



PYLAT COUNCIL CHARITABLE TRUST

Changing the flag

CANTERBURY YOUTH COUNCILS VIEW

July 2015

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ABOUT US

YVC's Purpose

Youth Voice Canterbury is a network of youth councils and youth advisory groups from Canterbury. We are a network of young people supporting young people.

PYLAT's Purpose

The PYLAT Council is a Charitable Trust based in Christchurch created to assist Pasifika young people to participate in our democracy and realise the value of their political voice.

PREAMBLE

On Wednesday 08th July 2015 the PYLAT Council hosted 'Youth Connect' for Youth Voice Canterbury. This project brings together the different youth councils, participation, engagement and advocacy groups from across Canterbury to collaborate in order to support young people across our region.

This particular youth connect was attended by members of the Selwyn Youth Council, Wai Youth and the Waimakariri Youth Council, Hurunui Youth Council, Christchurch Youth Council, PYLAT Council, Te Ora Hau Canterbury District Health Board Youth Council, Ministry of Youth Development Youth Advisory Group, Canterbury Youth Workers Collective and the Strengthening the Youth Sector Group. Amongst this group multiple high schools, workplaces and tertiary backgrounds were represented. Ethnically, there was a wide range of peoples present with tangata whenua, Pacific Peoples, NZ Europeans, Australians and British peoples all represented. In total there were around 40 young people and 8 youth workers and coordinators.

Background information was provided using the 'Stand For,' 'History of the Flag' and 'Process of the discussion' videos followed by a debate between two Members of Parliament. Four key areas of the discussion were covered by Jonathan Young National MP for New Plymouth and Chair of the Cross Party Working Party for the Flag Referendum, and Denis O'Rourke List MP for NZ First, Constitutional Affairs and Flag Referendum Spokesperson.

This statement is a result of that seminar and reflects the majority views of the participants in this discussion. This statement does not reflect the opinions of each and every individual. For a breakdown of individual comments and raw survey results used to draw the conclusions here, please see the appendices.

Summary

The majority of participants support the flag being changed. They would like to see Maori culture, our growing multicultural society, and vast diversity reflected in the new flag. Participants were not able to reach consensus if the cost to the flag discussions costs was too much.

From the data, the PYLAT Council recommend that the Flag Panel, the Electoral Commission and the Government develop a youth engagement strategy in partnership with Youth Voice Canterbury and the Ministry of Youth Development Youth Advisory Group. This will support young people having an informed opinion to participate in the flag referenda, and public discussions fully. As Minister of Youth Hon. Nikki Kaye states “It is young people who live with the decisions being made today so it’s imperative that young people are given opportunities to have a say on issues affecting them.”¹ In developing this strategy it will not only ensure young people have an opportunity to have a say, but the value of their vote, and voice in our democracy can be realised.

¹ Letter from N. Kaye (Minister of Youth) to PYLAT Council Charitable Trust regarding the value of young people’s perspectives and input (15 June 2015).

Our Values

What we stand for

As small groups we discussed what we value in New Zealand (please see appendices for all comments). Each group was then asked to choose their top three values, which are shown below. A number of individuals also contributed (see appendices).

- Equality, Culture, whanau and community.



- Equality, Maoritanga and diversity.



- Tangata whenua, whanau and fairness.



- Equality, independence and safety/security.



The Flag

What should our flag represent?

Participants strongly believed that our past and future should be reflected in any flag design for New Zealand. In order to make it timeless we should focus on the future, but should consider the place of some past symbols like the Southern Cross. Some participants thought that our flag should represent diversity and multiculturalism.

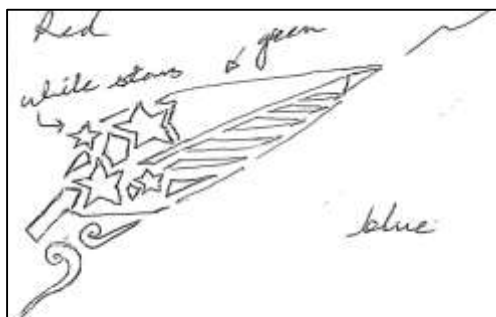
Does our flag represent New Zealanders?

The majority of participants did not feel our current flag (the Blue Ensign) represented all of the peoples of New Zealand and our diversity. There were some who thought that the flag accurately reflected parts of our history, particularly the initial European settlement. Others did not think Maori, Pasifika and Asian peoples were properly involved in the choice of that flag. Some participants did not feel that Southern Cross was enough of a Maori presence, nor adequate recognition of the Pacific region which we live in.

Should we change the flag?

The majority of participants agree we should change our flag. Those who supported changing it gave reasons such as wanting our flag to belong to all New Zealanders, so we can all decide what this might be. Others thought that this was a key way to detach ourselves from our colonial past as a symbol of an inclusive future. There was agreement that our flag was too similar to Australia's and this would be a good time to review it.

There were some who thought that this discussion should go ahead, but wanted to get the perspectives of current soldiers and the RSA. A couple of participants said that although this might not be an immediate priority in the scheme of things, we should make the most of the money spent and fully get involved in the discussion. There was a minority view that this discussion was a diversion from other issues in New Zealand.



Design ideas

For those that opted to design a flag, there were nine distinctive designs. One was of the current Tino Rangatiratanga flag, one was a koru based waka and seven variations of the fern were submitted. (The other designs can be seen in the appendices.)

The Process

Cost

Participants could not come to consensus whether the \$26 million being spent on this consultation and referenda was too much. Those who supported this money being spent said that “our democracy costs” and we have to be realistic about calling our society a democracy if we do not have fair and open, non-tokenistic discussions such as this. Those opposed said that this money could have been spent on more important things such as minimising poverty in New Zealand. A few participants were concerned about the cost of the discussion if New Zealanders end up voting to retain the old flag.

Participation

Only 8 of the 20 participants who filled in the survey said they would have participated in the discussion without this meeting. This is deeply concerning as this suggests that current engagement methods to get young people’s input in this process have not been as effective as they could have been, despite this process being online.

There has been some media criticism about the numbers of people attending the official flag discussions. This consultation has demonstrated the success of targeted engagements organised by community providers partnering together. For future consultations of this nature, it may be more successful if this is the approach taken. To support this grants could be made available for community groups to help cover related costs.

Information

A few participants thought that although they would have participated in the discussion they would not have had the richness of information nor perspectives to have an informed opinion on the topic without this intensive discussion.

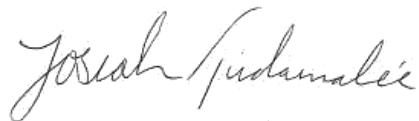
Final Comments

We would like to thank MP's Denis O'Rourke and Johnathan Young for attending this debate and discussion, and for presenting to Youth Voice Canterbury on this key national discussion.

The PYLAT Council ask the flag panelists, all decision makers, organisation's and individuals involved in the Flag discussion to consider and act on the thoughts and opinions of young people represented in this submission .

If you have any questions or queries please feel free to contact the PYLAT Council.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Josiah Tualamali'i". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Josiah" being more prominent than the surname.

On behalf of the PYLAT Council
Josiah Tualamali'i
PYLAT Council Chairperson
pylatcouncil@gmail.com

APPENDICES

Survey Results

Youth were asked how they felt about each of the following statements. The results were as below. Not all participants who attended filled in the survey.

	Strongly Disagree 0	Disagree 1	Sort of Disagree 2	Maybe 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5	Mean
1. Should we change the flag	0	0	2	8	5	5	3.7
2. The flag does not need to change as it represents NZers.	5	5	5	4	1	4	2.1
3. The \$26 million being spent on this process by the government is too much	3	0	4	4	5	5	3.1

	Terrible 0	Poor 1	Sort of Poor 2	Sort of Good 3	Good 4	Excellent 5	Mean
How was the organisation of the event?	0	0	0	0	4	16	4.5
How was the length of the programme?	0	0	1	2	6	12	4.3
How was the venue?	0	0	0	1	5	14	4.3
How was the food?	0	0	0	0	1	19	4.9
How was the facilitator	0	0	0	0	2	18	4.6
How do you feel about the purpose of the programme (to ensure the Youth opinion is heard)	0	0	0	0	4	14	4.8

	Yes	No	Approval Percentage
Should we continue organising these discussion events for Pacific Youth?	20		100%
Did you learn anything new today?	20		100%
You would have contributed to the discussion if you had NOT attended this event.	8	12	42%

Comments from Discussion Groups and Survey Forms

The following comments are notes taken from both the group discussions which all attendees participated in, and also the comments made on the individual survey. Please note that the comments are in raw form and no attempt has been made to correct any grammatical errors.

1. Should we change the flag?

- Yes it does get confused with the Australian flag. This a good opportunity for those who have moved here and it is awesome as it may not come up again. What does this mean for ANZAC and those who fought under it? We would be keen to hear from the RSA. Although 2 of our group members were a no, after Jonathan spoke we agree that the money is already allocated and so we should carry on with the process and it is important that we the people get to have our say.
- Yes, but we are nervous if we use \$26 million to keep the same flag. Is this a distraction? More background information is needed to confirm this. It is interesting the Southern Cross is labelled the Pasifika bit as Pasifika people did not choose the Southern Cross, actually it was old white guys. On the no side, there is a lot of poverty in NZ and money should be spent on this. But, yes we don't feel represented by the current one.
- Yes, but right now it might not be a priority. It's important because not all NZers had input into the current flag. It would be better if it was a more natural public discussion rather than one forced on us. Some people think it is just a distraction from the TPPA. But what would we change it to. Our one is too similar to Australia though.
- Our team had mixed feelings. On the no side, the government has just brought it up, does this mean we are going to leave the commonwealth soon? No because of the cost and that we need more information and we need to decide if we are following America's example – joined five eyes – now looking to change our flag; is this why? If we use more red we need to consider that it is expensive to dye. Those who thought yes said because we are more informed, because we are ashamed of colonization, yes as \$26 million is going to be spend either way. The money being spent is a yes and no.
- Yes, to something uniquely NZ.
- Yes only to get rid of the Union Jack.

2. Do you think our flag should reflect should reflect our history, now, our future or a combination of those 3?

- All of these are important. It is key to connect with where from but still look to the future we can only get more diverse.
- I don't like our history. The silver fern is a much better known as NZ than the current flag, Even NZers don't always know the difference between Oz and us. Re: the history argument; even the confederate flag has history!
- All of these. We liked the silver fern suggestion with sports athletes flying the fern. It is already widely represented. Everyone needs to be able to know what it means.
- Yes it should reflect all of this & recognise multiculturalism. Less about now, some about the past and future. Out with the old and in with the new. Add all of them in we don't have to represent every country. It does need to change to reflect our past as it is supposed to (Taranaki Maori & others who don't feel this flag represents them due to colonization). Yes these would make it better as alone, some people aren't happy with our past. It is worth considering if other countries pasts which ain't good have changed their flag.

3. Does our current flag represent NZers?

- We didn't connect to British parts of the current flag. The current flag represents more of history than our present or future.
- It represents its origin (Union Jack) and Maori while not discriminating other nationalities.
- It doesn't really represent everyone.
- The Southern Cross does not encompass Maori pfft were they asked about that, nar old European men were. No gender, ethnic or other equality there.

4. What do we 'stand for' or value in NZ?

(a) Team comments

- Silver fern, equality (4), culture (6), diversity, clean green – connected to the land (3), family/whanau & community, biculturalism, innovative, sport, leisure and recreation, kiwi.
- Diversity, love, culture, equality, Maoritanga, tikanga, culture, giving things a go, resilience, DIY.
- Whanau (3), environment, tangata whenua, land, sea & water, community, sports, arts, diversity, equality (3), equity, language, manaaki, chill factor, innovative, stand up, resilient, unity.
- Commitment to the people (3), environment & our fern (2), far far away, diversity, freedom of speech, sports, equality (6), acceptance, respect individual ideas, community (2), independence (3), empower, safety & security (3), peace and bicultural.

(b) Individual's comments

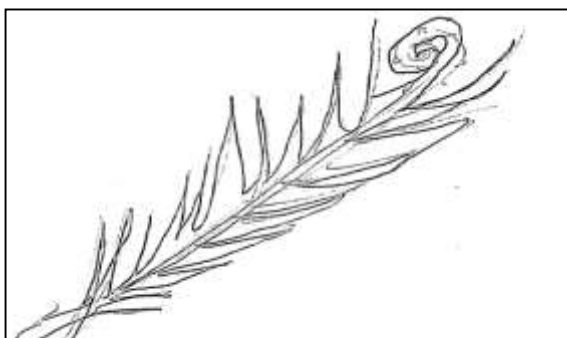
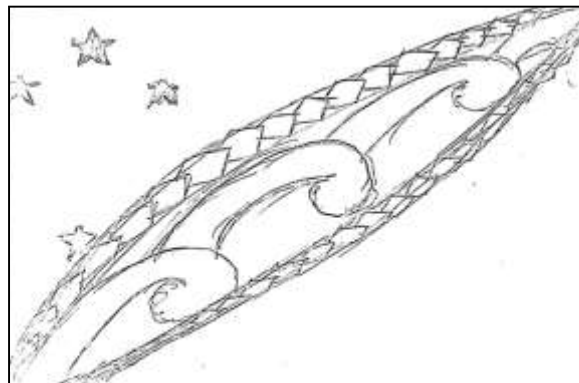
- Inclusiveness. Diversity, Equality and Maoritanga. Resilience, Equality as we are representatives of so many peoples. Equity, diversity and culture. Whanau, tangata whenua, fairness, community and diversity. Family (aiga). Individuality. Equality and the opportunity to express your individuality. Biculturalism, independence, equality. Unique identity. A pacific nation. Post-colonial identity. Honesty, integrity, family, equality, social justice. Tangata whenua. Chance for a new life in a beautify land, opportunity, excitement and family. It's a friendly place with respect when everyone is being nice to you no matter who you are. A brood culture of where everyone is diverse and equal. Respect, Maoritanga, diversity. We are generally an egalitarian society. Environment, bicultural, equality. Empowering, acceptance, working together with others.

5. Is the \$26 million being spent on this process too much

- No it is a one off cost. It is necessary for representation.
- Poverty greater than the flag. It can't be changed to get peoples input.
- There are better things that \$26 million could be spent on. I pay way to much tax. I'm not that keen to have a 'free' future because I know it is not going to be.
- Jonathan's comment that our democracy costs and that if we want to be democracy we have to consider that it is not cheap. Great point about the cost of parliament per hour. 20K who would have known.

6. Flag Designs

- Only the unique flag designs have been included (due to space) including the design under on page 5. Others suggested were the same as those here so have not been included.



Event Evaluation Comments

1. How was the organisation of the event?

- Thank you PYLAT for a well organised active and educational event
- Had such an awesome time tonight, was so much fun thank you guys you did a brilliant Job
- Great night, thanks for being great hosts and shearing your amazing culture with us
- One of the best youth connects
- Was great – good food.
- Awesome!!!

2. How was the length of the programme?

- Don't mind if it was longer
- Great! Loved food first
- Nice size, decent.
- Good I think the time was good for people who drive home or have work.
- Good length for the people who do not live in Christchurch.

3. How was the venue?

- Irrelevant, nice.
- Community House forever.
- Same as usual, great!
- Great.
- Really good for the amount of people who attended.

4. How was the food?

- Amazing
- Love the vegetarian

- Kai was amazing the soup!! Can I have the recipe?
- The desert
- Vegan food love it, love it.
- OMG!
- Chocolate mousse to die for.
- Best food.
- Kai wow was delicious and definitely a highlight!

5. How was the facilitator?

- Amazing
- Loved him.
- Josiah = amazing
- Did his job nicely.
- Awesome.

6. How do you feel about the purpose of the programme (to ensure the Pacific Youth opinion is heard)?

- I love coming
- Very worthy discussion
- Awesome

7. Should we continue organising these discussion events for Pacific Youth?

- Yes, but not just target the youth in school, Uni etc. but youth who have dropped out etc.
- Invite a friend, watch it grow.

8. Did you learn anything new today?

- Some cool cultural greetings
- More informed about the flag discussion
- Pacific values, greetings and history
- About another culture.
- Flag crap.
- Lots of greetings.
- To allow youth to learn about issues and get involved. Mainly why to change the flag.

9. Would you have contributed to discussion on changing the NZ flag if you had not attended this event?

- Not nearly so much.
- Dependent on when I ended up but knowing what I know now. It has changed my mind and stuff.
- Because I would not have known why they want it to change.
- I have but not been as informed nor felt it was this meaningful.

10. Do you have any other comments?

- Thank you for allowing me to be a part tonight. It was very informative and entertaining.
- Great work team PYLAT.
- Thanks for the awesome evening.
- Thanks for doing this.
- Great hosting and sharing of your culture well done.
- Well done PYLAT.