

# DEAF AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

**Deaf Aotearoa provides  
Deaf New Zealanders  
with knowledge,  
information, resources  
and skills.**



Deaf Aotearoa New Zealand is a Deaf-led, not-for-profit organisation formed more than 30 years ago by D/deaf New Zealanders.

The organisation focuses on promoting Awareness of, Access to and Advancement of New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) – to help strengthen the rights of Deaf people and give them the confidence to be an active part of society.

As the only nationwide provider of services to Deaf people, Deaf Aotearoa provides information on a range of services, including legal advice, education opportunities and employment issues.

Deaf Aotearoa also works with government agencies, businesses and other organisations to provide information and resources on life for Deaf New Zealanders, the Deaf community and NZSL.

## **Deaf Aotearoa:**

- Promotes the advancement of human rights for Deaf people
- Celebrates NZSL
- Works with Dedication, Discipline and Determination to strengthen the rights of Deaf people

As a member of the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD), Deaf Aotearoa is accountable to the Federation's principles – promoting the human rights of Deaf people in accordance with the objectives of the Charter of the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, including the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

## **Location**

Deaf Aotearoa's national office is in Auckland and it has 11 branches, plus outreach offices, around the country.

Please visit [www.deaf.org.nz](http://www.deaf.org.nz) to find an office close to you.

## **Services**

Deaf Aotearoa provides Deaf New Zealanders with knowledge, information, resources and skills - enabling them to independently manage events in their own lives.

Deaf Aotearoa delivers a variety of services including needs assessment, service coordination, equipment assessment and employment consultants.

Deaf Aotearoa also:

- Provides access to information and services
- Offers DEAFinitely Aware and DEAFinitely Signing workplace training programmes
- Facilitates ongoing academic research and provides resources for local and national government
- Lobbies for better access to opportunities and services on behalf of New Zealand's Deaf community
- Encourages Deaf New Zealanders to pursue opportunities that will better their lives and to chase their dreams
- Promotes NZSL both nationally and regionally in communities throughout the country

## Deaf Awareness Training

To help hearing New Zealanders respect the rights of a Deaf person and understand more about the Deaf community, and the issues Deaf people face, and to learn ways to effectively communicate with Deaf people, Deaf Aotearoa offers specialised courses.

The workplace programme, DEAFinitely Aware, helps teach relevant information and NZSL to businesses and organisations. The programme's qualified trainers teach staff in organisations/workplaces different ways to provide a Deaf-friendly business and achieve positive experiences for current and potential Deaf customers/clients.

Following on from DEAFinitely Aware, is the DEAFinitely Signing programme. This six-week course (two hours per week) is designed for staff/managers to learn NZSL signs/phrases that are specific to their workplace.

## New Zealand Sign Language

Deaf Aotearoa actively and passionately advocates for the promotion of New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) in government departments, organisations, educational facilities and every day life.

NZSL is the natural language of the Deaf community in New Zealand, so it reflects the country's culture and includes signs for Maori terminology and concepts unique to New Zealand.

As one of the country's official languages, NZSL is used daily by more than 24,000 New Zealanders, and it is the 12th most frequently used language, out of approximately 190 languages, currently used in New Zealand (Census 2006).

Sign language is a combination of hand shapes, facial expressions and body movements. It is not simply signed representations of spoken words.

Each May, Deaf Aotearoa organises and runs a celebration of New Zealand Sign Language – NZSL Week. NZSL Week helps promote the language as well as raise awareness about the Deaf community and the issues/challenges its members face each day.

NZSL Week is a chance for the Deaf community to stand proud as Deaf, and promote their language and culture. It is a chance to break down barriers, fears and misconceptions, and allows Deaf New Zealanders to 'put their hands up' – a chance to be 'heard'.

*For more information about Deaf Aotearoa and the services it provides please visit [www.deaf.org.nz](http://www.deaf.org.nz)*

*For more information about learning NZSL please visit [www.nzsign.co.nz](http://www.nzsign.co.nz)*