

New Zealand Sign Language Board position statement: New Zealand Sign Language and Artificial Intelligence



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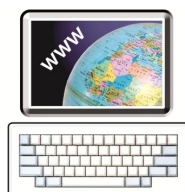
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About this Easy Read



This Easy Read is from the **New Zealand Sign Language Board – Te Oranga Reo Rota**.



The **New Zealand Sign Language Board – Te Oranga Reo Rota** is part of Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled People.



In this Easy Read the New Zealand Sign Language Board – Te Oranga Reo Rota will be called the **NZSL Board**.



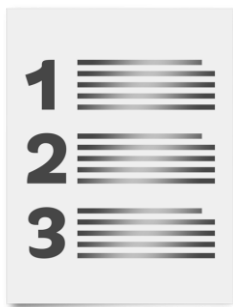
Where it says **we / us** this means the NZSL Board.



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

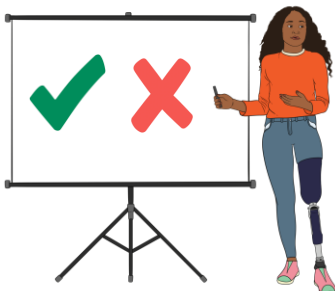


This Easy Read is a **summary** of a **position statement** from the NZSL Board about NZSL and **artificial intelligence / AI**.



A **summary**:

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



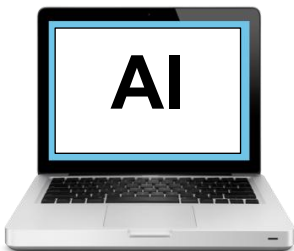
A **position statement** is information from an organisation about what they:

- think about something
- will do about something.



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

- learning
- solving problems.



In this Easy Read **artificial intelligence / AI** will be called AI for short.



The position statement was made with perspectives / thoughts from:

- Deaf people
- Turi Māori / Māori Deaf people.



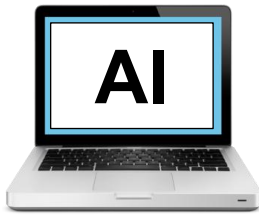
The position statement is for people working with:

- AI
- NZSL
- NZSL **data**
- NZSL users.



Data is information that shows what groups of people:

- are doing
- need.



The NZSL Board does not endorse / support any AI:

- tool
- provider / organisation that makes AI
- dataset / group of information
- technology.

NZSL is an official language



NZSL is an **official language** of Aotearoa New Zealand.



An **official language** is a language that the Government has said is to be used by law for people who need it.



NZSL is the **living language** of:

- Deaf people
- Turi Māori.



Here **living language** means a language that:

- is used a lot
- changes.



NZSL is not the English language using hands.



NZSL has its own:

- grammar / ways words are put with each other
- history
- meanings that people understand by watching it being used.



Deaf

Some of the things that make up NZSL are:

- language
- **culture**
- community.





Culture is a way of:

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



These things cannot be separated / taken away from each other.



There is an important saying for Deaf and disabled people:

Nothing about us without us.



This means Deaf people should be a part of:

- building their language
- things that are done with their language.

Agreeing on how NZSL can be used



Data about NZSL can include:

- language
- the bodies of people
- how people move
- the **identity** of people
- what people know about Deaf culture
- how language is different for different people.



Here **identity** means how someone:

- sees themselves
- does things in their life.



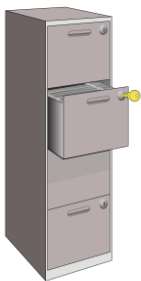
People must agree in a clear way
before their NZSL data is:

- collected
- used.



People should know:

- why the data is being collected
- who can use the data
- how the data will be:
 - stored
 - shared
- if the data can be:
 - used more than 1 time
 - removed / deleted.





People should also know who might benefit / get good things from using the data.



Content being on the internet does not mean anyone is allowed to use it to:

- put into an AI to make it do more things
- test their AI
- make AI tools to sell.



Here **content** means things people put on the internet like:

- videos
- news
- posts on social media like Facebook.





Sharing something is not the same as saying it is okay for people to use it.



The Deaf community should be a part of making decisions about NZSL data like:

- collecting it
- storing it
- sharing it
- transferring / moving it to another place.



NZSL data should be kept in Aotearoa New Zealand.



This should only change if the Deaf community agree to it.

What should AI do for NZSL?

AI can be used in good ways like:



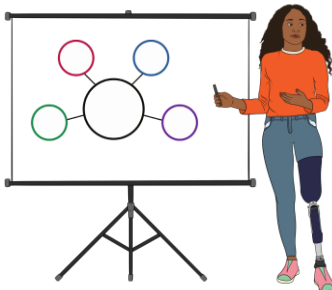
- improving access to:

- information
- services



- supporting Deaf people to:

- take part
- be independent / do things for themselves



- making new ways of doing things.



AI could be bad if it is not:

- made well
- governed / looked after properly.



This could mean AI:

- does not do NZSL properly
- gives out information about people when it should not
- changes access to important services for Deaf people like:
 - education / school
 - health
 - justice like the Police.





AI should support:

- interpreters
- translators
- NZSL teachers
- other Deaf services.



AI should not:

- be used instead of people having their jobs
- make services worse.





It is important to think about how AI might be used in things that need to be:

- accurate / correct
- trusted
- safe.



It is also important to think about how AI might be used in things that make decisions with lots of information.

What we are asking you to do



There are things you can do when thinking about using AI with NZSL.

Use our position statement to check your project



Use our full position statement before making a decision about using AI with NZSL.



The decision could be about:

- getting money for an AI project
- buying an AI tool
- developing / making an AI tool
- using AI with NZSL.
- researching / finding out about AI.





Ask if AI is the right tool

Think about what you need to do with NZSL.



You might not need AI to do something.



Think about:

- what could happen if AI got something wrong
- if people could still get support from a human.



Have Deaf people and Turi Māori take part from the start



Have people with good skills join what you are doing before making big decisions about AI.



Make sure the people with good skills are a big part of what you are doing with AI.



Ask questions about what happens with data

Find out what happens to data like:

- who can use it
- where it is stored
- who controls / is in charge of it
- how it is used more than 1 time
- who gets good things from using it.





Deaf



Protect privacy and quality

Make sure any AI technology is done with:

- Deaf people
- people who know a lot about NZSL.

Make sure they take part in:

- designing / coming up with AI
- testing AI
- checking AI.

Keep human support and choice



AI can support making more information available.



AI should not replace people where human support is needed.



People should have a choice about how they access:

- information
- services.



Share the position statement

Share the position statement with:

- your team
- people who:
 - make decisions
 - give you funding / money
- anyone who is thinking about using AI with NZSL.



There are things that should be done before doing a project with AI.



Anyone doing a project with AI should explain:

- how it will be governed / looked after
- how the data will be used
- how NZSL will be used.
- what the good things they want to happen are
- who will fix things if something goes wrong.



If you are planning to do AI work with NZSL you can talk to:

- the NZSL Board
- Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled People.





They can talk to you about:

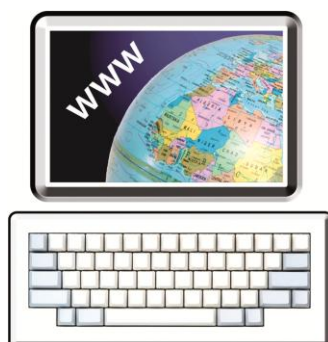
- the position statement
- support you may need with your AI project.

More information



You can contact the NZSL Board at this email address:

nzsl@whaikaha.govt.nz

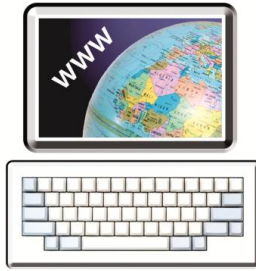


You can read the full NZSL Board position statement on NZSL and AI at this **website**:

www.NZSL.govt.nz/AI

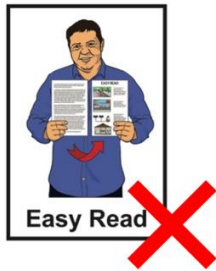


This full position statement is **not** in Easy Read.

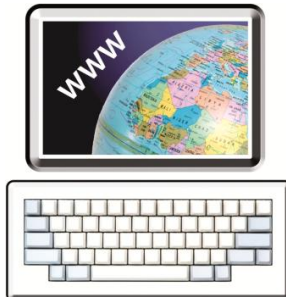


You can read the NZSL Strategy
2026 to 2036 at this website:

www.NZSL.govt.nz/26-36



This website is not in Easy Read.



You can read the **Human Rights
Commission report on AI and
digital technologies** at this website:

<https://shorturl.at/G1boG>



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This information has been written by The New Zealand Sign Language Board – Te Oranga Reo Rota.



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