



In memoriam



Stephanie Awheto

Stephanie was a pioneering trilingual interpreter (NZSL, te reo Māori and English) and advocate for the Turi Māori community.

She tirelessly supported Turi Māori, providing access to cultural ceremonies and significant national events.

Her legacy will be remembered and honoured.

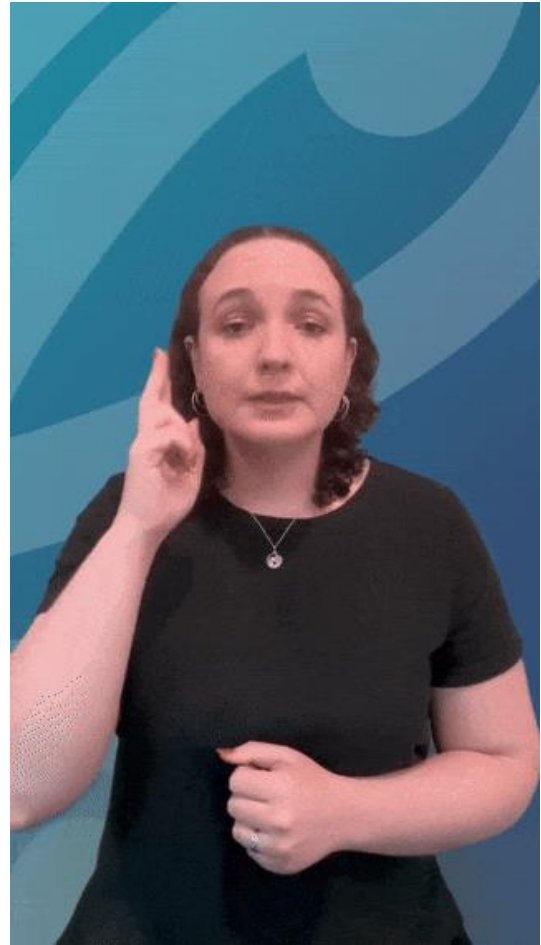
Kua haere ia ki tōna moenga roa.



Deaf Aotearoa wish to honour Stephanie Āwheto after the news of her passing – Stephanie was a pioneering trilingual interpreter and advocate for the Turi Māori community.

This year, she was honoured with the prestigious Te Panekiretanga o te Reo Rotarota award, recognising her lifetime of service.

Stephanie's lifelong dedication to bridging communication gaps between NZSL, te reo Māori, and English began with her work alongside the late Patrick Wikiriwhi Thompson.



She became Aotearoa New Zealand's first trilingual interpreter and tirelessly supported Turi Māori, providing access to cultural ceremonies and significant national events.

Stephanie also mentored new interpreters, developed Māori sign concepts, and played a crucial role in the relationships between SLIANZ and Māori NZSL interpreters.

Her legacy will be remembered and honoured. Kua haere ia ki tōna moenga roa.

Stephanie will be at her marae at Oeo, Taranaki.



Stephanie with her Te Panekiretanga o te Reo Rotarota award at the NZSL Awards 2024



Stephanie presents evidence at the Waitangi Tribunal



"Stephanie Awheto was the first, and now, one of few trilingual interpreters in Aotearoa New Zealand. We were fortunate to have her participate in last year's wānanga with whānau hauā, tāngata turi and tāngata kapo – where she talked about the

importance of trilingual interpreters.

This week Stephanie presented evidence at the Waitangi Tribunal Health Services and Outcomes Inquiry (Wai 2575)."

Royal Commission of Inquiry into Historical Abuse in Care

'Disheartening' lack of trilingual interpreters for Māori Deaf

"As Aotearoa gets ready to celebrate Te Wiki o Te Reo Māori, those who work with Māori Deaf are “disheartened” by the failure to train more trilingual translators.



Stephanie Awheto is one of the few people in New Zealand who are fluent in all three official languages. She told Q+A that “for any Māori to know who they are, to have a sense of belonging, is really important, and that’s no difference for Māori deaf”.

Q+A (1News)

Whānau mourn as Māori sign language pioneer Stephanie Awheto dies

"Stephanie Awheto, New Zealand’s first trilingual interpreter, has died of cancer.

Awheto devoted her career to ensuring the Māori deaf community was connected to te ao Māori by being its eyes and ears through tikanga processes on marae.

She was a passionate and dedicated leader throughout her 30-year career.

In 2021, Awheto was diagnosed with stage 4 breast cancer, taking to social media to highlight the struggles and to mark the milestones.

Awheto was relentless in her advocacy, highlighting the issue of the lack of trilingual interpreters in Aotearoa."

Te Ao Māori News

Stephanie Awheto on SignDNA

Want to see more of Stephanie in action?
Check out SignDNA. Link in the picture.



Full access and participation for
Deaf in Aotearoa / New Zealand

GENERAL ENQUIRIES

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