

Report

Date: 19 August 2020 **Security Level:** IN CONFIDENCE

To: Hon Carmel Sepuloni, Minister for Disability Issues

From: Brian Coffey, Director, Office for Disability Issues

Report No. REP/20/7/879

EDRMS ID A12670536

New Zealand Sign Language Board Annual Report 2020

Purpose of the report

- 1 The New Zealand Sign Language Board (the Board) is required to provide an annual report to you which summarises the progress that has been made towards the maintenance and promotion of NZSL.
- 2 This year's annual report outlines the Board's key achievements between November 2019-June 2020, priorities for the year ahead and the outcome of Round Seven of the NZSL community grant applications. The impact of COVID-19 on the Board's work is also briefly discussed.
- 3 Note that annual reporting has traditionally followed the NZSL community grants funding cycle. Changes made by the Board and the Board's Secretariat have systematically implemented changes to allocate the community grants early in the financial year. These changes have meant that the reporting round for this year's annual report is slightly shorter. Going forward, community grants will be allocated at the start of each financial year which will return the annual reporting cycle to a full 12 months ending in June each year.

Executive summary

- 4 The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the Board's work programme and other associated projects that were planned for 2019/20. As a result, the Board has taken the opportunity to re-prioritise the work programme and to consider how to better engage with the community, stakeholders, and Government.

Key achievements: November 2019-June 2020

- 5 Key achievements include:
 - Investment of the NZSL Fund. In the past seven months the following projects have been contracted:
 - NZSL week was tendered and won by Deaf Aotearoa. This \$300,000 three-year contract allows longer term planning for the annual celebration of NZSL

- NZSL Online Dictionary maintenance is being provided by Victoria University of Wellington who currently host the dictionary and app for an annual cost of \$147,000
 - NZSL Interpreter Standards for general and legal settings are being developed by Victoria University of Wellington (\$36,000)
- Agreement to further refine how the NZSL Fund is allocated from 2021/22 onwards:
 - NZSL community grants will be allocated \$250,000 annually with maximum individual grants of \$50,000
 - A new funding mechanism will be established for projects up to \$250,000 over two years with a maximum of \$500,000 invested each year
- Round Seven of the NZSL community grants opened in May 2020
- A review of the Board's terms of reference
- the NZSL Board review 2020 [REP/20/5/505] recommended changes to the Terms of Reference, strengthening governance and Board appointments, and a series of actions to strengthen community cohesion to achieve the Strategy Outcomes.
- Development of indicators to measure progress against the outcomes of the NZSL Strategy
 - work to develop indicators to measure outcomes of the NZSL Strategy (2018-2023) has progressed. The Board will approve a final draft with four key Government agencies – Justice, Education, Health, and Social Development and develop an annual reporting framework.
- Agreement of a new NZSL Board logo
 - a new NZSL Board logo has been designed, celebrating the vibrancy of NZSL and work of the Board. The new branding will be shared with Government, stakeholders and the wider community on the new NZSL Board Facebook page.
- The Board funded a hui and report to consider the needs and opportunities for Māori Deaf sign language users.

Priorities for the year ahead

6 Priorities for the year ahead include:

- Building on the 2019/20 report with a significant commitment to the engagement and development of Māori Deaf has been approved for the next five years. This work programme will build capacity, capability and succession planning to strengthen the self determination of this group Deaf youth
 - a project to learn about the needs of Deaf youth was commissioned by the Board along with the employment of two Deaf youth interns. The final report will support the Board's understanding of how Deaf youth access and use NZSL today
- Stakeholder and community engagement
 - the relationship between the Board, stakeholders and the community has been identified as a priority for the success of the NZSL Strategy. Strong stakeholders and a good community understanding of the NZSL Board role will share the work to maintain and promote NZSL
- Review of the NZSL Act 2006
 - the Board reported on the opportunity to align the NZSL Act 2006 and the NZSL Strategy (2018-2023) in the previous annual report. The scope and Terms of Reference will be developed to identify any benefits of reviewing the NZSL Act 2006.

Outcome of Round Seven

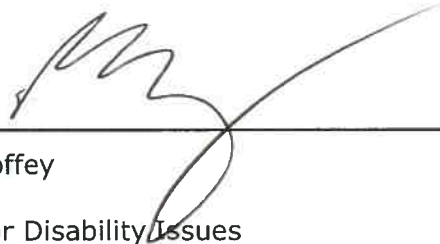
- 7 The NZSL Fund has a total of \$1.645m per annum to allocate to activities designed to maintain and promote NZSL.
- 8 Round seven opened in May 2020 and 16 applications were assessed against the priorities outlined in the NZSL Strategy (2018-2023). 13 grants totalling \$395,800.20 have been approved for 2020/21 allocation (see Annex A for details).

Rhian Yates

18/08/2020 7:24 PM

Rhian Yates
Chair
New Zealand Sign Language Board

Date



Brian Coffey
Director
Office for Disability Issues

20 August 2020

Date

Recommended actions

It is recommended that you:

1. **Note** that the New Zealand Sign Language Board continued to undertake its responsibilities during 2020/21 as established by Cabinet in 2014, including through allocation of funding from the New Zealand Sign Language Fund.
2. **Note** that 13 applications to Round seven of the NZSL Fund have been recommended by the NZSL Board for funding.
3. **Agree** to announce the 13 successful applications for community grants.

Agree / Disagree

Hon Carmel Sepuloni
Minister for Disability Issues

Date

What was achieved over the past seven months?

Strategic investment of the NZSL Fund

1. The investment of NZSL funds has historically been driven by ideas from the NZSL community through community grant applications. The NZSL Strategy (2018-2023) now guides the work programme according to the language planning priorities to maintain and promote NZSL.
2. The increase of \$395,000 in the 2019 budget has grown the NZSL Fund to \$1,645 million annually, enabling the ongoing investment into key strategic projects without compromising the funding allocated to local communities and Deaf organisations.
3. In the past seven months the following projects have been contracted:
 - a. NZSL week was tendered and won by Deaf Aotearoa. This \$300,000 three-year contract allows longer term planning for the annual celebration of NZSL.
 - b. NZSL Online Dictionary maintenance is being provided by Victoria University of Wellington who currently host the dictionary and app for an annual cost of \$147,000.
 - c. NZSL Interpreter Standards for general and legal settings are being developed by Victoria University of Wellington (\$36,000).
4. A further refinement in the use of the NZSL Fund has been approved by the Board from 2021/22 onwards:
 - a. NZSL community grants will be allocated \$250,000 annually with maximum individual grants of \$50,000. These parameters fit the low accountability of a grant model while continuing to support local community initiatives aligned to the NZSL Strategy.
 - b. A new funding mechanism will be established for projects up to \$250,000 over two years with a maximum of \$500,000 invested each year. The Board will identify a NZSL Strategy priority and invite tenders from Deaf businesses and organisations with the capacity and capability to successfully deliver large scale projects.

NZSL community grants

5. Each year, the NZSL community have an opportunity to apply for local initiative funding. Considerable planning to set a regular annual cycle for community grant applications will be realised in 2021/22 from which applications will be welcomed in March each year and the grants distributed in July each year.
6. Round Seven of the contestable process opened in May 2020, inviting projects that align with the NZSL Strategy priorities. An online funding portal Survey Monkey Apply, was used for the first time creating further efficiencies for the community grants process.
7. The Expression of Interest (EOI) stage contributed to a receiving a range of quality applications. During this stage, applicants receive guidance to refine their project ideas and ensure alignment to the NZSL Strategy.
8. The Board considered the 16 applications and have recommended 13 grants for the 2020/21 financial year totalling \$395,800,20. Details of the successful applications are attached at Annex A.
9. The Board was particularly pleased to award four grants to support initiatives for the Māori Deaf community.
10. Individual applicants will be notified of the outcome by September 2020 along with an announcement on the NZSL Board webpage.

NZSL Board review 2020

11. The Office for Disability Issues carried out a review of the NZSL Board gathering information from past and current members of the Board and the original Expert Advisory Group.
12. The Board will continue to represent community experience and diversity while seeking expert advice on key strategic topics.
13. A number of changes to the Terms of References were recommended and accepted creating stronger governance processes and reducing the impact of perceived conflicts of interest. The key changes include:
 - a. A DPO nominee will be recommended by Deaf Aotearoa for appointment onto the Board
 - b. Senior managers, owners of a Deaf business or close relative will not vote on funding decisions
 - c. The size of the Board will remain at up to 10 members however it is recognised that eight members is the ideal size.
 - d. The quorum will become half the Board members plus one to allow for Board size changes
14. Additional work to develop Deaf community capacity and capability will be commissioned including:
 - a. Regular community workshops to develop governance skills
 - b. A programme of work to develop community cohesion and collective impact for the maintenance and promotion of NZSL

NZSL Strategy (2018-2023): Indicators and Government agency relationships

15. Indicators to measure progress towards the outcomes of the strategy are being developed and will be reviewed by NZSL experts before a draft is signed off by the Board in September 2020.
16. The draft indicators will be discussed with the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Health to develop a reporting framework, identifying mechanisms for data collection, analysis, and regular reporting.
17. Work with the Ministry of Education has already begun alongside meetings with Ko Taku Reo Deaf Education New Zealand to discuss access to education in NZSL for Deaf children and reporting that will identify progress and barriers towards this priority.
18. The opportunity for Deaf children to experience NZSL immersion education remains a key issue for the Board. Acquisition of NZSL for Deaf children requires opportunities to learning alongside fluent adult users of NZSL and other Deaf children.

NZSL Board logo review

19. The Board reflected on the past five years since the establishment of the NZSL Board, on the progress made, the work to maintain and promote NZSL in New Zealand, and how the logo reflected this work.
20. A sub-committee worked with a graphic designer to develop a logo that embodies the vibrancy of NZSL and dual audiences of the Board – Government and the NZSL community.
21. The new logo represents the value of intergenerational use of NZSL and seeks to appeal to a younger generation of NZSL users required to maintain a vulnerable language.

22. Te Reo was developed in consultation with Māori Deaf, Te Reo linguistic experts and NZSL Board members. The meanings translate to “Te Oranga Reo Rota” - the well-being of sign language, and “Te Tahua Reo Rota” - funds for sign language.
23. The new logo will be shared using a soft launch approach with the initial release on the NZSL Board Facebook page



The impact of Covid-19

24. The demand for information in NZSL was highlighted throughout Covid-19 restrictions with several people and organisations advocating for timely information in NZSL.
25. The daily use of interpreters at the press conferences raised the visibility and status of NZSL as an official language of New Zealand. The NZSL Online Dictionary reported consistently higher user numbers during April 2020 than in previous years. The maintenance of the online dictionary is a key strategic annual investment of the NZSL Fund.
26. The Board commissioned a series of community for community NZSL videos targeting the wider Deaf community. The videos focussed everyday community issues during Covid-19 were welcomed by the wider community, complementing more official Government messages.
27. The Board took time to reflect on the annual work programme assessing the value of the current work programme against the priorities of the NZSL Strategy (2018-2023). Some previous commitments, such as work towards developing an NZSL Online hub, have been put on hold to focus on priorities such as NZSL acquisition and NZSL use/access.
28. Many NZSL community grant projects and contracts were delayed however remain important work for the maintenance and promotion of NZSL. Accommodations to extend timeframes have been completed to continue progressing the maintenance and promotion of NZSL.

Priorities for the year ahead

Māori Deaf engagement and development

29. The Board participated in training to develop cultural knowledge, understand Government’s commitment to upholding the principles of Te Tiriti and applications in the Board context. A new role of a Māori cultural coach and mentor also ensures the ongoing work to reflect the principles of Te Tiriti in all Board work.
30. A report commissioned by the NZSL Board identified significant barriers accessing Te Ao Māori for Māori Deaf who did not benefit from the renaissance in the 1970’s onwards. The barriers resulted in significant cultural gaps for Māori Deaf impacting on their ability to lead from a Māori perspective.
31. Two Board members who bring a Māori perspective were appointed in December 2019. While both are relatively new members, the timing of their appointment has supported the Board making a significant commitment to the future engagement and development of Māori Deaf.

32. A five-year programme of work to fund ongoing community engagement, the provision of workshops to access and develop cultural competency and resource development will be announced at a hui between the Board and Māori Deaf members who provided input to the report.
33. This work programme will support Māori Deaf to engage with the NZSL Strategy (2018-2023) and unpack the use and access needs of tamariki, rangitahi and whānau.
34. In addition, work with the Ministry of Education to support the Māori Deaf youth to access this knowledge whilst enrolled in the school system will prevent future knowledge gaps for the adult Māori Deaf community.

Deaf youth

35. A report to understand how Deaf children and Deaf youth access and use NZSL was commissioned. Deaf youth experience increased enrolment into local schools and technological advancements that provide hearing to children who previously would have not had access to spoken language.
36. Some preliminary work on the project was supported with the employment of two Deaf youth interns in ODI. Unfortunately, Covid-19 reduced their experience from the planned 14 weeks to five weeks.
37. The project has been carried over and will be completed by the end of 2020. The report findings will guide Board decision making about funding projects to support the acquisition of NZSL by Deaf children.

Stakeholder engagement

38. Work to maintain and promote NZSL is led by the NZSL Board but achieved through the work of many organisations, businesses and community members.
39. The Board identified key stakeholders, whose work is important for the vitality of NZSL, and committed to working with them to strengthen their work to ensure the survival of NZSL.
40. In particular, the New Zealand Sign Language Teachers Association (NZSLTA) and the Sign Language Interpreters Association of New Zealand (SLIANZ)
 - a. NZSLTA is a not for profit membership organisation, responsible for the quality of teaching and learning NZSL in the community.
 - b. SLIANZ is also a membership based organisation that provide mentoring and guidance for the small workforce of NZSL interpreters in New Zealand
41. The health of both organisations is critical to the work of the Strategy yet both have struggled with the capacity to maintain the work of organisation. The NZSL Board have committed to funding governance training in the 2020/21 financial year along with invitations to inform the Board of the current successes and challenges of each sector.
42. Further detail around how to maintain strong stakeholder relationships with regular input to the Board will be developed over the coming year and will include the two universities delivering key NZSL courses such as the NZSL interpreter course at the Auckland University of Technology and the Deaf Studies Certificate at Victoria University of Wellington.
43. Already on track is the relationship with Deaf Aotearoa, as the Disabled Peoples Organisation (DPO), with a final draft of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which outlines the relationship and how the Board will work together currently being considered by the Deaf Aotearoa Executive Board. During Covid-19

lockdown, the Chair kept in regular contact with the President of the Executive Board to discuss impacts on the Deaf community.

Community engagement

44. Deaf community capability and understanding of the Board work as 'heartland' users of NZSL was made a priority with 12 community meetings booked from March to May 2020. Five were completed before New Zealand entered Level 4 lockdown.
45. The intent of these meetings was to connect with local 'grassroots' Deaf communities to promote the work they can do to maintain and promote NZSL at a local level through the NZSL community grants and the work of the Board to focus at a Government level.
46. The NZSL Strategy and the NZ Disability Strategy were discussed so the community understood the differences between the work of the NZSL Board and Deaf Aotearoa as the Disabled People's Organisation (DPO).

NZSL Act 2006 review

47. Preliminary work will be completed to consider the provisions of the NZSL Act 2006 and alignment with the language planning principles in the NZSL Strategy priorities (2018-2023).
48. The scope will consider what could be achieved through a change to legislation compared with alternative ways to achieve increased benefits for the recognition, maintenance and promotion of NZSL as an official language.
49. A report will be provided to you for consideration.

Annex A: Summary information for successful applications to contestable Round Seven of the NZSL Fund

Ref	Supplier	Project Name and Description	Funding requested (excl GST)	Funding recommended (excl GST)
1	Deaf Wellbeing Society	<i>The Journey from Nature to Plate</i> – a series of short films of Deaf New Zealanders sharing their passion for living off the land including beekeeping, cheesemaking, gardening, fishing, chickens, hangi, Māori native forest foods, and paua divers.	49,698.00	49,698.00
2	Southland Deaf Community Inc	<i>NZSL Education in Southland</i> - teaching the Invercargill and Southland community about Deaf culture, identity and NZSL.	16,000.00	8,000.00
3	Kara Technologies Ltd	<i>High-Tech NZSL Children's Book Library (Phase Two)</i> – the production of four new NZSL books and a vocabulary list for eight books from phase one and two.	79,950.00	40,000.00
4	Wellington Deaf Society	<i>Revitalising the Heart of Wellington Deaf Community</i> – funding a position to organise and deliver events for Wellington Deaf Society.	25,000.00	20,000.00
5	Edumaxi	<i>Te Reo Singalong Books</i> – translating two more Te Reo singalong books into NZSL	19,245.00	19,245.00
6	JPF Films and AFED Ltd	<i>IMAGENZSL</i> – fund a feasibility study to determine whether it is worth developing a NZSL app where a smartphone will be aimed at an object and the NZSL sign will come up, like the Kupu app.	79,800.00	Up to \$10,000*
7	Nga Rangatahi Turi o Aotearoa	<i>Māori Deaf Youth Part Two</i> – the focus will be discussing factors of equality vs equity, advocacy for the needs of Māori Deaf and identifying ongoing activities for Māori Deaf youth hui to develop knowledge of Te Ao Māori including whakapapa, kaupapa and tikanga.	80,000.00	40,000.00

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8	Talk Town Ltd	<i>Talk Town</i> - Talk Town is a digital game that aims to teach young Deaf and hard of hearing people to develop self-advocacy and social communication skills. This project aims to scope the adaption of the game into NZSL and a Deaf context.	5,199.00	5,199.00
9	Auckland Deaf Society	<i>An Interactive Day for Families and Whanau with Deaf Children</i> – a guided introduction into the local Deaf community where Deaf adults and youth will deliver workshops showcasing the diversity of the Deaf community and the value of participation in NZSL to hearing parents of Deaf children.	8,152.00	8,152.00
10	Platform NZ	<i>Finding your place in Aotearoa through te Tiriti o Waitangi</i> - providing a series of workshops to Māori Deaf in partnership with Tu Tangata Turi.	78,276.00	78,276.00
11	Platform NZ	<i>Creating Standards for using interpreters in mental health situations</i> - Develop guidelines, supervision processes and deliver workshops for NZSL interpreters in mental health settings and addiction settings. Scope training for interpreting work during comprehensive mental health assessments and treatment.	41,900.00	41,900.00
12	Platform NZ	<i>Changing Minds in the Deaf Community</i> - Develop Rākau Roroa sessions – face to face, small group two-day sessions with Deaf people who have a lived experience of mental distress and recovery, to use the experience to create change in the community by empowering them with knowledge.	55,330.00	55,330.00
13	SignDNA	<i>Expanding the Sign DNA Archive</i> – There are three elements to this project – maintain the archive, process material and a developing a community engagement tool.	20,000.00	20,000.00
		Total	558,550.20	395,800.20

What was achieved over the past seven months?

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NZSL Act 2006 review

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48. The scope will consider what could be achieved through a change to legislation compared with alternative ways to achieve increased benefits for the recognition, maintenance and promotion of NZSL as an official language.
49. A report will be provided to the Minister for consideration.

Annex A: Summary information for successful applications to contestable Round 7 of the NZSL Fund

Ref	Supplier	Project Name and Description	Funding requested (excl GST)	Funding recommended (excl GST)
1	Deaf Wellbeing Society	<i>The Journey from Nature to Plate</i> – a series of short films of Deaf New Zealanders sharing their passion for living off the land including beekeeping, cheesemaking, gardening, fishing, chickens, hangi, Māori native forest foods, and paua divers.	49,698.00	49,698.00
2	Southland Deaf Community Inc	<i>NZSL Education in Southland</i> - teaching the Invercargill and Southland community about Deaf culture, identity and NZSL.	16,000.00	8,000.00
3	Kara Technologies Ltd	<i>High-Tech NZSL Children’s Book Library (Phase Two)</i> – the production of four new NZSL books and a vocabulary list for eight books from phase one and two.	79,950.00	40,000.00
4	Wellington Deaf Society	<i>Revitalising the Heart of Wellington Deaf Community</i> – funding a position to organise and deliver events for Wellington Deaf Society.	25,000.00	20,000.00
5	Edumaxi	<i>Te Reo Singalong Books</i> – translating two more Te Reo singalong books into NZSL	19,245.00	19,245.00
6	JPF Films and AFED Ltd	<i>IMAGENZSL</i> – fund a feasibility study to determine whether it is worth developing a NZSL app where a smartphone will be aimed at an object and the NZSL sign will come up, like the Kupu app.	79,800.00	Up to \$10,000*
7	Nga Rangatahi Turi o Aotearoa	<i>Māori Deaf Youth Part Two</i> – the focus will be discussing factors of equality vs equity, advocacy for the needs of Māori Deaf and identifying ongoing activities for Māori Deaf youth hui to develop knowledge of Te Ao Māori including whakapapa, kaupapa and tikanga.	80,000.00	40,000.00

Ref	Supplier	Project Name and Description	Funding requested (excl GST)	Funding recommended (excl GST)
8	Talk Town Ltd	<i>Talk Town</i> - Talk Town is a digital game that aims to teach young Deaf and hard of hearing people to develop self-advocacy and social communication skills. This project aims to scope the adaption of the game into NZSL and a Deaf context.	5,199.00	5,199.00
9	Auckland Deaf Society	<i>An Interactive Day for Families and Whanau with Deaf Children</i> – a guided introduction into the local Deaf community where Deaf adults and youth will deliver workshops showcasing the diversity of the Deaf community and the value of participation in NZSL to hearing parents of Deaf children.	8,152.00	8,152.00
10	Platform NZ	<i>Finding your place in Aotearoa through te Tiriti o Waitangi</i> - providing a series of workshops to Māori Deaf in partnership with Tu Tangata Turi.	78,276.00	78,276.00
11	Platform NZ	<i>Creating Standards for using interpreters in mental health situations</i> - Develop guidelines, supervision processes and deliver workshops for NZSL interpreters in mental health settings and addiction settings. Scope training for interpreting work during comprehensive mental health assessments and treatment.	41,900.00	41,900.00
12	Platform NZ	<i>Changing Minds in the Deaf Community</i> - Develop Rākau Roroa sessions – face to face, small group two-day sessions with Deaf people who have a lived experience of mental distress and recovery, to use the experience to create change in the community by empowering them with knowledge.	55,330.00	55,330.00
13	SignDNA	<i>Expanding the Sign DNA Archive</i> – There are three elements to this project – maintain the archive, process material and a developing a community engagement tool.	20,000.00	20,000.00
		Total	558,550.20	395,800.20