

# NEW ZEALAND FLAG DEBATE

## Introduction

In the past, New Zealand has changed our flag 3 times. In the past few years parliament has brought it up in discussions but nothing has been done until now. Many New Zealanders want a change and many New Zealanders don't.

## History of our current flag

Our current flag is very similar to Australia's flag. The stars on our flag represent the Southern Cross which you can see from New Zealand. The Union Jack on our flag represents our connections in the past and present with Britain. The royal blue background represents the seas that we are surrounded by. This flag was elected to be our national flag in 1902. Before then, there have only been two other flags before the current one.

## Arguments for changing the flag

Some arguments for changing the flag include:

The New Zealand flag is too similar to Australia's flag. People believe that this makes us less unique and harder to distinguish from Australia and even a few other countries' flags as well.

As the last time that the flag was changed was 113 years ago, another reason for changing the flag is how we aren't the same country as we were one hundred years ago. We have different beliefs and respect different things to what we did in the past.

There are three official languages in New Zealand; English, Sign-language and Maori. 15% of New Zealand's population is Maori and it is a big part of our culture yet there is absolutely no representation of it in our current flag at all!

Many people want to see the silver fern make an appearance on the flag. The fern shows up on many of our sports team's uniforms, such as the All Blacks, Silver Ferns, Black Caps and even our America's Cup team. The silver fern is our most representative symbol, yet it doesn't appear on our current flag at all.

## Arguments for not changing the flag

Some arguments against changing the flag;

Changing the flag costs a lot of money. The campaign has cost over 26 million dollars already and that is just deciding whether to change the flag or not. If we do change the flag it will cost millions more to actually change all the flags around the country.

People also argue that the flag shouldn't be changed as it has been through World War 1 and World War 2 and the soldiers all fought for our country when this flag was flying. They believe that if we replace the flag then it would be like getting rid of all the history behind it that we would forget what the soldiers did for us.

Another reason why the New Zealand flag shouldn't be changed is that how the Union Jack signifies our connections with Britain. Some people do not agree with this anymore, believing that we don't need it on our flag anymore.

## My Personal opinion

I think that New Zealand's flag should be changed. The last time the flag was changed was in 1902. That is more than a century ago! I don't think that our current flag is up to date with how we are as a nation. Our flag doesn't represent the modernised us, it only represents what we thought was important 100 years ago. Yes, the flag we have now has been through World War 1, World War 2 and many other significant events, but if we change the flag that doesn't mean we will forget these important events that shaped our country. The flag is also too much like Australia's. We have to be an independent country with an independent flag. We have three official languages in New Zealand, English, Sign-language and Maori. Our Maori culture isn't represented at all in our current flag.

## How does the referendum process work?

The referendum process started with New Zealanders saying what they wanted to stand for and what they wanted in their flag. After those comments were submitted any-one could submit a flag design that they thought would be worthy of being our national icon. Almost 10 000 designs were submitted by July 16<sup>th</sup>. From there a panel of twelve supreme New Zealanders will choose from all those designs and will pick their top four. The vote will then be handed to the New Zealand public on which of those four is the best. In March 2016 New Zealand will then vote against whether they want that chosen flag to be the official flag or whether we stay will the current flag.



The current New Zealand flag.



This is the panel of New Zealanders that have to choose four top flag designs out of almost 10000 designs.



This is the official Maori flag. I believe that the New Zealand flag should incorporate our Maori culture as well.

## Bibliography

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