

# **Cabinet paper – Draft**

## **New Zealand Sign Language**

### **Strategy Consultation**



**Published: June 2025**

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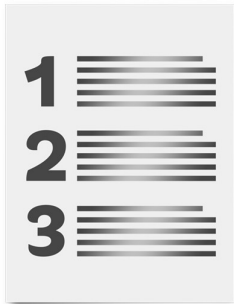


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## About this Easy Read



This Easy Read is a **summary** of a **Cabinet paper**.



A **summary**:

- is shorter than the Cabinet paper
- tells you the main ideas.



A **Cabinet paper** is a document:

- from a **Minister**
- asking **Cabinet** to agree to something.



A **Minister** is an important person who works in the Government.

They are in charge of something the Government does like:

- education
- transport.



**Cabinet** is a group of the most important ministers.

They make important decisions together.



This Cabinet paper is from the **Minister for Disability Issues**.



The **Minister for Disability Issues** is the person who the Government has put in charge of making things better for disabled people.

The Minister for Disability Issues is Louise Upston.



**Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled People** wrote this summary.

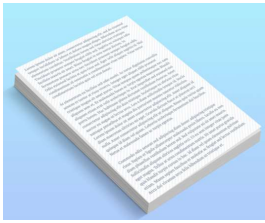


**Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled People** works to make changes for disabled people so their lives are better.

Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled People makes things better for disabled people by working with:

- the Government
- the community
- businesses.

In this Easy Read we call Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled People **Whaikaha** for short.



The Cabinet paper asks Cabinet to let the **New Zealand Sign Language Board** do a **consultation**.

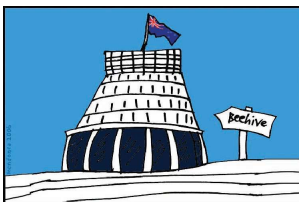


In this Easy Read we call New Zealand Sign Language **NZSL** for short.



The **New Zealand Sign Language Board** is a group of people who:

- have lived experience of using NZSL
- know a lot about NZSL
- give advice about NZSL to the:
  - Government
  - community.





In this Easy Read we call the New Zealand Sign Language Board the **NZSL Board** for short.



Here **consultation** means asking people what they think about something the Government is doing.

The consultation is about the **draft New Zealand Sign Language Strategy**.



A **draft** is the first version of something like a document.



Here a **strategy** is set of long term plans that are made to reach a **goal**.



A **goal** is something we want to make happen.



The **New Zealand Sign Language Strategy** is about making sure more people can use NZSL.

In this Easy Read we call the New Zealand Sign Language Strategy the **NZSL Strategy** for short.



You can find the full Cabinet paper at:

**<https://tinyurl.com/3n8z5dc8>**



The full Cabinet paper is under the heading **Consultation on the New Zealand Sign Language Strategy**.



The full Cabinet paper is **not** in Easy Read.



You can find out more information  
about the NZSL Strategy consultation  
at:

**[www.nzsl.govt.nz](http://www.nzsl.govt.nz)**

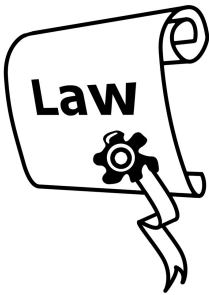


Some of the information on this  
website is in Easy Read.

# About NZSL



Many Deaf people prefer to use NZSL.



In 2006 a law called the New Zealand Sign Language Act made NZSL an **official language** of New Zealand.



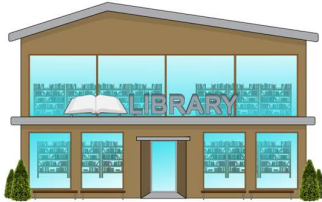
Being an **official language** means that:

- NZSL is protected by the Government
- people are supported to use NZSL
- NZSL can be used in places like the courts.





Many Deaf people still find it hard to use NZSL in the **community**.



Here the **community** means all the places you go outside your home like:

- your job
- the library
- the supermarket.



Not being able to use NZSL in the community makes it harder for Deaf people to have good lives.

## About the NZSL Strategy



The NZSL Board want to **release** a new NZSL Strategy.



Here **release** means making the NZSL Strategy public so everyone can read it.



The new NZSL Strategy will guide the work the NZSL Board does from 2025 to 2030.



Before they release the new NZSL Strategy the NZSL Board want to hear what:

- Deaf people think about it
- other people think about it.



The NZSL Strategy has a **vision**.

Here **vision** means ideas about what things should be like.



The vision in the NZSL Strategy is having NZSL:

- everywhere
- every day.



This means Deaf people can:

- know about NZSL
- use NZSL.



It also means hearing people can:

- know about NZSL
- use NZSL.



The NZSL Strategy will make sure everyone can use NZSL through:

- **revitalisation**
- **integration.**



Here **revitalisation** means doing things to make sure the Deaf / hard of hearing community can keep using NZSL.



Here **integration** means making sure everyone can use some NZSL in their everyday lives.



This includes making sure **government agencies** use NZSL.



**Government agencies** are different parts of the government like:

- Whaikaha
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Health.



The NZSL Strategy has 5 **priority** areas of work.



Here **priority** means the most important areas of work we need to do to:

- revitalise NZSL
- integrate NZSL.



## Priority 1

Support Deaf / hard of hearing tamariki / children to:

- learn NZSL
- use NZSL.



Support the whānau / families of Deaf / hard of hearing tamariki / children to:

- learn NZSL
- use NZSL.



## Priority 2

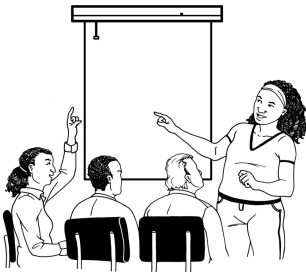


Get better **data** so the Government knows what life is like for people who use NZSL.



Here **data** means numbers that tell the Government what life is like for people who use NZSL like:

- how many people in Aotearoa New Zealand use NZSL every day
- how many people in Aotearoa New Zealand are learning NZSL.



This data should include information about **Turi Māori**.



**Turi Māori** are Māori who are Deaf / hard of hearing.



### Priority 3

Make it easier to:

- learn NZSL in Aotearoa New Zealand
- use NZSL in Aotearoa New Zealand.



### Priority 4

Make sure government agencies use NZSL more.



### Priority 5

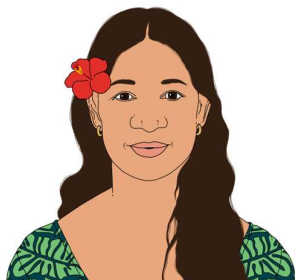
Celebrate:

- being Turi / Deaf
- NZSL.





Support different **cultures** in Aotearoa New Zealand to celebrate NZSL.



**Culture** is a way of:

- thinking that a group shares
- doing things as a group.

There are many different cultures in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Some examples of the different cultures are:

- Māori culture
- Pacific culture
- Deaf culture.

## Consultation on the draft NZSL Strategy



The Cabinet paper says consultation on the draft NZSL Strategy should:

- start on 22 April 2025
- end on 2 June 2025.



Everyone can be part of the consultation.



Deaf people will get lots of chances to say what they think about the draft NZSL Strategy.



Deaf people will be able to use NZSL to say what they think about the draft NZSL Strategy.



There will be **specific** chances to say what they think about the draft NZSL Strategy for these people:

- Deaf people
- Turi Māori
- organisations who run services for Deaf people.



Here **specific** means a way of saying what they think about the draft NZSL Strategy that is only for 1 group of people.

## What will happen after the consultation



After the consultation Whaikaha will work out what **actions** will support people to use NZSL:

- everywhere
- every day.



Here **actions** are the things the Government can do to support more people to use NZSL.



Whaikaha will also work out what information we need to record to see if the actions are working.



At the moment government agencies are not doing everything the New Zealand Sign Language Act says they need to do.



Government agencies need to have **NZSL capability plans**.



An **NZSL capability plan** says what a government agency is doing to support people who use NZSL like:

- having information in NZSL on their website
- teaching people who work for the government agency to use NZSL.





In their **annual reports** government agencies need to say:

- how they are using NZSL
- if people who use NZSL can easily get support from them.



An **annual report** is a document that explains what an organisation has done that year.



The NZSL Board will need to say how the NZSL Strategy is going in its annual report.



The Minister for Disability Issues will tell Cabinet how the NZSL Strategy is going every year.



In 2026 it will be 20 years since the New Zealand Sign Language Act became a law.



Whaikaha is working with the NZSL Board to decide how to celebrate this.

# Recommendations



Here **recommendations** are the things the Minister for Disability Issues asked Cabinet to do.

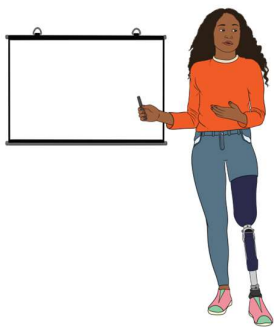


Cabinet agreed that consultation on the draft NZSL Strategy would:

- take 6 weeks
- start on 22 April 2025.



Cabinet said the draft NZSL Strategy could be released as part of the consultation.



After the consultation has finished the Minister for Disability Issues will:

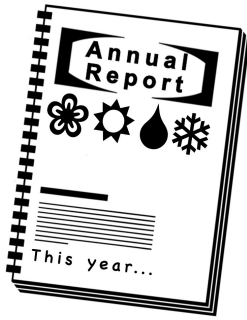
- tell Cabinet about the consultation
- ask Cabinet to say that the NZSL Board can release the new NZSL Strategy.



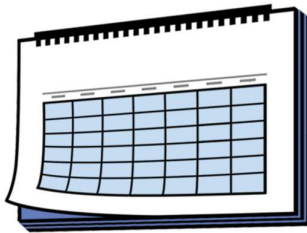
Cabinet agreed that when the NZSL Strategy has been released Whaikaha will work with other government agencies to work out what:



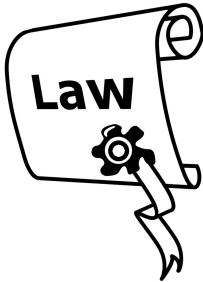
- actions the Government can do to support more people to use NZSL
- information we need to see if the actions are working.



Cabinet agreed that government agencies should talk about how they are using NZSL in their annual reports.



Cabinet agreed that the Minister for Disability Issues will tell Cabinet how the NZSL Strategy is going every year.



Cabinet agreed that they would not change the New Zealand Sign Language Act.



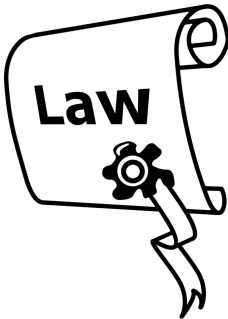
Cabinet knows that Whaikaha is looking at how to make alternate formats work better.

## Other parts of the Cabinet paper



The Cabinet paper also talked about some things that are not part of the NZSL Strategy.

### Law changes



In 2023 Cabinet said the New Zealand Sign Language Act could be changed to give the NZSL Board more power.



The Minister for Disability Issues decided not to make these changes.

This Cabinet paper asked Cabinet not to make these changes.



Instead of changing the law

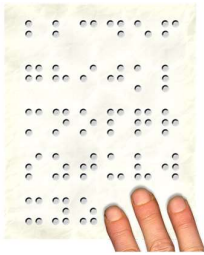
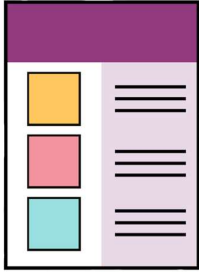
Whaikaha have:

- supported the NZSL Board to learn new skills so they can do more to look after NZSL
- set up a group of Turi Māori to give the NZSL Board advice.



The new NZSL Strategy will also support more people to use NZSL.

## Alternate formats

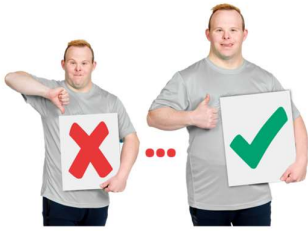


### Alternate formats are:

- Easy Read
- Braille
- audio
- large print
- NZSL video.

Alternate Formats make it easier for disabled people to get information.

Since December 2024 the Whaikaha has been in charge of alternate formats.



Whaikaha is looking at how to make alternate formats work better.



They will work with the people who make alternate formats to make sure they are doing what government agencies need them to do.



This information has been written by Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled People.



It has been translated into Easy Read by the Make it Easy Kia Māmā Mai service of People First New Zealand Ngā Tāngata Tuatahi.



The ideas in this document are not the ideas of People First New Zealand Ngā Tāngata Tuatahi.



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