



New Zealand Sign Language Strategy 2026–2036 Action Plan May 2026 – June 2027

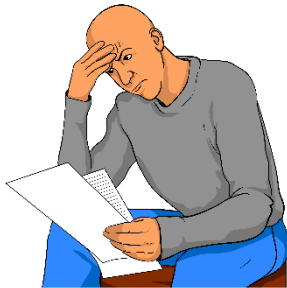


Published: July 2026

Before you start



This is a long document.



It can be hard for some people to read a document this long.

Some things you can do to make it easier are:



- read it a few pages at a time
- set aside some quiet time to look at it
- have someone read it with you to support you to understand it.



What you will find in here

Page number:



What this Easy Read is about.....3



About the Strategy8



The Action Plan.....12



Governance, monitoring and
future planning32

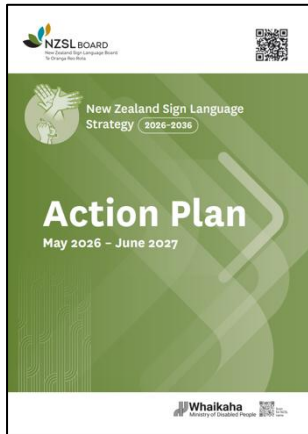


What success looks like by
June 202733



More information36

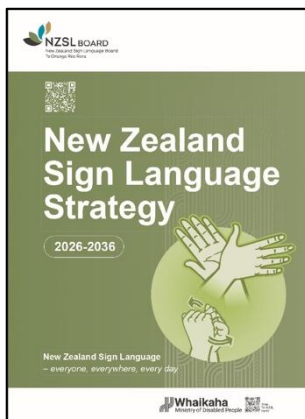
What this Easy Read is about



This Easy Read is about the **Action Plan May 2026 – June 2027** for the **New Zealand Sign Language Strategy 2026 – 2036**.



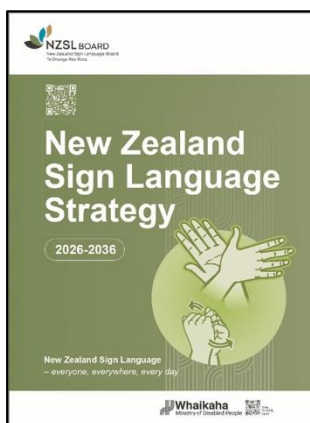
The **Action Plan May 2026 – June 2027** says the first things we need to work on for the **New Zealand Sign Language Strategy 2026 – 2036**.



In this Easy Read the Action Plan May 2026 – June 2027 will be called the **Action Plan**.



A **strategy** is a plan for how to do something.



The **New Zealand Sign Language Strategy 2026 – 2036** is the plan the New Zealand Government has for things to do with New Zealand Sign Language.



In this Easy Read the New Zealand Sign Language Strategy will be called the **Strategy**.

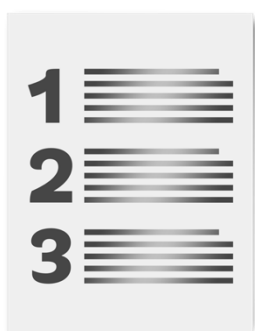


In this Easy Read **New Zealand Sign Language** will be called **NZSL**.



You can find an Easy Read **summary** of the Strategy here:

<https://tinyurl.com/yc673j6x>



A summary:

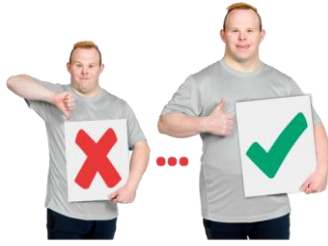
- is shorter than the full document
- tells you the main ideas.

The Action Plan was written by:



- the **Ministry of Disabled People – Whaikaha**
- the **New Zealand Sign Language Board.**





The **Ministry of Disabled**

People – Whaikaha works to make things better for disabled people by working with:

- the Government
- the community which includes:
 - disabled people
 - tāngata whaikaha
Māori / Māori disabled people
- businesses.

In this Easy Read the **Ministry of Disabled People – Whaikaha** will be called **Whaikaha**.



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 / our / us** means:

- the New Zealand Sign Language Board
- and**
- Whaikaha.

About the Strategy





We have created a picture of a house to show how the Strategy will work.

This house picture shows:

- the **vision** for the Strategy
- the 2 **approaches** / ways of doing things for the Strategy
- the 5 **key priority areas** for the Strategy as things that support the vision.



Here a **vision** is what we hope will happen with NZSL in the future.

Here **approaches** are ways of doing things.



A **key priority area** is an important part we will work on.



The vision for the Strategy is:

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



This means we want to see NZSL being used a lot more across New Zealand.

The 2 approaches are:



- **energise** which is about making sure Deaf people have lots of chances to learn / use NZSL
- **integration** which is about making sure people who do not use NZSL:

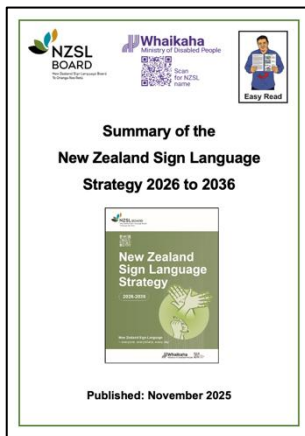


- know about NZSL
- understand why NZSL is important.



The key priority areas are:

- Acquisition and Learning
- Evidence and Data
- Deaf and NZSL Workforce
- Public Sector
- Celebrating NZSL.



There is more information about the key priority areas in the Easy Read summary of the Strategy at:

<https://tinyurl.com/yc673j6x>

The Action Plan



Acquisition and Learning

This is the NZSL sign for **acquisition**.

Here **acquisition** is the way people learn languages.



These first actions are so every part of the **education system** can work together to make learning better for:



- Deaf children
- NZSL users.



The **education system** is all the places people learn like:

- preschools / kindergartens
- schools
- tertiary education places like polytechs.



When all parts of the education system work together Deaf children will have more chances to:



- learn / use NZSL
- do well in school.



We will hold a **strategic hui / meeting** with:

- Deaf leaders
- parent groups
- government agencies
- education **stakeholders** like:
 - teachers
 - principals
 - students
 - whānau / families.





A **strategic hui** is when different people meet to talk about important things.

This is so they can:

- share ideas
- understand things together.



Here **stakeholders** are people who are affected by things that happen in the education system.

The strategic hui will look at:



- how Deaf learners go through the education system
- how schools can better meet the needs of Deaf learners
- what teachers need to know to better support Deaf learners.

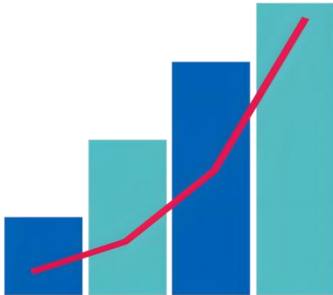




Evidence and Data

This is the NZSL sign for **evidence**.

Evidence is **data** that shows if something is true.



Data means information like:

- facts
- numbers.



Whaikaha will work with **Stats NZ** to get better data about how NZSL is used in Aotearoa New Zealand.



Stats NZ is the part of the Government that collects information about life in Aotearoa New Zealand.



This will make it easier to **monitor**:

- how easy it is to learn NZSL
- how NZSL is used in Aotearoa New Zealand
- what life is like for NZSL users.



Here **monitor** means to watch something to see how well it is doing.



Deaf and NZSL Workforce

This is the NZSL sign for **workforce**.

We will have a **forum** to find out what the **NZSL workforce** needs.



Here a **forum** is a way for a lot of people to share their ideas.



Here the **NZSL workforce** is everyone who has a job:

- supporting Deaf people
- teaching Deaf people
- using NZSL.





We will make an **interpreter** workforce strategy to support:

- NZSL interpreters
- **tactile sign language** interpreters
- **trilingual** interpreters.



An **interpreter** supports people who do not use the same language to understand each other.



Tactile sign language is a kind of sign language where a deafblind person can feel the signs with their hands.



Trilingual means someone knows 3 languages.

Here trilingual interpreters usually use:

- English
- te reo Māori / Māori language
- NZSL.

The interpreter workforce strategy will include finding out:

- what training interpreters need
- if the way interpreters work can be made better.



Whaikaha will support the development of **standards** for NZSL interpreters.



Here **standards** are rules that say how interpreters should:

- work
- behave.



At the moment there are no standards for NZSL interpreters.



Deaf people have a **right** to good interpreting services so they can:

- use the services they need
- have their say about things that matter to them
- take part in all the same things hearing people do.





Rights are things everyone should:

- have
- be able to do.



Rights are things like:

- having a safe place to live
- being able to use NZSL.



Having standards for NZSL interpreters will mean Deaf people can get interpreting services that are always:

- trustworthy
- safe
- **culturally appropriate**
- **accurate.**





Here **culturally appropriate** means something meets the needs someone has because of their **culture**.



Culture is a way of:

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



Some examples of the different cultures in Aotearoa New Zealand are:

- Māori culture
- Pacifica culture
- Deaf culture.



A person can be part of more than 1 culture.



Accurate means something is:

- right
- without mistakes.



Public Sector

This is the NZSL sign for **public sector**.



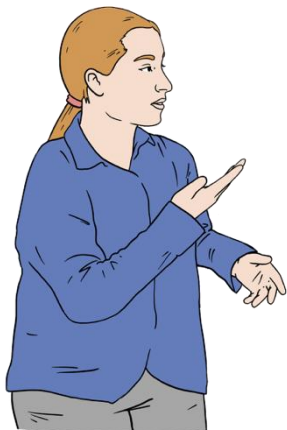
The **public sector** is all the organisations that are:

- part of the Government
- run by the Government.



The public sector includes public service departments which are parts of the Government like:

- departments
- ministries.



Whaikaha will work with some public service departments to make plans to:

- tell staff why NZSL is important
- teach staff NZSL
- make their department easier for NZSL users to deal with.



Public service departments will also have to write in their **annual reports** about how they are using NZSL.



Annual reports say what an organisation has:

- done in the past year
- spent money on in the past year.



This will make it easier to:

- find out how public service departments are using NZSL
- support staff in public service departments to learn more about NZSL.



The NZSL Board will work with government agencies including:

- Stats NZ
- the Ministry of Education
- the Ministry of Health
- the **Public Service Commission.**



The **Public Service Commission** is a part of the Government that supports public service departments.



The NZSL Board will support these government agencies to quickly make good changes to how they use NZSL.



We will have a forum to talk about how **artificial intelligence** could:

- support NZSL
- cause problems.



Artificial intelligence means computer programs that can do some of the things humans can do like:

- learning
- solving problems.



Artificial intelligence is also called **AI**.



We will look at how the Government can support AI projects that:

- are led by Deaf people
- do new good things
- are **ethical**.

Here **ethical** means something does not cause harm.



Celebrating NZSL

This is the NZSL sign for **celebrate**.



2026 is the 20th anniversary of the **New Zealand Sign Language Act 2006**.



The **New Zealand Sign Language Act 2006** is a law that makes NZSL an **official language** of Aotearoa New Zealand.



An **official language** is a language that has special rights in a country.

Official languages are used:

- in government communication
- in courts of law
- in schools.

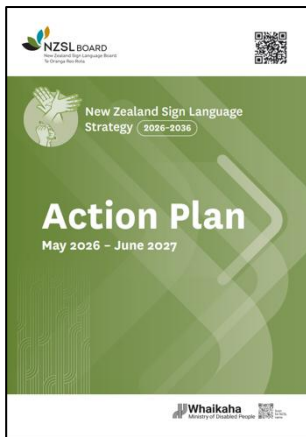




Deaf clubs all around Aotearoa
New Zealand will lead celebrations
for the anniversary.



The NZSL Board will fund / pay for
the celebrations.



We will **launch** the Action Plan as
part of the celebrations.

Here **launch** means put something
out so people can read it.

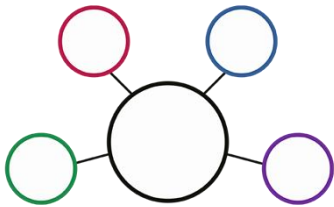


This will mean more people can:

- find out about the Action Plan
- work together on things in the Action Plan.



Governance, monitoring and future planning



Here **governance** means the way an organisation is run.



We will write an annual report to say:

- how the Action Plan is going
- what we need to do
- if there are any problems with the Action Plan.



We will start work on the Action Plan for July 2027 to June 2030.



Writing the next action plan will make sure work for the Strategy keeps on going after June 2027.

What success looks like by June 2027



These are the things that will have happened by June 2027 if work on the Action Plan has gone well.



We will have:

- found out what the NZSL workforce needs

and

- agreed on what to do to meet those needs.



Government departments will be working on plans to make the way they use NZSL better.



Public service departments will have written in their annual reports about how they use NZSL.



Good changes for NZSL will have started to happen in:

- health
- education.



Stats NZ will have created a **draft indicator framework**.

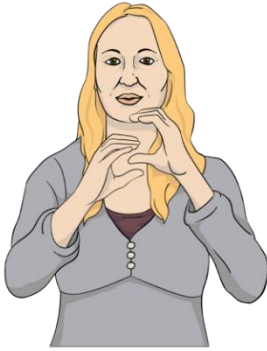


Draft means something:

- is a first copy
- could change.



An **indicator framework** is a way to use data from a lot of different places at the same time.



More people will know about NZSL.

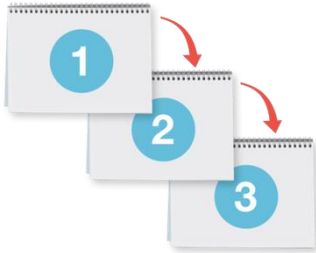
NZSL will be used in more places.



We will have written an annual report about how work on the Strategy is going.



We will have written the next Action Plan.



The next Action Plan will clearly show what we need to do.



Doing these things will set us up to achieve our vision of **everyone, everywhere, every day** by 2030.

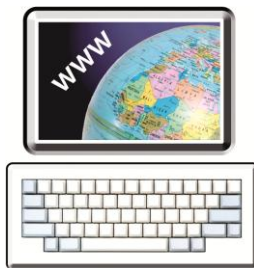
More information



You can read the full Strategy at:

<https://shorturl.at/8j9i9>

The full Strategy is **not** in Easy Read.



You can also find the Strategy in
NZSL at the website link above.



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



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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