help Animals (HUHA), New Zealand Animal Law Association, SPCA New Zealand, Veterinarians for Animal Welfare Aotearoa (VAWA), and World Animal Protection, and this important correction received media coverage.



NEW ZEALAND / COUNTRY

## Call for caged hen eggs to be clearly labelled

4:56 pm on 10 April 2023

Share this     



Battery hen egg farming ended at the beginning of this year, but colony cages are still allowed. (file image) Photo: RNZ / Cole Eastham-Farrelly

Back on chickens bred for meat, we had a valuable meeting with the Labour Government’s Minister for Animal Welfare, who had promised to review the chicken standards. Unfortunately, with the recent change in government, progress on chicken welfare appears to have been pushed even further down the track.

This has highlighted, once again, the continued importance of our campaigns focused on food brands to secure better lives for chickens, rather than waiting for politicians to act. While the government is failing to help chickens, major food brands have already stepped up, and they can do so again.



*Mona Oliver*  
**Mona Oliver**  
Campaign Director



# Awareness campaigns

Sadly, so many people are simply unaware of the extreme, systemic welfare problems that every chicken bred for meat experiences.

In our experience in corporate meetings, on social media, with journalists and in conversations with everyday Kiwis, we find many people aren't across even the basics about farmed chickens. For example, that hens kept for their eggs and chickens bred for meat are not the same type of bird! They are entirely distinct breeds and colours. (Hint: in New Zealand, it's white feathers for chickens bred for meat, and brown for those kept for eggs). The chicken industry likes to skirt the details to hide the reality from their customers. The real picture is far less palatable.

That is why getting the word, and the facts, out about chickens is such an important part of our work here at Animals Aotearoa.

Many people have become accustomed to the many types of sneaky greenwashing common at the supermarket, but they don't realise the same

practices are being employed by the animal agriculture industry to imply their products are more humane, or more ethical, than they are.

We polled Kiwis to find out what they knew about chicken meat and the labels. Horizon Research's findings showed that two-thirds of people thought the type of life a chicken had was important - they cared about these birds. This isn't surprising in a nation of animal lovers; we pride ourselves on how we treat animals.

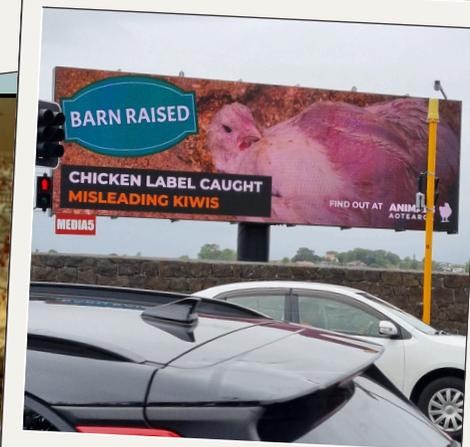
The way chicken companies treat chickens is really out of step with people's expectations. After learning the truth about chicken farming in NZ, 78% of those polled wanted to see an independent third-party standard to define labelling claims.

In November, we marched for chickens at the Animal Rights March, taking to the streets to raise awareness of the unnatural chicken breeds used throughout the industry. We also attended many protests to help a wide range of animals, organised by other animal groups, including about greyhound racing, live export, kangaroo killings, and environmental issues.

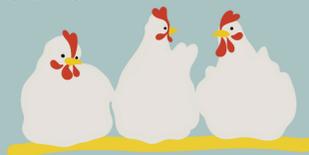
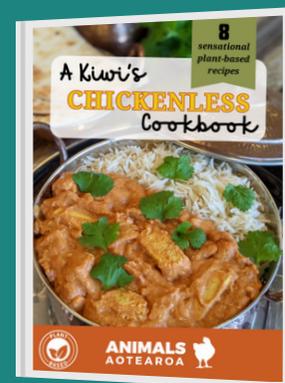


NEWSROOM.CO.NZ

Misleading chicken packaging complaint to Commerce Commission



We also wrote and published a guide to chicken-free cooking. This Kiwi-created guide uses local ingredients, all available at supermarkets, for a twist on the classic NZ chicken dinners, including burgers, enchiladas, curries and soup. Hop over to our website [animalsaotearoa.org](http://animalsaotearoa.org) to get your free copy, digitally or in print.



# Working together to end animal suffering

Working to end the suffering of farmed animals is a big mission and one we can't achieve alone.

While here at Animals Aotearoa we focus on chickens bred for meat, we also support local and global campaigns to champion animal welfare in a variety of ways.



As a member of the Open Wing Alliance, we worked to ensure that companies are helping improve the lives of hens farmed for their eggs on the global scale. We ran accountability campaigns against Hilton Hotels, Louvre Hotels, Hotels by Meliã, Au Bon Pain, Focus Brands, and Inspire Brands. Our flagship campaign saw the Alliance join forces to demand that the ever-growing global food brand Jollibee ensures all their brands are committed to cage-free.



# Live Export Alliance

We worked with End Live Export NZ, HUHA, SAFE, SPCA, VAWA and World Animal Protection to support the petition from John Hellström – to keep live export banned. The petition gathered over 57,000 signatures from passionate folks against a shameful regression in animal welfare.



As a member of the Aquatic Animal Alliance, we submitted proposals to improve the welfare of farmed fishes all over the world. A big part of the year was spent focused on promoting the campaign against a proposed octopus factory farm in the Canary Islands. We need to stop this new type of intensive farming cruelty before it starts!



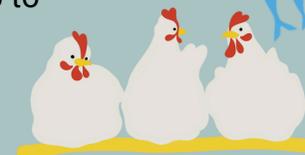
We also teamed up with Compassion in World Farming as part of their global campaign to end factory farming. Their petition to the United Nations asks world leaders to transform the global food system and end factory farming – for the sake of animals, people and the planet. We're proud to be their New Zealand partner sharing this work.



Commissioner for Animals alliance

While New Zealand does have some strong animal protection laws, sadly, these are often undermined by the government agency, the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) responsible for regulating the industry. As well as being woefully underfunded and under-resourced, MPI is inherently conflicted by playing two often opposing roles - primarily it's job is to promote animal agriculture while also being charged with protecting animal welfare. The fox is tasked with guarding the henhouse.

We joined SAFE's Commissioner for Animals Alliance calling for an independent Commissioner to be set up to review and monitor animal welfare law and regulations in Aotearoa.



# The Numbers

It can be a challenge to quantify improvements for chickens, but here are some statistics we can tally.

## Food brands

Four new companies<sup>+</sup> signed the Better Chicken Commitment.

## Submissions

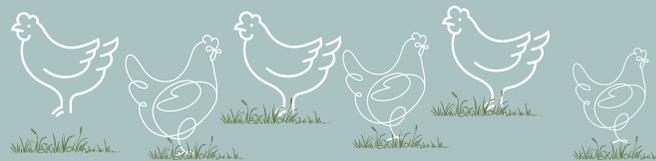
15 submissions to various regulatory bodies and other organisations reflected our proactive approach to effect change in policy and practice.



*+ Sadly, Bird on a Wire is no longer operating.*

## Our supporters

- The A-Team, our online action team for animals **doubled in size** and we sent out **27 action alerts** mobilising this dedicated group.
- Our online database **grew by almost 40%** (37.6% to be exact!). Demonstrating growing interest in our cause and care for chickens.
- Likewise, our social media presence also expanded this year. Our Facebook page likes grew from 3,480 to 3,671. We now have 360 followers on LinkedIn (up from 260), and 1,783 on Instagram (up from 1600).
- The dedicated efforts of **over 30 volunteers**, took actions to drive our campaigns forward.



*all the stats in this report are from 31 March 2023 except for social media followers which compares 31 July 2023 to 31 July 2024.*

## Our Campaigns

- Our targeted Facebook advertising had a **reach of 297,000**.
- Animals Aotearoa gained **media attention with 3 news stories in trade and food publications** and a feature in Newsroom.
- And an additional **three news stories about our Open Letter on Cage Eggs**.
- This year, our **website received 27 thousand unique visits**, showcasing our online presence and the increased interest in our campaigns. There was a **spike in early December** when our work was featured in mainstream news.



# Update from the Board

As we write this update on all the positive things we have accomplished, we also wanted to pause and reflect on the challenges we've faced.

New Zealanders are well aware of the supermarket duopoly and the lack of competition in food pricing. A similar issue exists in the chicken industry, dominated by two major companies, Tegel and Ingham's. These companies control all the chicken genetics coming into New Zealand and determine the breeds commercially available to farmers.

Our staff and volunteers have worked tirelessly over the last few years to put pressure on the industry to shift. We are using a variety of tactics and outreach plans to create waves in an industry that ignores the suffering inherent in the way chickens currently live and die.

Meaningful change won't occur unless the chicken industry radically improves its animal welfare standards. By creating partnerships with food brands, we are driving this change and recruiting the changemakers.



Educating the public and collaborating with major food retailers and providers is essential to transforming the market and, consequently, the industry.

We were delighted to see our donor base growing, but Animals Aotearoa still mainly relies on grants to fund our work. As we continue to grow and develop as an organisation we are reaching more and more people, with our numbers growing every year.

We are positive that as our organisation continues to grow, and we undertake this important mahi, we will see the welfare shifts so crucial to improving the lives of chickens.

## Financial Update

The work of the last few years has not been possible without support from the Open Wing Alliance. We want to extend our thanks to them for offering us grants to cover the costs of our Campaign Director and Corporate Outreach Specialist.

We also offer thanks, again, to the Effective Ventures Foundation (previously Centre for Effective Altruism), which has funded us since 2021, and continues to fund us, for 2024 and 2025.

We were delighted to be recommended for funding by Open Philanthropy for the 2024 and 2025 period. This gives us the confidence that our work is valued, and sustainable.

World Animal Protection has also awarded us grants to cover staff costs and other expenses.

We're continuing to reach out to donors and develop other streams of income that will help us be more sure of our future.



## INCOME

Effective Ventures Foundation	\$225,636
Donations	\$6,171
World Animal Protection	\$20,000
Travel Grants	\$9,307
Merchandise Sold	\$596
Interest Received	\$8,436

## EXPENSES

Accountancy Fees	\$750
Bank Charges	\$26
Campaign Expenses	\$19,157
Conference Expenses	\$273
Consultants	\$3,272
Contractors	\$151,609
Expenses Office	\$425
Licenses & Registration	\$44
Processing Fees	\$198
Photography, Video & Design	\$1,448
Printing & Stationery	\$247
Staff Training	\$1,190
Subscriptions	\$1,828
Travelling Expenses	\$438
Travelling Expenses-Overseas	\$11,969
Volunteer Expenses	\$676
Merchandise	\$1,051

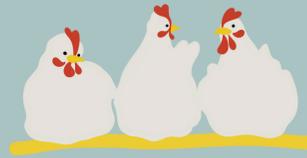
View our full financial statements on the [Charities Services Website](#).



# Thank you's

Throughout this report, we've already mentioned, with gratitude, our amazing supporters and donors. But we've compiled all our thank you's here on one page, as we wanted to again express our gratitude for everyone who has made our work possible.

- Our fantastic Board members, **Avril, Roz and Debbie**, for their governance and guidance.
- Alf Jamieson of **M5 Media** for billboards.
- Amy and James Odene of **User-Friendly** for graphic design and campaigns advice.
- Our **donors**, who believe in our work and contribute financially.
- Our **volunteers**, who go above and beyond to help us with our campaigns.
- **Jinki Cambroner**, for photographing the beautiful rescue chickens and hens for social media and our website.
- The **Open Wing Alliance** for grants awarded to cover 2022 & 2023 expenses.
- **Effective Ventures Animal Welfare Fund**, for grants awarded to cover 2024 & 2025 expenses.
- **Open Philanthropy** for grants awarded to cover 2024 & 2025 expenses.
- **World Animal Protection** for financial support for staff-related costs.
- Our chicken ambassadors **Pou, Beluga and Lucille**, and the rescue hens at the sanctuary.



🌸 RIP LUCILLE



*Jinki  
Photographer  
Extraordinaire*





# ANIMALS AOTEAROA



Ending the suffering of farmed animals.  
Kia mutu ai te whakataumaha i  
ngā kararehe pāmu.

**IMAGE**  
**CREDIT** *Jinki Cambronero*

Board Update | Thank You's | Back Page