



THE PEACE FIELD PROJECT

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Press release

For immediate release

The First Ever Peace Pitch in New Zealand. Thursday 24th August 2023

Southland Football, Turnball Thomson Park, Invercargill, New Zealand, will twin their designated area of play with Flanders Peace Field, Mesen, Belgium, site of the First World War, 1914, Christmas Truces. ORGANISERS, Southland Football have come together with The International Children's Football Alliance to celebrate peace through play at Turnball Thomson Park. In the year of the first ever women's Football World Cup held in New Zealand this poignant event is reminder to the international football family about the power of the game to bring peace through play..

The total number of New Zealand troops and nurses to serve overseas in 1914–18, excluding those in British and other forces, was 100,444, from a population of just over a million.

The International Peace Fields Project currently has 66 peace pitches in 5 continents. The peace pitches celebrate peace through play.

The Children's Football Alliance UK are the custodians of the International Children's Football Alliance. Their mission statement: Protect Childhood Through Play.

Ernie Brennan, CEO, CFA said, **“The Peace Fields Project is all about the essence of play. All children play without prejudice. When Allied and German soldiers stood up to shake hands, exchange gifts and play games on Christmas Day, 1914, the humanitarian act served to remind mankind that childhood is a time we all revert back too, for love, peace and happiness.”**

Mick Gale, CFA, International Projects Director and Peace Field Project Ambassador **“The first ever peace pitch in New Zealand commemorates all wars and celebrates peace through play’. ‘There is a tremendous sense of pride at Southland Football for their peace pitch.’ ‘ I know that the CFA are delighted that New Zealand will have a plaque displayed at the Peace Pitch, Mesen, under the shadow of the New Zealand War Memorial. ‘There’s plenty of scope for schools and clubs across New Zealand, to now connect with the Peace Pitch in Invercargill and the ICFA’s online resources.’”**

Notes to editors

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The Children's Football Alliance was established in 2008 to protect childhood through play.

NEW ZEALAND FIRST WORLD WAR MEMORIAL, MESEN, BELGIUM, is situated next to Flanders Peace Pitch at the Peace Village.

