



What is New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) Week about?

NZSL became an official language of Aotearoa New Zealand in 2006 when the NZSL Act passed into law.

In 2007 we celebrated NZSL Week for the first time.

The aim of NZSL Week is to raise awareness of NZSL and to encourage all New Zealanders to learn and use our language. The week is also an opportunity to learn about the New Zealand Deaf community and our Deaf culture.

NZSL Week adds to the rich and diverse identity of Aotearoa New Zealand.

NZSL Week 2024 is a week of fun, activities, stories and learning – a celebration of the Deaf community – from 6th to 12th May.

What is the theme for NZSL Week 2024?

The theme for NZSL Week 2024 is **An Aotearoa Where Anyone Can Sign Anywhere.**

- Join with our ambassadors Jon Tai-Rakena, Brad Watson from The Hits, Maria Foy from Happy Mum, Happy Child and all of New Zealanders, Deaf and hearing, to give signing a go from Monday 6th to Sunday 12th May 2024.
- So, whether you're just starting out on your New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) journey, or you are a pro ready to share your skills to everyone you know, or if you're somewhere in-between, together we can make New Zealand Sign Language thrive!

What happens during NZSL Week?

- **NZSL Week Challenges** – There are three different ways you can get involved during NZSL Week!
 1. Come together over morning tea with your team, use resources, and spend just 7 minutes giving NZSL a go!
 2. Learn 7 Signs – Can you learn seven new signs this NZSL Week? Perhaps it's your first time learning!
 3. Sign Sing – Give Six60's Pepeha song a try!
- Visit our website for more information. Be sure to tag Deaf Aotearoa and use the hashtags #NZSLWeek24 #NZSLWeekChallenge to show us your efforts, whether it's a team selfie or a video clip!
- A national PR campaign via media, radio, online engagement, social media and printed materials.
- New Zealand Sign Language Awards celebrating individuals, businesses, and organisations that have contributed to the vitality of New Zealand Sign Language

Check out our website nzslweek.org.nz and follow us on social media for updates.



hands up if you're ready to sign with us!



What is the impact of NZSL Week?

NZSL Week is a week where the NZ Deaf community stands together to celebrate our language and our culture.

NZSL Week brings NZSL into the homes and daily lives of Kiwis of all ages. Increasing the awareness and respect of NZSL in general society makes the daily interactions for Deaf people a little easier.



Where can I learn NZSL?

Learning NZSL is heaps of fun! It is just like learning any language – in fact even easier as you might know some signs already! It requires interest and motivation to learn and practice.

Things to know about NZSL

There are over 300 different Sign Languages in the world.

NZSL is one of them.

NZSL has its own grammatical structure and linguistic features, different from English. NZSL is not a version of English 'on the hands'.

NZ's 2018 census showed that over **20,000 people use NZSL, with an estimated 4,500 Deaf users of NZSL.**

NZSL is part of a language family which includes British Sign Language (BSL), and Australian Sign Language (Auslan).

These three languages are still different from each other! However, American Sign Language (ASL) is very different from BSL, Auslan and NZSL.

You can read more facts about NZSL at the Online NZSL Dictionary website: **nzsl.nz/nzsl/ and teara.govt.nz/en/new-zealand-signlanguage**

There are lots of ways you can learn NZSL:

1. Visit Learn NZSL, a free learning portal at **learnnzsl.nz**
2. Check out the NZSL Dictionary online at **nzsl.nz** or free from your app store
3. Visit NZSL Teachers Association at **teachsign.org.nz** for information about classes in your area
4. **nzslweek.org.nz/resources** has a variety of downloadable resources
5. **firstsigns.co.nz/learn-sign/** for resources to support your family to learn NZSL
6. Visit **deaf.org.nz**

Notes on terminology

New Zealand Sign Language is correctly abbreviated to NZSL, not "NZ Sign Language".

Deaf – is capitalised when referring to the Deaf community. The Deaf community are a cultural linguistic minority community within NZ. We have our own Deaf culture and language – NZSL.

Deaf culture has its own traditions, history, art, humour and behaviours.

NZSL Interpreters are not translators. They are tertiary-qualified professionals who facilitate effective communication between Deaf and hearing people.

What does Deaf Aotearoa do?

Deaf Aotearoa is the DPO (Disabled Person's Organisation) representing the voice of Deaf people in Aotearoa New Zealand. We are the national service provider for Deaf people and their whānau. We are the NZ representative to the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD).

We work with Deaf communities, families with Deaf children, government agencies and other organisations to increase awareness, promote NZSL and advocate for the human rights of Deaf people.

Deaf Aotearoa provides the following services:

- Children & Youth
- Adults & Seniors
- Translation
- iSign (NZSL Interpreter Booking Service)
- Adult Community Education
- Deaf Awareness workshops

Go to **deaf.org.nz** for more information about these services.

FOR MEDIA QUERIES OR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT NZSL WEEK, CONTACT US:

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Deaf
AOTEAROA
TANGATA TURI