Deaf Aotearoa New Zealand INC.

# CANDIDATES FOR DEAF AOTEAROA EXECUTIVE BOARD

## JOANNE KLAVER

NZSL Video: https://youtu.be/_h-1HitAEp0

Kia ora koutou,

My name is Joanne, and I am currently the President of Deaf Aotearoa. I've had the honour of serving on the Executive Board for 11 years, including 7 years being board member and 4 years as president. I plan to step down from the role during NZSL Week, and I want to thank you all for your ongoing support.

During my time on the Executive Board, we've communicated through Microsoft Teams and held regular meetings focused on reviewing minutes, reporting, and sharing key messages with our community. These efforts helped promote both our Board and the organisation.

I've gained valuable experience through my time on the Board, and I'm proud to have represented Deaf Aotearoa at WFD conferences in Fiji, Korea, and Kenya, each one an incredible and enriching experience.

As I step down from the president role, I want to continue supporting the Board, which is why I'm applying to stand as an Executive Board member at Deaf Aotearoa's upcoming AGM.

Reflecting on my journey, I've seen the importance of cultural inclusivity and respect within our community. I encourage all community members to share your vision and support one another. Together, we can build a strong and united organisation. Your voices and experiences matter.

I am committed to being transparent with both the Board and the community. We are the future, overcoming barriers and challenges. Each of us brings unique experiences. I bring Turi Māori representation and hope to see more Turi Māori leadership in the future.

I believe in equality and collaboration, which are essential to keeping our organisation sustainable.

Thank you.

## EMMA BENSLEY

Kia Ora, I'm Emma.

I'm excited to return to the board after some time away and take on new challenges. I'm passionate about supporting the Deaf community in different ways — being a voice for those who are shy to speak up and helping our culture be seen and celebrated through NZSL.

Right now, I'm enjoying a journey with my little family, embracing both Māori and Cook Islands cultures. My daughter and I do Cook Islands fitness classes twice a week and are involved in two Cook Islands groups. I look forward to working as a team, making a real difference, and inspiring the next generation to be proud of who they are.

Thanks for your time, Emma

**CRAIG FINDSEN**

NZSL Video: Https://youtu.be/EvfRhNOcoSQ

> Hello,
>
> I'm Craigo, as you already know I am a vice president for Deaf Aotearoa Executive Board. I am reapplying to continue being on the Executive Board at this November's AGM.
>
> The reason I'm applying is because I am not ready to leave the Board, and I want to provide more for the community. This term will be my last one as I have been on the Deaf Aotearoa Executive Board since 2019, but who knows if I get the opportunity to continue as it's up to the community to decide.
>
> I would like to stand for one more term on the Board and hope to guide more new Board members so that I can let go and know that the Board is in good hands.
>
> I am a devoted member of my community and committed to making sure your lives are better and thrive.
>
> Thank you.

**ALEXANDRA STEWART**

NZSL video: Alexandra Carr - YouTube

Kia Ora koutou,

I'm writing to self-nominate for the Deaf Aotearoa Executive Board.

My name is Alexandra Margaret Stewart - a new surname because I married recently this year.

I have experience and qualifications in nursing (degree level) and social sciences / counselling (degree level) and some extra qualifications in clinical supervision and addictions support.

I have worked in NGOs or the health sector for most of my career and currently hold a full-time role in a government department working as the Deaf Relationships Lead for Survivor Experiences Service.

I have excellent English skills and am Deaf. I am a member of Deaf Aotearoa. I have an implant which when off renders me completely and peacefully D/deaf!
I have been on a brief advisory Board (18 months) in the capacity as mental health disability expert for the Royal Commission of Enquiry in Abuse in Care. I was a Board Member among 20 others.

I have been on multiple committees in my career and in a voluntary capacity. Some of these included Deaf Committees - especially those dealing with mental health.

There are several things I am passionate about supporting in the Deaf Community. I would like to see:

- A strong Deaf voice amplified and Deaf led that can speak to the government about Deaf needs

- Uplifting support of Sign Language and access to resourced support for Deaf children and their hearing whanau.
- Turi Māori support to help access their culture and tikanga
- Aging Deaf population support to decrease isolation
- Support for isolated Deaf in prison

There is always much work to do! :) I feel I have sufficient skills and experience to benefit the Deaf Community and Deaf Aotearoa in the capacity of Executive Board member.

I trust my submission will be considered favourably and look forward to seeing your reply.

Ngā mihi nui.

**OLIVER FERGUSON**

Kia ora,

My name is Oliver Ferguson. I am Deaf, a native New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) user, and a proud father of three children—our eldest and youngest are Deaf, and our middle child is hearing.

I am standing for re-election to the Deaf Aotearoa Executive Board because I want to make a difference for our community now and for the future. I know the benefits of a strong community organisation that is Deaf led. I also know the risks of such an organisation not being available to the community.

I bring extensive governance experience to the Board. I have served as a parent representative on the Combined Board of the two Deaf Education Centers prior to the formation of Ko Taku Reo, and for 11 years on the Deaf Aotearoa Executive Board, including five years as President and 5 years on the Board of Directors for Deaf Aotearoa Holdings Limited (DAHL). I have also served as a member of the Ministry of Education's NZSL Sector Advisory Group and worked with the Disabled People's Organisations Coalition.

If re-elected, I will work tirelessly to strengthen our community's voice, advocate for meaningful policy change, and support the ongoing sustainability of Deaf Aotearoa. My vision is one of accessibility, equity, and opportunity for all Deaf people, ensuring that every member of our community can thrive in all areas of life.

We have a long proud history in Deaf Aotearoa. I know there is so much more we could do with a motivated, united and passionate Executive Board - I want to be part of that team.

I look forward to the opportunity to contribute to the ongoing success and growth of Deaf Aotearoa.

Deaf Aotearoa New Zealand INC.

Ngā mihi,
Oliver Ferguson

**PETER BARKER**

NZSL video: https://youtu.be/Bpt9E8L3lYM

Hello, my name is Peter Barker.

***1. Why do I want to be Executive Board?*** I would like to stand as Deaf Aotearoa Executive Board member. I want to support and encourage youth, seniors and diverse age groups of people, support them to become professional, leaders, and successful in Deaf community and in Deaf Aotearoa. I also want to support iSign interpreting, changing attitudes.

***2. Why do I think I would be good for Deaf Aotearoa Executive Board member?*** I can be professional and a good leader, I listen to the Deaf community, and I listen to the Board. Also, I have experience representing in DPO, I advocate for equal opportunities in the future.

***3. My experiences in Deaf Aotearoa***. I have previously involved in the Executive Board, then I came back this year as board member again. I also involved as DPO representative both times.

***4. How can I provide to Deaf Aotearoa?*** I want to encourage Deaf Aotearoa to be able to provide to the Deaf community, professional development to the staff, providing advice to the DAHL board, as well to the government educating them on Deaf people.

I want to see change within Deaf community in Aotearoa, change of attitude, more opportunities on leadership, more freedom. I want to see all people work together brothers-and-sisters-in-arms. People like Deaf community, NZSL interpreters, Deaf Aotearoa, Deaf Action, Connect, iSign, and more organisations and services.