

Microsoft New Zealand Limited  
Level 12  
157 Lambton Quay  
Wellington  
New Zealand

To all New Zealanders

**Protecting our heritage, our future....**

Prior to the arrival of computing, our personal, business and public documents were created in a single, open format – the written or typed word on paper – and stored for ongoing access, preservation and future reference. The arrival of the computer changed everything.

In a few days, Standards New Zealand will make a decision that will have a direct impact on the way New Zealanders store, access and share their electronic documents now and in the future. The final decision will determine whether to support Open XML as an ISO standard alongside other document formats. Open XML is a new format that allows Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint documents to be easily converted to an open standard, while also supporting the full capabilities of those applications.

**This is about much more than technology – it is about New Zealand.**

For the past twenty years, most of our business and organisational information has been written and stored in digital format – much of it in Microsoft Word, Excel or PowerPoint documents. So much so, these are now considered informal standards.

New Zealanders use these documents every day – at work, at school and at play. These documents support the learning of our children and communities. They support the world-class innovation that is emerging from our flourishing IT sector.

Along with many others in New Zealand, we believe having Open XML approved as an ISO standard will help:

- **Protect our heritage** and enable ongoing access to documents that are already in existence now and in the future.
- **Provide choice** about which software we use to exchange documents.
- **Secure our future** when storing and formatting information without requiring the use of any specific organisation, machine or system.
- **Foster innovation** and enable the New Zealand IT industry to develop new and innovative software for markets locally and worldwide.
- **Give confidence** that Open XML can continue to evolve under the supervision of the International Standards Organisation (ISO).

Given the sheer volume of our digital record and its importance to our businesses, communities and families, it is vital that we retain the same level of openness and transparency as in the ‘paper days’.

Supporting Open XML as an ISO standard is a good thing for New Zealand. It means the ownership of this standard will be in the hands of an independent, well recognised international organisation. You can visit [www.openxmlcommunity.org](http://www.openxmlcommunity.org) to learn more about the benefits or call 0800 800 004 for more details.

We urge Standards New Zealand to support the ISO ratification of Open XML; and by doing so provide New Zealand businesses, entrepreneurs, communities and families with greater certainty and choice, and a means to safeguard our digital heritage.



Helen Robinson  
**Managing Director** | Microsoft New Zealand



Brett Roberts  
**Director of Innovation** | Microsoft New Zealand