

Victoria Green



Biography

Born in Christchurch, Victoria Green (Deaf) has a passion for teaching New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL). To date, she has delivered hundreds of hours of NZSL tuition in the Canterbury region. Still today, she teaches many NZSL courses, both online and onsite for Merge NZ. Victoria is also a NZSL in Schools Coordinator who help support schools in New Zealand to incorporate NZSL in their everyday learning.

One of Victoria's previous roles, was the President for New Zealand Sign Language Teachers Association. This is a professional national body that supports NZSL teachers becoming members and registered to teach NZSL in Adults Community Education centres and private businesses in New Zealand.

Web: www.mergenz.co.nz

She currently is very active in her secretarial role for Southern Branch NZSL tutors.

She has generously contributed many hours to support a new team of NZSL tutors, which will greatly benefit many NZSL learners and their whanau/families to learn NZSL.

In her spare time, she enjoys doing volunteer work, supporting people with disabilities and walking with her dog.

Reality of Sign Language

Interacting with Deaf and hard of hearing customers in business is a challenging experience if you do not know any New Zealand Sign Language. Communication is a part of everything we do in the business world. The Government recognises the importance of having NZSL accessibility in public places, workplaces and in the media. Many businesses are now taking up the challenge and incorporating NZSL into their business practices.

So, what happens if you have a Deaf or hard of hearing customer? How would you communicate with them?

As recent as the early 1990's the answer to that question would have been widely accepted as being, 'teach them to lip read, encourage them to talk and avoid using signs. This is because, for the better part of 100 years, New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) was banned in our Education systems. Oralism (using spoken language) was the 'solution' to

communication with Deaf children. Of course, much time and research later, we now know that teaching New Zealand Sign Language to Deaf children (or hearing for that matter!) improves English skills and comprehension. So much so, that in 2006 NZSL was made one of New Zealand's official languages, followed one year later, by the establishing of NZSL Week, which we recently celebrated 15 years of NZSL Week last May.

Our presenter, who is Deaf, will teach the participants basic NZSL skills using facial expressions. NZSL has its own grammatical structure, making it very different from English, so learners learnt to 'turn off' their voices and 'listen' with their eyes.

Communication is an integral part of everyday situations, and a Right for all people, hearing or Deaf. NZSL bridges the gap in communication and provides equality to the Deaf community. How great it is that New Zealanders recognise its importance, celebrate and share its beauty within their businesses, our schools, health care facilities, public spaces and many community groups.