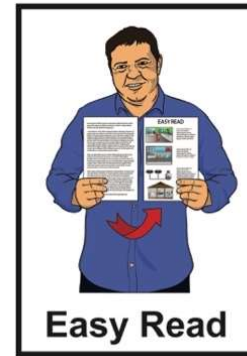




**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA



Summary of Cabinet Paper: Changing the New Zealand Sign Language Act 2006



Published: June 2023

What this document is about



This is an Easy Read **summary** of a **Cabinet Paper** from the **Minister for Disability Issues**.



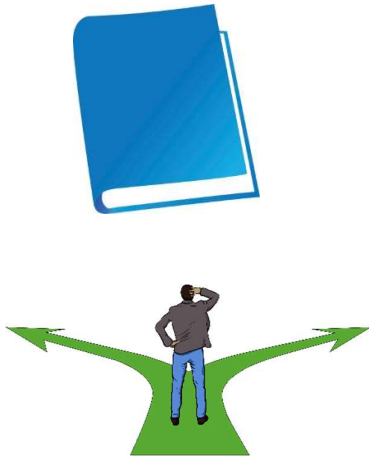
A summary:

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



Cabinet:

- is a group of senior government ministers
- meets to make important decisions.



Cabinet paper has information in it that Cabinet needs to:

- know about
- make a decision about.



The **Minister for Disability Issues** is Priyanca Radhakrishna.



This Cabinet Paper asks Cabinet to agree to make some changes to the **New Zealand Sign Language Act 2006**.



New Zealand Sign Language is the main language of the Deaf community in Aotearoa New Zealand.

New Zealand Sign Language is sometimes called **NZSL**.



You can find more information about NZSL on the Office for Disability Issues **website**:



<https://tinyurl.com/mvurt2kr>

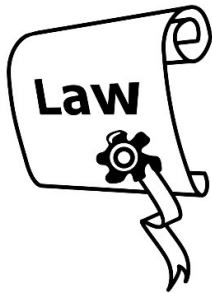


In this Easy Read document we call the New Zealand Sign Language Act 2006 the **NZSL Act**.

About the New Zealand Sign Language Act 2006



In 2006 Parliament agreed to have the NZSL **Act**.



An **Act** is a **law** that has been agreed to in Parliament.

A **law** is like a set of rules that must be followed.



The NZSL Act meant that NZSL became an **official language** in Aotearoa New Zealand.



An **official language** is a language that people speak / use in that country.



The NZSL Act was made **before**:

- the New Zealand Government signed the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** in 2008
- the **New Zealand Sign Language Board** was set up in 2015
- the **New Zealand Sign Language Strategy 2018 – 2023** was written.

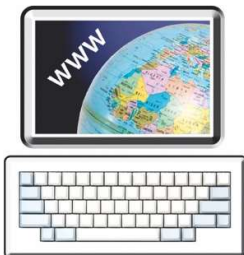




The **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** is a law lots of countries have agreed to.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is also called the **UNCRPD**.

It says what governments must do to make sure disabled people get the same rights as everybody else.



The **New Zealand Sign Language Board** is a small group made up of mostly Deaf people who use NZSL.

The NZSL Board works to:

- make sure Deaf people have the right to use NZSL
- give advice to Government about the use of NZSL
- give advice to the community / other users of NZSL like sign language interpreters.

You can find more information about the NZSL Board on the Office for Disability Issues **website**:

www.odi.govt.nz/nzsl/about-board



The **New Zealand Sign Language Strategy** is a plan of work that the NZSL Board will do between 2018 and 2023.



You can find more information about the Strategy on the Office for Disability Issues **website**:

<https://tinyurl.com/2whyf9zf>

NZSL is important for Deaf people to:

- learn
- communicate
- take part in our society.



Reviewing the NZSL Act



In 2019 the Minister for Disability Issues was Carmel Sepuloni.

She asked the NZSL Board to:

- **review** the NZSL Act
- suggest ways to make the NZSL Act match the ideas in the NZSL Strategy better.



Review means to take a good look at something to see if changing it will make it better.

The NZSL Board looked at ways to:



- give the Deaf community a stronger say in **public leadership**
- check how well people / organisations follow the NZSL Act
- make **Te Tiriti o Waitangi / The Treaty of Waitangi** part of the NZSL Act.



Public leadership is when people / organisations speaks up for whole community.



Te Tiriti o Waitangi / The Treaty of Waitangi is a legal document that was signed in 1840.

Te Tiriti / The Treaty is important to Aotearoa New Zealand.

It is about Māori and the New Zealand Government:

- making decisions together
- looking after the things that are important to Māori.



The NZSL Board and the Ministry of Social Development did a **public consultation** to find out what changes people wanted to the NZSL Act.



Public consultation is when you ask people for their ideas about something.

Some ways of doing public consultations are:

- having hui / meetings
- people sending in their written submissions / ideas
- people recording / sending in their submissions using NZSL.



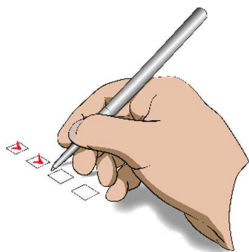


People had between September 2022 to November 2022 to have their say.



During the public consultation people said they wanted:

- Deaf people to get a bigger say / lead long-term planning for NZSL
- Te Tiriti o Waitangi / The Treaty of Waitangi put into the Act to give **Turi Māori** more leadership
- checks on how well government agencies followed the NZSL Act.



Turi Māori means Māori who are Deaf.



You can read about the main things
people in the public consultation said
on the Office for Disability Issues
website:

www.odi.govt.nz/nzsl/nzsl-act-consultation-2022

Recommendations to Cabinet



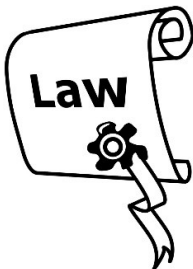
Recommendations are things that should be done to make things better for people.



Cabinet agreed to make changes to the NZSL Act as recommended by the Minister for Disability Issues.



These changes include the NZSL Board becoming a **statutory Ministerial advisory group**.



A **statutory Ministerial advisory group** has its job set out in the law.



By being a statutory Ministerial advisory group the NZSL Board will:

- have more powers
- new things to do.



These new things to do will include:

- leading planning for the future of NZSL
- getting information from government agencies about how they use NZSL.





Another change is that Te Tiriti o Waitangi / The Treaty of Waitangi becomes an important part of the NZSL Act.



This will give Turi Māori more leadership when it comes to decisions about NZSL.



The NZSL Act will say that learning is NZSL important.

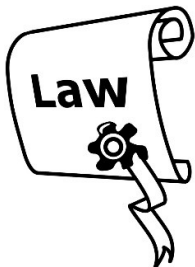


Government agencies will use the information in the NZSL Act to better support the Deaf community.



There will be a review of the NZSL Act 5 years after these changes become law.

What happens next?



As Cabinet has agreed to change the NZSL Act officials will be working to change the legislation.



You can find more information about changing the NZSL Act on Office for Disability **website**:

www.odi.govt.nz/nzsl/nzsl-act-consultation-2022



This information has been written by the Ministry of Social Development.



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



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