



NZSL BOARD

New Zealand Sign Language Board
Te Oranga Reo Rota



Summary of the **New Zealand Sign Language Strategy**

2026–2036



New Zealand Sign Language
– *everyone, everywhere, every day*



Whaikaha
Ministry of Disabled People



Scan
for NZSL
name

Our Vision

“New Zealand Sign Language -
everyone, everywhere, every day”





Why is New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) important?

New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) is an official language of New Zealand. However, NZSL is more than just an official language – it is vital for communication, for connection, and for inclusion.

NZSL is the language used by many Deaf and hard of hearing people. It is also used by many non-speaking people, people who have difficulty communicating using a spoken language, the deafblind community, and children of Deaf Adults (CODA).

For some people, NZSL will be their only language.

NZSL is also important to support Turi Māori (Māori Deaf) to access and engage in te ao Māori.

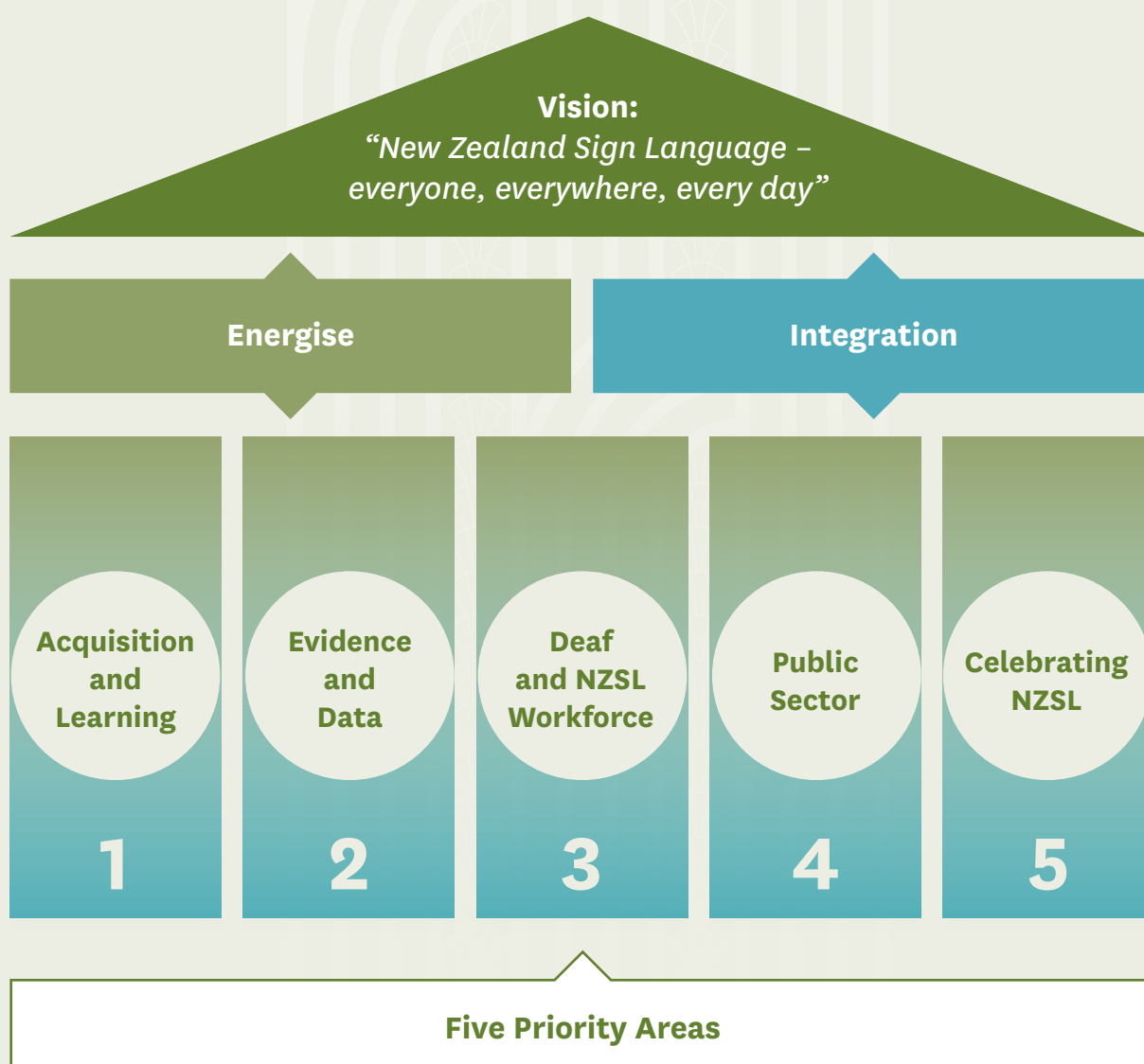
The role of the NZSL Board

The NZSL Board's role is to maintain and promote NZSL.

In developing this strategy, the Board, along with its Turi Māori (Māori Deaf) advisory group, Te Rōpū Kaitiaki, aim to improve inclusion and equity for Deaf people and NZSL users by lifting the use, understanding, and acceptance of NZSL in New Zealand.

Everyone can play a part in making NZSL a strong, vibrant, living language.

The NZSL Strategy





Refreshing the NZSL Strategy

The NZSL Strategy is based around two approaches

- Energise is focused on Deaf people and NZSL users, particularly children, and aimed at ensuring the survival of NZSL and ensuring early acquisition and use of NZSL by Deaf people and NZSL users.
- Integration is focused on people who do not use NZSL and aimed at ensuring NZSL thrives, and promoting the awareness, acceptance and everyday use of NZSL.

Five key priority areas sit under the two approaches

- **Acquisition and Learning:** Enable deaf children / tamariki, and children who use NZSL to communicate, and families and whānau to acquire and use NZSL.
- **Evidence and Data:** Build an evidence-based profile of Deaf people and NZSL users.
- **Deaf and NZSL workforce:** Ensure there is a workforce to support the acquisition and use of NZSL.
- **Public sector:** Improve attitude, acquisition, and use of NZSL across the public sector
- **Celebrating NZSL:** Enhance the status of NZSL in New Zealand and celebrate NZSL across society and cultures

Implementing the NZSL Strategy

Action plans will be developed by the NZSL Board, Te Rōpū Kaitiaki and the Ministry of Disabled People – Whaikaha, working with other agencies.

The NZSL Board will report annually to the Minister for Disability Issues on actions and progress.

Indicators will be developed to track progress and impact.



Acknowledgments

The New Zealand Sign Language Board and the Ministry of Disabled People - Whaikaha acknowledge and thank everyone who provided input to develop the New Zealand Sign Language Strategy 2026-2036.

Information about this summary document

This document is a summary of the New Zealand Sign Language Strategy 2026-2036.

You can access the full strategy at www.nzsl.govt.nz/nzsl-strategy-2026-2036

You can also the NZSL version and alternate formats of this summary at that same website.

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**Te Kāwanatanga
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