



28 APR 2021

Tēnā koe

On 1 April 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- 1. Full historical and current documentation recorded by the NZSL Board for all te reo Tūri signs that are known in the Deaf community.*
- 2. A full report of the strategic plan for Deaf Māori.*
- 3. A response to the reviews that will take place regarding investigating the NZSL Dictionary.*
- 4. Clarification from the NZSL Board on the term 'Tāngata Tūri' and a clear explanation to expectations of the NZSL Board of any other groups that are able to formally lodge signs and the process to officially document.*
- 5. An update of the discussion held with Deaf Aotearoa, Tū Tāngata Tūri Trust and Deaf Aotearoa to clearly outline the relationships and consultation process between all three entities.*

For the sake of clarity, I will address each question in turn.

- 1. Full historical and current documentation recorded by the NZSL Board for all te reo Tūri signs that are known in the Deaf community.*

The New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) Board has not commissioned the work to document te reo Tūri and cannot provide any historical or current documentation on this. As such this information is refused under section 18(e) of the Act, as this information does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

Any queries which the NZSL Board or Office for Disability Issue (ODI) receive about Sign Language are referred to Victoria University of Wellington, Deaf Studies Research Unit. Further information and contact details for the Deaf Studies Research Unit can be found online at the following link: [www.wgtn.ac.nz/lals/centres-and-institutes/dsru](http://www.wgtn.ac.nz/lals/centres-and-institutes/dsru).

- 2. A full report of the strategic plan for Deaf Māori.*

A strategic plan has at present not been developed, this is due to the additional commitment to explicitly supporting Māori Deaf being relatively new and the need to engage with Māori Deaf to determine their strategic needs. A strategic plan will be released publicly once it has been developed and Māori Deaf have been consulted.

Therefore, this information is refused under section 18(e) of the Act as this information does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

It is important to note that the NZSL Board is focused on the maintenance and promotion of NZSL and until 2018, was focused on developing the NZSL Strategy which can be found online here: [www.odi.govt.nz/nzsl/nzsl-strategy-2018-2023/](http://www.odi.govt.nz/nzsl/nzsl-strategy-2018-2023/).

*3. A response to the reviews that will take place regarding investigating the NZSL Dictionary.*

The NZSL Board funds the maintenance of the NZSL Dictionary as an important vehicle for documenting signs in common use by the Deaf community as 'documentation' of signs is vital to the maintenance of NZSL. However, the NZSL Board has never carried out a review or investigated the NZSL Dictionary. Therefore, this information is refused under section 18(e) of the Act as this information does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

*4. Clarification from the NZSL Board on the term 'Tāngata Tūri' and a clear explanation to expectations of the NZSL Board of any other groups that are able to formally lodge signs and the process to officially document.*

The NZSL Board currently uses the term 'Tāngata Tūri' when discussing the Māori Deaf community. This is a term used for and by the Māori Deaf community and is also the term used in the organisational name Tū Tāngata Tūri Trust.

The NZSL board does not have the mandate to question the validity of the term, when it is so commonly used by the Deaf community in Aotearoa. The NZSL Board is a governance group, which leads the implementation of the NZSL Strategy through commissioning projects and providing community grants to maintain and progress NZSL.

As previously mentioned, the NZSL Board has provided funding for the maintenance of the NZSL Dictionary as 'documentation' of languages is vital for the maintenance of languages that are at risk. For further details on the process of how Sign Language is identified and is documented in the NZSL Dictionary, please contact the Deaf Studies Research Unit at Victoria University. Further information and contact details for the Deaf Studies Research Unit can be found online at the following link: [www.wgtn.ac.nz/lals/centres-and-institutes/dsru](http://www.wgtn.ac.nz/lals/centres-and-institutes/dsru).

*5. An update of the discussion held with Deaf Aotearoa, Tū Tāngata Tūri Trust and Deaf Aotearoa to clearly outline the relationships and consultation process between all three entities.*

The NZSL Board has not met with Tū Tāngata Tūri Trust, and so any update of discussion held between the parties does not exist. Therefore, this information is refused under section 18(e) of the Act as this information does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

However, you might be interested in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Deaf Aotearoa and the NZSL Board that was signed on 9 December 2020. This document describes how the two organisations will work together and keep each

other informed on key work programmes. There is currently no formal relationship between Tū Tāngata Tūri Trust and the NZSL Board. Please note that the MoU does not specifically mention the Māori Deaf community.

The MoU can be found online at the following link: [www.odi.govt.nz/nzsl/about-board/memorandum-of-understanding-between-the-new-zealand-sign-language-board-and-deaf-aotearoa/](http://www.odi.govt.nz/nzsl/about-board/memorandum-of-understanding-between-the-new-zealand-sign-language-board-and-deaf-aotearoa/).

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

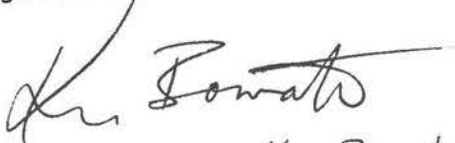
- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter available to the wider public. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter and attachments on the Ministry of Social Development's website. Your personal details will be deleted, and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact [OIA\\_Requests@msd.govt.nz](mailto:OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz).

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding information on the NZSL Board, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui



Ken Bowater, Acting Director  
Office for Disability Issues.

for

Brian Coffey  
**Director, Office for Disability Issues**