

THE NEW ZEALAND FLAG

DEBATE

WATCH THIS SPACE...

INTRODUCTION

Arguments have been happening about this 'flag-changing' event. It's always back and forth, "We should change it because..." and "We shouldn't change it because..." The idea of changing the flag has been around for over a decade and has finally come to action. This is to inform the person reading this (which is you right now) about the different opinions on changing or keeping the current New Zealand flag. Have you made your mind up yet?

HISTORY OF THE NEW ZEALAND FLAG

It was actually on October 23rd, 1869 that the New Zealand flag was adopted as the ensign of government ships, but from 1902-present it has also been the civil and state flag that represents this country. On the current New Zealand flag is four red stars with a white outline. These stars represent the Southern Cross which can only be sighted in the Southern Hemisphere. The deep, rich blue background resembles the ocean, which surrounds New Zealand, as we are a coastal country. The Union Jack shows the link we have to the Commonwealth.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE CHANGE

It was chosen by New Zealanders and reflects our past.

It has been used for 113 years and has represented the country at war and sporting events so it is known internationally.

A lot of sports icons and fans from New Zealand are proud of it.



The current New Zealand Flag.

ARGUMENTS FOR THE CHANGE

The Union Jack is old fashioned.

It is very similar to the Australian flag and is often confused.

It doesn't show a lot of connection to the land, it doesn't show the different cultures of New Zealand either.



The head of the panel, Emeritus Professor John Burrows.

HOW DOES THE REFERENDUM PROCESS WORK?

- 1) New Zealanders get an opportunity to say what they stand for. Not what they as a person stand for, but what our country stands for. They get the chance to consider the values of New Zealand that should be represented on the flag.
- 2) There are thousands of designs (all made by the people), so the panel will look at what and how they reflect specific values of New Zealand.
- 3) Based on that, the panel chooses four potential designs that best represent us as a nation.
- 4) The designs are then ranked by you, in this year's referendum. The one ranked the highest becomes a referred design.
- 5) In next year's referendum. You vote again to choose between the preferred alternative and the current flag.
- 6) Both referendums are binding. This means the flag with the most votes will become or remain the national flag for New Zealand. Chosen by the people it is your choice. Keep or Change?

MY OPINION

I think that to change the flag is a good idea. At first when I heard about it I immediately thought 'No, 26 million dollars can be used in plenty of different ways than a flag referendum.' But now that I thought about it and we've been doing it for homework, we should change it. We need to show what we have become as a nation, not what we were. Our flag should not only represent the sky and the sea, it should also represent the land of our country. We have a most beautiful landscape. We are also bi-cultural and our old flag has no incorporation of our Maori culture. We have had this flag for 113 years, it is too much like the Australian flag is a usual complaint as well. We have been contemplating the Union Jack symbol too. As well as being old fashioned, we can't really connect with it anymore. I think the idea to change our flag should have been decided years ago. It would show we are an independent, unique and beautiful country all in one.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

WEBSITES: www.flag.govt.nz BOOKS: THE WORLD ENCYCLOPEDIA OF FLAGS

www.wicked.org.nz

BY ALFRED ZNAMIEROWSKI