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Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment  
Wellington  
By email: [MarrakeshTreaty@mbie.govt.nz](mailto:MarrakeshTreaty@mbie.govt.nz)

Tēnā koutou

### **Marrakesh Treaty: Possible Accession and Options for Implementation**

The New Zealand Nurses Organisation (NZNO) welcomes the opportunity to briefly respond to your consultation on whether New Zealand should accede to the Marrakesh Treaty which aims to increase access to published works for persons who are blind, visually impaired or print disabled, and the costs and benefits of doing so. NZNO is the leading professional nursing association and union for nurses in Aotearoa New Zealand, representing over 47,000 nurses, midwives, and health workers. We have consulted with a small group of expert nurses working with people who are visually impaired. This submission is informed by their feedback, though they noted that it was not an easy document to read. NZNO supports signing the Treaty if it would improve access to information that is currently unavailable to people who are visually impaired or print disabled.

There is no doubt that the ability to 'read' or 'not read' is a limiting factor in how people integrate into our world, and for extending personal, social and employment opportunities, which generally have a beneficial impact on health and wellbeing. New technologies and digital formats have made a significant difference to the accessibility of information to the print-disabled, but there are limited resources for converting print to other formats, such as braille, audio or large print books. Copyright does present a barrier to converting some material, so the Treaty's provisions for exceptions to copyright to improve access for the visually impaired are welcomed.

However, we observe that the United States and Great Britain are notable omissions from the list of 81 countries, which include the 12 current signatories and Canada, Australia and South Africa, comparable countries to Aotearoa New Zealand, which may have signed since. As many resources come out of USA and Great Britain, we seek assurance that current access to these countries' resources eg through *Bookshare* will not be negatively impacted if Aotearoa New Zealand were to sign the Treaty and these countries continued to remain outside it. *Bookshare* is available not just to the visually impaired but also to those who have

a medical disability, so the impact of any changes to access would extend beyond the visually impaired community to many others living with disabilities.

Once again thank you for this opportunity to contribute.

Nākū noa, nā



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#### NEW ZEALAND NURSES ORGANISATION (NZNO)

NZNO is the leading professional nursing association and union for nurses in Aotearoa New Zealand. NZNO represents over 47,000 nurses, midwives, students, kaimahi hauora and health workers on professional and employment related matters. NZNO is affiliated to the International Council of Nurses and the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions.

NZNO promotes and advocates for professional excellence in nursing by providing leadership, research and education to inspire and progress the profession of nursing. NZNO represents members on employment and industrial matters and negotiates collective employment agreements.

NZNO embraces te Tiriti o Waitangi and contributes to the improvement of the health status and outcomes of all peoples of Aotearoa New Zealand through influencing health, employment and social policy development enabling quality nursing care provision. NZNO's vision is *Freed to care, Proud to nurse*.