



Autism Research Centre  
Aotearoa New Zealand



## Introduction to the Autism Research Centre and Autistic Partnership

The Autism Research Centre (ARC) connects Autistic communities and researchers through the Autistic Partnership of Aotearoa New Zealand (AP-NZ). This ensures that Autistic voices shape autism research.

### What is the Autism Research Centre Aotearoa New Zealand (ARC)?



*Do you prefer listening or watching instead of reading? Watch an introduction to the ARC and learn more about the goals of the ARC here: [ARC Video](#)*

**The Autism Research Centre (ARC) is Aotearoa New Zealand's first centre dedicated to autism research.** The ARC hosted by the University of Canterbury and has networks across the country and beyond.

**Our vision is to enhance the health and wellbeing of Autistic people and their support networks** in Aotearoa New Zealand. We will do this through collaborative, community-engaged, world-leading research.

Research within the ARC is underpinned by a **core set of values**:

- **Community participation and inclusion**
- Alignment with the **neurodiversity** framework and understanding of autism
- **Respect** for difference within and between communities
- **Reciprocity**
- **Lifelong learning**

**Our goal is to drive delivery of the research priorities identified by Autistic people.** We will do this by:

- **Undertaking research** that aligns with the priorities of Autistic people and the autism community of Aotearoa New Zealand
- **Empowering Autistic people** to build capabilities, advocate and create change
- **Promoting community awareness** and education around autism and neurodiversity
- **Connecting people** and supporting others



*Do you want to learn more about the research priorities identified by Autistic people and the autism community of Aotearoa New Zealand? Read our community report here: [Research Priorities Report](#)*

The ARC is led by Professors Laurie McLay (Director) and Ann-Marie Kennedy (Associate Director). It includes academics, students, and autism community members. The ARC connects with Autistic people through the Autistic Partnership of Aotearoa New Zealand (AP-NZ). The AP-NZ is chaired by Ruth Monk.



*Do you want to learn more about the ARC? Contact Professor Laurie McLay: [laurie.mclay@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:laurie.mclay@canterbury.ac.nz)*

## What is the Autistic Partnership of Aotearoa New Zealand (AP-NZ)?



*Do you prefer listening or watching instead of reading? Watch an introduction to the AP-NZ and learn more about the principles and structure of the AP-NZ here: [AP-NZ Video](#)*

The Autistic Partnership of Aotearoa New Zealand (AP-NZ) is a **network of Autistic people in Aotearoa New Zealand**. AP-NZ members each have unique experiences, perspectives, interests and connections to autism.

The AP-NZ works collaboratively with the ARC to:

- **Influence research** strategy, design and outputs
- Promote and **support community involvement**
- Produce research that aligns with the **core values of the ARC** and the
- Ensure that research aligns with the **priorities of Autistic people**

## What is the role of the AP-NZ in ARC research projects?

Research within the ARC is conducted using a participatory approach. This means that Autistic people are involved across different stages of research. Members of the AP-NZ can have different roles across different projects. They may be **advisors**, **advocates** or **co-researchers**.



*Do you want to learn more about how members of the AP-NZ might be involved in ARC research projects? Read our Autistic Partnership frequency asked questions document here: [AP-NZ FAQ](#)*

## How is the AP-NZ structured?

The AP-NZ consists of a **chair**, a **steering group**, and a **wider network** of Autistic community members:

**Chair:** The AP-NZ is chaired by an Autistic researcher, Ruth Monk. The chair oversees the running of the network and steering group. They connect members of the AP-NZ with ARC researchers.

**Steering group:** A small steering group of Autistic people meet regularly to discuss the direction and needs of the AP-NZ. They commit to be in the steering group for at least one year.

**Network:** The wider network is made up of Autistic community members. They can join at any time and do not need to commit to a fixed term. This means they can adjust their involvement to suit their availability.



*Are you interested in hearing from members of the AP-NZ? Hear some of our AP-NZ members share their perspectives on Autistic inclusion in research here: [AP-NZ Research](#)*

## Where can I learn more or join the AP-NZ?



If you have any questions or you would like to join the AP-NZ network, please contact Ruth Monk: [ruth.monk@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:ruth.monk@canterbury.ac.nz)



Alternatively, you can read the Autistic Partnership Network Membership document and follow the instructions to fill out your membership form here: [AP-NZ Network Membership](#)