



The New Zealand Heritage Flag - One Flag for Many Voices

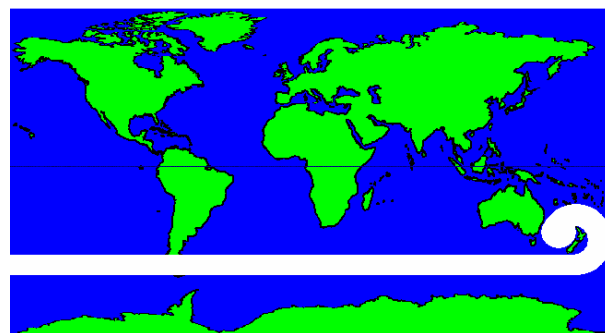
- I see the stars by which we have navigated. The sky is turning blue, while in the shadow of the waka the sea looks green. On the horizon I see something like a long white cloud. Aotearoa. This is New Zealand.

- What it says to me, is that the surf's up. It looks like a wave crashing on the beach - a real kiwi image. When I think about it a bit more, the wave's just turned over and it's going to surge forward, with movement and power. To me it says "New Zealanders, we're going forward and nothing can stop us!"

- The flag reminds me of a landscape. It's the colours of New Zealand as I look out my window. There's the green of grass and bush and the green of pounamu (greenstone). There's the white of snow-capped mountains, misty hills, and fluffy white clouds. And up above there's a sky that's clear and blue. At night the air's so clear you can see the stars! It makes me think clean, green and healthy, with plenty of open space. A great place to bring up children.

- It reminds me of being on holiday. I remember standing on a hill, looking down at the green bush trailing to the blue Pacific Ocean. In between, the beach was a ribbon of sand stretched out and curling round at the end of the bay. It was the colours of paua, truly beautiful. This is my home.

- I see the flag like a kind of map. It marks our place in the world. The blue reminds us of the Ocean that surrounds us. The Southern Cross puts us clearly in the southern hemisphere, and the line shows we are about half-way down. The koru shape, right up against the right-hand side of the flag, symbolizes that we are right next to the international dateline. We are the first place in the world to see the new day's sun.



- I see it as symbolic, that line with a koru on the end of it. The koru is just about to open, and speaks of newness and youth and life and growth. The koru hints at a Maori design, and makes this flag unique in the world. I see the line before it as the line of humanity spreading throughout the world. The koru at the end of the line reminds everyone that this was the last major part of the world to be discovered and settled - and it was Maori who did it! Now as a nation combined, Maori, Pakeha, all New Zealanders together, we are turning to take on the world.

- The stars have many reminders for our nation. They are important to Maori, and remind us of brave and skilful Pacific navigators. Some see them as the Southern Cross, reminding of the influence of Christianity on our history, our institutions, and many of our peoples. Some see them as the four points of the compass, celebrating the liberty, religious freedom, tolerance and diversity that we enjoy, for people from all over the world. The red, white and blue colours reflect the Union Jack, the Crown, and New Zealand's British heritage. These stars on blue link back to the 1902 flag that New Zealanders served and fought under, and honours those who gave so much. Finally, history tells us that red was a favorite colour on Maori flags because it spoke of rank and mana. That's something we can all aspire to.

- I can use this flag to teach my kids about the Treaty of Waitangi that gave birth to this nation. There are three bands. The green one is for the land. The white one is for the original people of Aotearoa, the iwi and their chiefs who signed the Treaty. And the blue band is for the people who came here under the Treaty. The treaty itself is symbolized by the koru, which is like a hook, or an arm reaching out to embrace those from across the sea. Through this act the top two bands were fastened together inseparably, and making us one nation, represented by the one flag. ¹

¹ The flag also acts as a memory-aid for the three articles of the Treaty. To begin, the Maori Chiefs ruled the land on behalf of their iwi (Rangitiratanga) - shown by the white (bone) line above the green band. In the Treaty (Article 1) they gave Kawanatanga (sovereignty) to the Crown and acknowledged that other people would come from across the sea, symbolized by the stars with Union Jack colours above, and the blue colour alongside the white band. In Article 2 the Crown promised extra protection to taonga, and was given access to the land - blue and green bands brought together. In Article 3 the Treaty fastened Maori and non-Maori New Zealanders together, as equals under the Crown.