

# Flags

The purpose of this activity is to use the history and symbolism of four significant flags to give participants further understanding of how the different parties saw the relationship entered into through the Treaty.

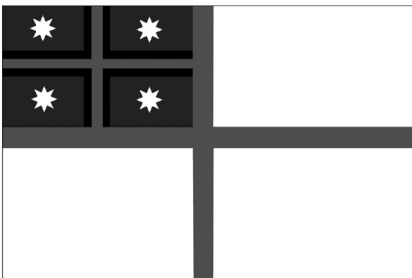
## Activity 15

**Time:** 15 minutes.

**Materials:** Handout page 50. Colour copies of the flags pages 56 - 59.

1. Hand out one copy of the back and white flags on page 50 for each group of three or four people. Ask people to share what they know about these flags and what country they think the flags are from. (Actually they all belong to Aotearoa/New Zealand, so it's a trick question.)
2. Show the large colour flags and tell the story of each from the notes below.

### The first flag of Aotearoa/New Zealand (Colour flag page 56.)



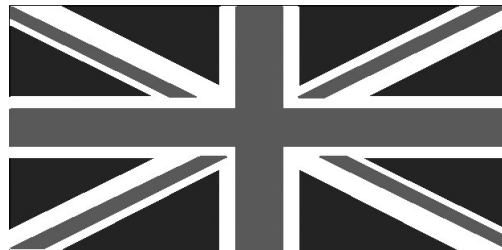
This was the first New Zealand flag from 1834 onwards (see Buick, 1936, and Orange, 1987). In 1830 a ship built on the Hokianga Harbour went to Sydney but the ship and its goods were taken by customs because it had no flag. Two important Māori rangatira were on the ship at the time and when they got back they told their people all about what had happened.

The first design for a flag was sent from Sydney to James Busby (the British Resident) but he rejected it because it had no red. In Māori culture, like many other cultures around the world, red is a very important colour.

**For discussion:** Is red an important colour in your culture?

This flag was chosen by 25 rangatira in 1834. The next year, on 28 October, the Declaration of Independence was signed at Waitangi (see Appendix 1) and this flag came to be known as the Flag of the United Tribes of New Zealand. Britain recognised the Declaration of Independence which stated that New Zealand was an independent country under the government of the Māori rangatira. This is still an important flag for Māori people, especially in the north.

### The second New Zealand flag (Colour flag page 57.)



The Union Jack is the official flag of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. After the Treaty was signed the new Governor, William Hobson took down the United Tribes flag in the Bay of Islands and put up the Union Jack. The flag flew above Kororāreka, the first capital of New Zealand (now called Russell).

Māori people were not happy about their flag being taken down, especially Hone Heke, an important Māori leader from the Bay of Islands area. He cut down the flagpole at Kororāreka/Russell four times in two years. He was also upset that the Governor was taxing visiting ships. Because of the tax and because the capital was moved to Auckland, there were fewer ships visiting the Bay of Islands to do business.

Hone Heke was not happy because he thought the two flags (the Union Jack and the Flag of the United Tribes) should be flown together. This image of the two flags together shows us how Māori people understood the Treaty as the co-existence of two powers.

The Union Jack was used by the settlers as the official flag of New Zealand for more than 60 years.

### The New Zealand flag

(Colour flag page 58.)



The New Zealand flag has the Union Jack in the corner and the stars of the Southern Cross.

It became the national flag in 1902 during the Boer War in South Africa. It has been our national flag for a little more than 100 years.

### The Māori flag

(Colour flag page 59.)



In 1990 there was a national flag competition in Aotearoa/New Zealand. None of the entries showed any Māori acknowledgment or inspiration. Te Kawariki, a Māori group from Northland, therefore held their own Māori flag competition. This is the flag they chose as the winner. Te Kawariki's explanation of the flag is included below.

Black represents Te Korekore, the realm of Potential Being, the long darkness from whence the world emerged. It represents the heavens. The male element is formless, floating and passive.

White represents Te Ao Mārama, the realm of Being and light. It is the physical world, which symbolises purity, harmony and enlightenment. White also symbolises purity, harmony, enlightenment and balance. The Koru, curling frond shape, represents the unfolding of new life, that everything is reborn and continues. It represents renewal and hope for the future.

Red represents Te Whei Ao, the realm of Coming into Being. It symbolises the female element. It also represents gestation. Red is Papatūānuku, the Earth Mother, the sustainer of all living things. Red is the colour of earth from which the first human was made.

Source: <http://aotearoa.wellington.net.nz/back/flag.htm>

# Flags

Do you know these flags?

What countries are they from?

What colours are they?

