

“Abracadabra variant 27”, an alternative New Zealand national flag design
(with suggested adaptations of the design to the other major flags and ensigns of the nation)



Army



Navy ships



Air Force



RSA



Government ships



Civil & merchant ships



Civil aviation



Yacht Squadron



Police Service



Fire & Emergency



Customs Service



NZ Olympic Committee



Tokelau



Niue



Cook Islands



Ross Dependency



Auckland



Wellington



Christchurch



United Nations



See this flag waving. See it in all wind conditions. See many more alternative New Zealand flag designs at newzealand.flagoptions.com

Like [Abracadabra variant 20](#), this variant arranges two realistically-rendered silver fern fronds in a graceful arch across a full-length, red-and-black background, and it likewise features a centred, white-starred, New Zealand-style Southern Cross. Like all variants of the basic Abracadabra flag design, its background also includes an abstract representation of the capitalised letters 'NZ', although in this case the letters are very subtle, given that they are formed by a perfectly symmetrical arrangement of what seem to be undulating 'folds' of red satin. There are a total of sixteen of these illusory folds, numerically symbolising the official regions of New Zealand proper. The satin-like appearance of the folds is effected through the use of gradient colouring, which is actually not the impediment to flag manufacture that some claim it to be. The number of the gradients merely needs to be controlled to suit the particular method of production, and the method of production merely needs to be chosen to best-suit the particular purposes of the flag being produced.

For example, Abracadabra variant 27 as it has been rendered at the top of the previous page presents roughly 200 colour gradients, far too many to be effected through typical screen printing techniques. A flag with that many colour gradients, or with even more of them, can only be produced by using printers that basically print on flag fabrics in the same way that ink-jet printers print on paper, using travelling 'print heads'. Nowadays such 'digital' flag printers can inject millions of colours deep into durable flag fabrics, using pressure and heat to produce flags of high quality in any dimensions up to those of the flags waving atop the Auckland Harbour Bridge. However, digitally printed flags are usually produced in limited numbers for ceremonial purposes such as parades, celebrations, and political events, for which their somewhat higher cost of manufacture will not be an issue. They can also be printed on the very finest of fabrics. The red-to-black colour gradients of Abracadabra variant 27, for example, could even be digitally printed on actual white satin, giving an extra sheen to not only its illusory folds but to the unprinted areas of its fern fronds and the stars of its Southern Cross.

Colour gradients as numerous as those needed for Abracadabra variant 27 can also not be 'pieced together' by the standard techniques that are usually used for manually sewn-together flags, which like digitally printed flags are usually reserved for ceremonial purposes, in their case because of the extensive manual labour involved in their production. However, a sewn-together flag can always incorporate sections of digitally printed fabric, including sections that have colour gradients. For example, the sewn-together versions of the suggested civil and Defence Forces versions of the Abracadabra variant 27 design that are shown on the previous page could incorporate digitally printed cantons. Whether for cantons or for the full-sized flag, the white fern fronds and the white stars of the Southern Cross could be added by computer-controlled embroidery machines, using fine-quality, high-sheen silk thread, and even more elegance could be bestowed upon sewn-together versions of the flag by the addition of borders of gold tasselling.

Although sewn-together and digitally printed flags have their purposes, most of the world's mass-produced flags will be screen printed. It is not uncommon for manufacturers of screen printed flags to have facilities that are capable of producing flags with as many as a dozen or more different colours, and these can just as easily be different colour gradients as different hues. From top to bottom in the image below, the red-to-black Abracadabra variant 27 background has been rendered with twelve, nine, and six colour gradients, respectively, indicating that for the most common dimensions of screen printed versions of the flag, as few as twelve screens would be more than acceptable, whilst for medium-to-smaller-dimensioned versions of the flag, including cantons, nine or six screens would probably suffice. For the actual manufacture of screen printed versions of Abracadabra variant 27, a roll of pre-dyed white flag fabric would be sequentially positioned beneath the various screens, with each screen adding its specific red-to-black colour gradient.

