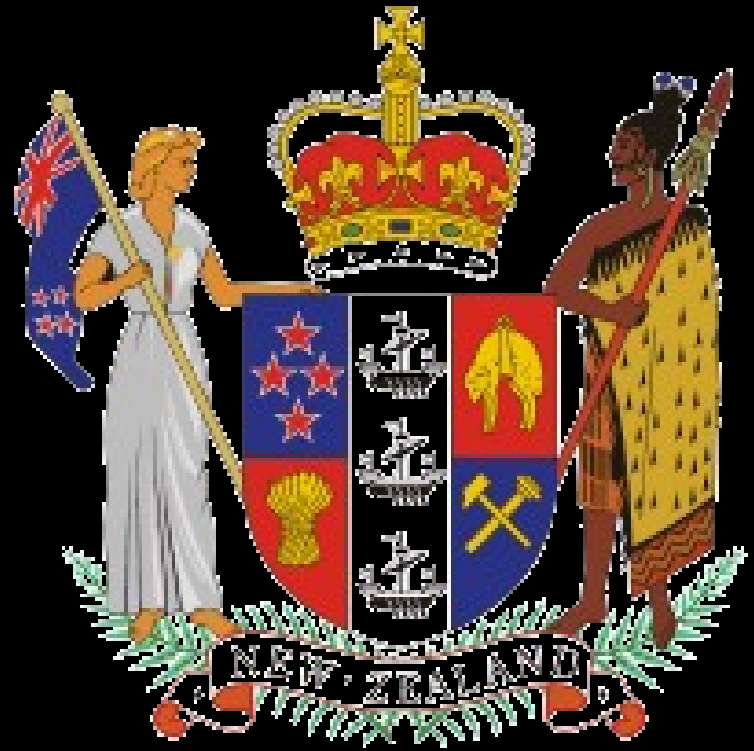


New Zealand





175°E ©Oxford Cartographers



- **New Zealand** is an island country in the south-western Pacific Ocean comprising two main landmasses, (the North Island and the South Island,) and numerous smaller islands, most notably Stewart Island/Rakiura and the Chatham Islands. The indigenous Māori named New Zealand **Aotearoa**, commonly translated as *The Land of the Long White Cloud*.



- New Zealand is notable for its geographic isolation, situated about 2000 km (1250 miles) southeast of Australia across the Tasman Sea, and its closest neighbours to the north are New Caledonia, Fiji and Tonga. During its long isolation New Zealand developed a distinctive fauna dominated by birds, a number of which became extinct after the arrival of humans and the mammals they introduced.



- The population is mostly of European descent, with the indigenous Māori being the largest minority. Asians and non-Māori Polynesians are also significant minorities, especially in the urban areas. Elizabeth II, as the Queen of New Zealand, is the Head of State and, in her absence, is represented by a non-partisan Governor-General.



- She has no real political influence, and her position is essentially symbolic. Political power is held by the democratically elected Parliament of New Zealand under the leadership of the Prime Minister, who is the head of government. New Zealand's open economy is known for being one of the world's most free market capitalist economies.



**Elizabeth II,
Queen of New Zealand**



**Anand Satyanand,
Governor-General**



**John Key,
Prime Minister of New Zealand**

- New Zealand is a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary democracy. Although it has no codified constitution, the Constitution Act 1986 is the principal formal statement of New Zealand's constitutional structure. Queen Elizabeth II is the head of state and is titled Queen of New Zealand under the Royal Titles Act 1974. She is represented by the Governor-General, whom she appoints on the exclusive advice of the Prime Minister. The current Governor-General is Anand Satyanand.
- The Governor-General exercises the Crown's prerogative powers, such as the power to appoint and dismiss ministers and to dissolve Parliament, and in rare situations, the reserve powers. The Governor-General also chairs the Executive Council, which is a formal committee consisting of all ministers of the Crown.

- Members of the Executive Council are required to be Members of Parliament, and most are also in Cabinet. Cabinet is the most senior policy-making body and is led by the Prime Minister, who is also, by convention, the Parliamentary leader of the governing party or coalition.
- The New Zealand Parliament has only one chamber, the House of Representatives, which usually seats 120 Members of Parliament. Parliamentary general elections are held every three years under a form of proportional representation called Mixed Member Proportional. The 2008 General Election created an 'overhang' of two extra seats, occupied by the Māori Party, due to that party winning more seats in electorates than the number of seats its proportion of the party vote would have given it.





- The first Europeans known to have reached New Zealand were Dutch explorer Abel Janszoon Tasman and his crew in 1642. Māori killed several of the crew and no Europeans returned to New Zealand until British explorer James Cook's voyage of 1768–71. Cook reached New Zealand in 1769 and mapped almost the entire coastline. Following Cook, New Zealand was visited by numerous European and North American whaling, sealing and trading ships. They traded European food and goods, especially metal tools and weapons, for Māori timber, food, artefacts and water.

- On occasion, Europeans traded goods for sex. The potato and the musket transformed Māori agriculture and warfare, although the resulting Musket Wars died out once the tribal imbalance of arms had been rectified. From the early nineteenth century, Christian missionaries began to settle New Zealand, eventually converting most of the Māori population, who had become disillusioned with their indigenous faith by the introduction of Western culture.



- **Becoming aware of the lawless nature of European settlement and increasing interest in the territory by the French, the British government sent William Hobson to New Zealand to claim sovereignty and negotiate a treaty with Māori. The Treaty of Waitangi was first signed in the Bay of Islands on 6 February 1840. The drafting was done hastily and confusion and disagreement continues to surround the translation. The Treaty is regarded as New Zealand's foundation as a nation and is revered by Māori as a guarantee of their rights. Hobson initially selected Okiato as the capital in 1840, before moving the seat of government to Auckland in 1841.**



- Under British rule New Zealand had been part of the colony of New South Wales. In 1840 New Zealand became its own dominion, which signalled increasing numbers of European settlers particularly from the British Isles. At first, Māori were eager to trade with the 'Pakeha', as they called them, and many iwi (tribes) became wealthy. As settler numbers increased, conflicts over land led to the New Zealand Land Wars of the 1860s and 1870s, resulting in the loss of much Māori land. The detail of European settlement and the acquisition of land from Māori remain controversial.



- New Zealand experienced increasing prosperity following World War II. However, some social problems were developing; Māori had begun to move to the cities in search of work and excitement rather than the traditional rural way of life. A Māori protest movement would eventually form, criticising Eurocentrism and seeking more recognition of Māori culture and the Treaty of Waitangi, which they felt had not been fully honoured. In 1975 a Waitangi Tribunal was set up to investigate alleged breaches of the Treaty, and enabled to investigate historic grievances in 1985.



- In common with all other developed countries, social developments accelerated in the 1970s and social and political mores changed. By the 1970s, the traditional trade with Britain was threatened because of Britain's membership of the European Economic Community. Great economic and social changes took place in the 1980s under the 4th Labour government largely led by Finance Minister Roger Douglas, and commonly referred to as "Rogernomics."



