

## Flag Design Guidelines

These guidelines have been developed for people who would like to suggest flag designs to the Flag Consideration Panel (the Panel). The Panel has been appointed by the Government to help people get involved in discussions about the future of our flag. They'll also choose a shortlist of alternative flag designs for people to rank in the first referendum.

These guidelines may be updated before the closing date for people to suggest alternative designs for the New Zealand Flag (16 July 2015). You can view the most recent guidelines at [flag.govt.nz](http://flag.govt.nz).

### The basics:

Internationally accepted principles to guide the design of flags have been developed over time in response to practical issues as well as historical and cultural conventions. *Vexillology* is the art and practice of designing flags. In particular, this practice responds to practical issues around reproducing the design on cloth and making sure the design stands out from a distance and from many angles.

Here is a set of common principles to use when developing a flag design. These have been developed to ensure that flag designs stand out from a distance and can be reproduced well in different formats and sizes. While the use of these principles is optional, it is likely they will be taken into account when the flag designs are considered.

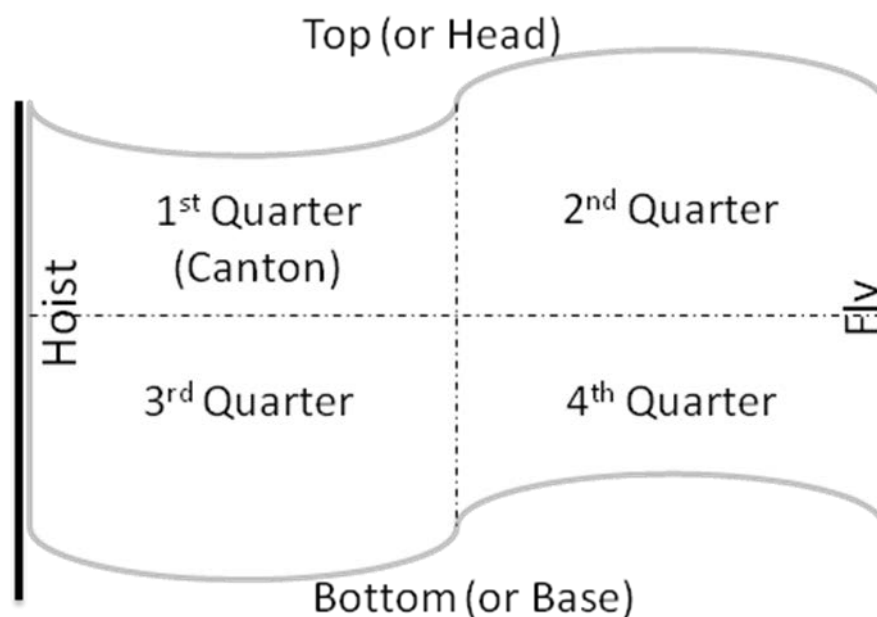
1. The design should be simple, uncluttered and balanced.
2. It should be designed to be flown, and viewed from either side.
3. It should look as "timeless" as possible. Avoid using features in the design that will cause the flag to become dated or obsolete. Imagine the flag in a historic setting and in a very modern setting to check whether it would work in both.
4. In terms of colour, using fewer colours will keep the design simple and bold.
5. Contrast is important – use light colours on dark, and vice-versa. So a white cross on red is a good contrast, but a blue cross on red would be a poor contrast. This is a very useful guideline, especially for choosing the colour of any symbols and their background.
6. If the use of non-contrasting colours is unavoidable, make use of outline colours.
7. Any animals or birds would traditionally face the flagpole, so that the animal faces in the same direction as the flag bearer.
8. The top left hand corner of the flag is typically the place of honour in a flag. This reflects the fact that the opposite end of the flag wears out first, and is the section that is least visible when the flag is not fully unfurled.

## Shapes and parts of a flag:

While flags can be other shapes (e.g. a triangle), national flags representing countries normally come in one of two rectangular shapes:

- The Golden Rectangle – where the ratio of the short side to the long side is approximately 1 : 1.618.
- The ratio of 1:2 – where the long side is two times the length of the short side. This is the shape of the current New Zealand Flag.

There are also defined parts of a flag which are useful to know if you wish to describe your flag design:



## The minimum standards:

These are some standards that we expect all flag designs to meet:

- Intellectual property – Do not suggest a design under your name that you know is a copy of an existing, or someone else's, design. Also, do not include symbols, trade marks, or elements in your design that are copied from someone else or that are the intellectual or cultural property of another person or entity without explaining who they belong to. Please remember that even if a particular design or symbol is on the internet, it does not mean you can copy it for your own design.

If you wish to recommend an existing design for consideration by the Panel, please suggest the design with clear information about who has developed the design and, if possible, how they can be contacted.

If your design is shortlisted for the first referendum, or chosen as the contender for the second referendum, or chosen as New Zealand's new flag, then you and any author or owner of the design, or any part of it, will need to sign a form agreeing to transfer ownership of any intellectual property rights in the design to the Crown at no cost.

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- Offensive or divisive designs – Flags should be a symbol of pride and unify the community they represent. For this reason, flags that are offensive to an individual or community, or that are divisive, will not be considered.
- Flag designs that include words, photos or complex objects will not be considered.
- Flag designs that incorporate the image of a person will not be considered.

The Panel reserves the right to not publicly display, or consider for the referendum, any suggested design that does not meet these minimum standards.

**Suggesting a design**

The Panel's preference is that designs are suggested as visual images (ideally a JPEG). When you suggest a design, you should recommend a title and description for your design, as well as some information about you (including personal contact information). You must also include a brief explanation of the colours and any symbolism incorporated into your design. When you suggest a design, you will be asked to agree to some standard terms and conditions.