

The Big Brand: Designing A National Identity System. A New Australian Flag and Supporting Ensigns.

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Creating a new Australian flag and implementation system can be viewed by any visual communicator/graphic designer as the ultimate branding challenge. It has been described as the most important mass-market design project of our time.

The task of designing a visual identity for one's own country is an alluring proposition, but designing a national flag should not be treated as a conventional design project. There are many design considerations, which are unique to flags. An effective flag is much more than a flat graphic; it must remain readily identifiable when in movement or at rest. The design must also have the ability to extend to a number of different applications.

The process of creating a national flag involves the creation of a visual icon, which requires a high level of acceptance within its constituency. Vexillography (flag design) embraces both design as cultural activity and design as cultural production. It is a visual communication exercise of the highest order involving political, physiological, sociological, historical and both domestic and international marketing considerations. The study of flags (vexillology) embraces these varied but interconnected areas of scholarship.

Dr Whitney Smith, recognised as a world authority and the originator of the word vexillology describes this unique discipline as follows, 'State symbolism, especially vexillology and official heraldry, is an auxiliary social science at the intersection of history, politics, semiotics, art and social psychology.'

In 1999 the Author of this abstract completed a Master of Art by Research (MA). His Thesis was titled "Designing a New Australian Flag: National Identity, Reconciliation and Acceptance," The thesis documentation presented a design which was reviewed in relation to the contemporary Australian flag debate. It was also rated by the criteria required to design an effective National flag. The final outcome produced two flag designs. One was a national flag titled; Advance Australia National Flag the other design referenced the issue of Aboriginal reconciliation. The flag was called Advance Australia Australian Reconciliation Ensign.

This flag has begun to establish itself as a national symbol for reconciliation. The Nillimbick Shire Council has officially recognized this flag at local government level in the State of Victoria. The flag is now referred to as the Australian Reconciliation Flag. Schools, shire councils, Aboriginal communities and indigenous organizations around Australia currently fly it.

The paper tests the Advance Australia National Flag in the context of an extended visual identity program. The colonial flag system used by the Britain to brand its empire has provided an insight into the possible implementation of any new Australian flag design. The flag of the colonising country assumes a position of dominance in the canton or first quarter. The individual symbol or badge of the colony is then positioned in the field (prominent back ground colour) of the flag.

If it is important for Australia to retain its state flags then any new Australian flag design should consider the Commonwealth's requirement for supporting ensigns. Few new Australian flag designs have considered this issue. Most have been designed as stand alone national flags without consideration of an extended visual identity. In this proposal supporting ensigns have been re-designed to comply with standards based on the new national flag design. They include ensigns for the Australian states and territories, mercantile shipping, civil aviation and the national defence institutions. The paper recommends the retention of current indigenous flags including the Aboriginal, Torres Strait and Reconciliation flags. It will also recommend the addition of an Australian army and a national sporting ensign.

This vexillological project is primarily an exercise in corporate identity and brand management. However as with any brand its design is only as good as the company or in this case the country it represents.

Vexil Australis

**An Illustrated guide to a proposed new Australian flag
and its supporting ensigns.**

A colonial approach to an integrated National identity.

**A guide to a new Australian flag and its supporting ensigns:
A colonial approach to an integrated National identity.**

ABSTRACT

In 1999 the Author completed a Master of Art by Research (MA). His Thesis was titled "Designing a New Australian Flag: National Identity, Reconciliation and Acceptance," The documentation presented a design which was reviewed in relation to the contemporary Australian flag debate and the criteria for effective flag design. The out come was a modified version of the Authors original design with particular reference to the issue of Aboriginal reconciliation. The flag design was titled: Advance Australia Reconciliation Flag.

Advance Australia Reconciliation Ensign has begun to established it self as a national symbol for reconciliation. Known as the Australian Reconciliation Flag, it is currently flown by Australian schools, shire councils, Aboriginal communities and indigenous organizations. The Nillimbick Shire Council has officially recognized this flag at local government level in Victoria. Monash University also supports the initiative. In 2000 it donated a flag to every Secondary School in the state of Victoria.

This paper explores the Advance Australia flag in the context of an extended visual identity program. The visual expression of this research will take the form of a printed flag chart and supporting web site.

Like the current Australian flag, the Advance Australia National Flag has been designed in a 1-2 ratio. This proportional link to the current flag, a colonial flag, enables supporting ensigns to accommodate the individual identity requirements of the Australian Commonwealth. This paper also recommends the establishment of a reconciliation ensign, an Australian army ensign and a national sporting ensign as flags of the Commonwealth. It also presents an example of the ongoing

potential of the system by extending the concept to an Australian Surf Lifesaving ensign.

Current ensigns have been re-designed in compliance with standards outlined in this document. These include ensigns for the Australian states and territories, Mercantile shipping, Civil Aviation and the national defense institutions.

INTRODUCTION

The colonial flag system used by the Britain and others to brand their empires may provide an insight into the brand extension of any new Australian flag design. Ironically this system is best illustrated by the current Australian flag and supporting ensigns which are all by definition colonial flags. The flag of the colonising country assumes a position of dominance in the canton or first quarter. The colonies symbol or badge is then positioned in the field (prominent back ground colour). If it is important for Australia to retain its state flags then any design for a new Australian flag should consider the Commonwealth's requirement for supporting ensigns. Few new Australian flag designs to date have considered this issue. Most have been designed as stand alone national flags without consideration of the extension or implimentation of the visual identity. The term Brand Management is used in the commercial context of corporate identity implementation. The principles are the same regardless of the term. Both Visual Identity Implementation and Brand Management are primarily concerned with maintaining the integrity of an organizations identity.

Creating a new Australian flag and implimentation system can be viewed by any visual communicator as the ultimate graphic design challenge. It has been described as the most important mass-market design project of our time. The task of designing a visual identity for one's own country is an alluring proposition, but developing a national flag should not be treated as a conventional design project. There are many design considerations that are

unique to flags. An effective flag is much more than a flat graphic; it must remain readily identifiable when in movement or at rest.

The process of creating a national flag involves the creation of a visual icon with a high level of acceptance within its constituency. It is a visual communication exercise of the highest order involving political, physiological, sociological, historical and marketing considerations. The study of flags (vexillology) embraces these interconnected areas of scholarship. Dr Whitney Smith, recognised as a world authority and the originator of the word *vexillology*, describes this unique discipline as follows, 'State symbolism, especially vexillology and official heraldry, is an auxiliary social science at the intersection of history, politics, semiotics, art, and social psychology.'²

It is not surprising that the suggestion of changing the Australian flag evokes a passionate response. But why is discussion so dominated by politics, tradition, race, sentiment and guilt and why is design often removed from the argument? Is it the conservative nature of Australian society about matters of design? Is it a lack of national maturity or have the people of Australia not been presented with an acceptable alternative? This paper attempts to stimulate discussion by presenting a distinctive national flag design supported by a practical visual identity expansion system. The outcomes are visually summarised in the form of a flag chart. Although this paper describes the flags in some detail the author believed the illustrations would be best displayed in the context of the flag chart genre. This guide is based on research investigation and compliance to vexillological conventions.

An ensign is another term for flag. It also means a flag based on another flag. Originally an ensign was a flag flown at the stern of a ship to denote nationality

² Smith, Dr,W. 1998, A fax from the Flag Research Centre

especially with naval flags. The term has extended over time to become associated with flags flown by government services on land, sea and air.

WHY DO WE NEED A NEW NATIONAL FLAG

The present Australian flag has always been regarded as a colonial flag of the United Kingdom. The design chosen in the 1901 international competition was similar to many other designs which existed prior to Federation (figure 1). Modification and fine-tuning of the flag continued after 1901 while confusion reigned about the flag's official status.

The debate for changing the Australian national flag is a passionate one and much of the debate was well covered at the 1989 International Congress of Vexillology in Melbourne at which time Tony Burton described the present Australian flag as:

... a relic, a distillation of imperial distinction and destruction. In 1991, not to speak of 2001, when Britain has become a province of Europe, the symbols of a faded Empire speak not ... of enduring tradition, but of a reality long since passed. (Burton 1989)

Constructive discourse is often jaded by people's inability to separate the flag and the republican debates in Australia. Although intertwined, they are constitutionally separate, as was the National Anthem which changed from 'God Save The Queen' to 'Advance Australia Fair' through a referendum in 1977.

The debate for changing the Australian flag started in earnest in September 1901 when the winning design was announced. Many people continued to use the Union Jack long after 1901.

There was strong criticism of the judges choice. It was argued that the competition was a cynical public relations exercise designed to make Australians feel that they had designed their own flag. In reality, the judges were briefed to choose a design which featured the Union Jack and Southern Cross. This point was not included on the published brief, which did however disclose that ...'the successful design will be submitted to the imperial authorities'. This statement of imperial authorisation has been used to bolster an argument for change by claiming that the final choice for the current flag design was made by the British.

Flag loyalists strongly maintain that imperial approval was simply an issue of protocol and that the British endorsement was to rubber-stamp the Australian Federal Government's decision. Australian flag historian Carol Foley articulates the significance of imperial approval:

The resolution of this issue is important for logical and for emotional reasons. If we didn't choose our present flag and if it was imposed on us by another country, then, arguably, both logically and emotionally, our attachment to it is consequentially and significantly weakened. (Foley 1996)

The Ausflag organisation has been an active voice of change in recent years and have presented a number of new design alternatives to the public, most of which feature the Southern Cross. The momentum for change has increased steadily since the early eighties with numerous design competitions taking place.

Australians should be proud of its current flag whether they like its British colonial design or not. It has served the country well over the years both through times of adversity and triumph. However, it has become clear that as a nation we have outgrown it. Australia has reached a point in time where a change is not only necessary but long overdue. To feature the flag of another country on our flag is perceived by the rest of the world as illogical and by Australians as not 'fair dinkum'. It's not a unique design and it's not a national flag – it is a colonial flag. To claim that the Union Jack on the Australian flag symbolises the historical origin of our people is insulting, especially to Indigenous Australians.

A GUIDE TO A NEW AUSTRALIAN FLAG AND SUPPORTING ENSIGNS WHY A FLAG CHART?

Australia has a long tradition of flag charts. Blah blah Blah Ralf Barlett. They are an effective way to display flags. Although this paper describes the flags in some detail the author believed the supporting illustrations would be best displayed in the context of the flag chart genre. The flag chart format provides an opportunity to instill emotion into the design by displaying them in context. A flag chart has a life beyond this paper. It provides a platform to show case the designs and in turn gauge public reaction to the concept.

This flag guide is designed to function as both a poster and a brochure. Unfolded the size is 20000?X29999? landscape (1-2 ratio). On one side features the proposed new Australian national flag. This poster folds in half horizontally to display the full set of proposed Australian ensigns. It then gate folds into two square panels which feature two ensigns in more detail. The proposed new Australian national flag on the left and the Australian Reconciliation ensign on the right. The guide then folds in half book fashion to display a square format the front cover. The front cover features an illustration of young Australians assembled under the new Australian flag.

The flag chart component of the guide is divided into five distinct areas:

- 1) The Australian National flag
- 2) Australian indigenous flags
- 3) Australian State and Territory ensigns
- 4) Australian defence, Merchant Shipping and Civil Aviation ensigns.
- 5) Australian Sporting and Recreational ensigns.

A detailed technical drawing of the flag has been included along with the Australian coat of Arms (unchanged) and the Supporting Reconciliation logo (incorporating the reconciliation ensign).

'ADVANCE AUSTRALIA' NATIONAL FLAG

Colours: yellow, blue and white

The kangaroo, Australia's most recognisable symbol should be the premier feature of our new flag. The southern hemisphere symbol of the Southern Cross should be retained although it is not unique enough to be used on its own.

The design proposal titled 'Advance Australia' (figure 3), features both the kangaroo and the Southern Cross.

A forward moving, dark blue kangaroo is silhouetted against a red Australian sky. The leading edge of the kangaroo diagonally divides the flag into two

distinct areas. The blue area of the kangaroo bleeds off to the fly edge with the Southern Cross reversed out in white in both the second and fourth quarters.

Feedback on the Advance Australia National Flag was very positive. Dr Whitney Smith, Executive Director of the Flag Research Center in the USA, commented in a letter dated 26 June 1993:

For many years we have been watching developments in your country as they relate to the national flag and other symbols. Many of the proposals made have been very amateurish, ignoring the most basic rules of vexillography. This has also been true of many professional designers who know little or nothing about the flag as a medium and end up with something which more resembles a poster than a flag. Your design, on the other hand, meets most of the requirements and provides a very striking, symbolic, and memorable design. (Smith 1993)

Dr Whitney Smith also recommended the inclusion of a fimbriation to separate the red and blue areas which were of a similar tonal value.

In a letter dated 21 May 1992 from the Office of the Prime Minister, Paul Keating was more non-committal by referring to the proposal as an 'intriguing design'.

Lois O'Donoghue, Chairperson of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) said in a letter dated 20 October 1992:

The proposed new flag still represents part of the English heritage and whilst I agree that it has merit, any design endorsed by the Board would need to be more representative of the first inhabitants. The Board would also not necessarily be in a position to decide on this type of issue without wider consultation. Once again, thank you for considering the Aboriginal point of view. (O'Donoghue 1992)

O'Donoghue's opinion prompted a reassessment of the concept and inspired the development of the following 'Reconciliation' version of the 'Advance Australia' National Flag.

'ADVANCE AUSTRALIA' RECONCILIATION ENSIGN AND AUSTRALIAN INDIGINOUS FLAGS

The history of the Australian flag reflects Australia's relatively smooth political, cultural and historical development as a nation since white settlement. However, if we include Aboriginal history and culture, as we must, then white settlement itself remains as the most destabilising event in Australia's past. It is

therefore not surprising that indigenous Australia is cynical about the national flag debate.

The emergence of the Australian Aboriginal flag in the early seventies brought with it a sobering element to the debate. The design of the flag is attributed to Harold Thomas, an Aboriginal rights activist and artist. In April 1997 he won sole copyright ownership of the Aboriginal flag after the Federal Court's finding challenged a Federal Government gazetted proclamation making the Aboriginal flag public property.

Harold Thomas immediately expressed concern about the insensitive use of the flag and has strongly stated that he may decide to restrict its use (*Herald Sun* 15 April 1997, p. 21). Most Aboriginal groups are pleased to have Harold Thomas as the custodian of the flag while others are concerned about the private ownership of such an important icon. They fear that the flag may be lost as a unifying Aboriginal symbol if restrictions are implemented.

The Aboriginal component of the flag debate is a sensitive one. Opinions are more politically motivated than other flag lobby groups. With Australian Aborigines, the flag issue has become emersed in the issue of reconciliation – a situation which creates an uneasy climate for constructive design discussion.

The South African flag, designed by Fred Brownell in 1993, demonstrates how design can contribute to racial and political consensus and avoid racial alienation. The flag demonstrates how simple but effective design can symbolically represent a sensitive issue and help create a climate of racial and political unity. Flags can be powerful entities with personalities and persuasive qualities of their own.

An 'Advance Australia' Reconciliation flag is proposed in recognition of indigenous Australians' desire for recognition of their own identity. This version of the proposed national flag design would feature a red sky, black kangaroo and yellow stars. Both flags would be endorsed and used as official Australian flags. It may be argued that the colour difference suggests division, however, the consistent design of both flags act as a solid symbol of unity and reconciliation. In the future *Australia may decide to assemble under one of the two ensigns as the final step to reconciliation.*

The principle of multiple flag versions is well established. Australia, like many other countries, displays different ensigns for a variety of ceremonial occasions.

At a meeting on 17 April 1997 with Helen Curzon-Siggers, Director of MOSA (Monash Orientation Scheme for Aborigines), reaction to the flag design was extremely positive:

The reconciliation aspect of the design shows genuine sensitivity. The concept of two flags is a thoughtful way of satisfying the requirements of both indigenous and non-indigenous Australia. The design is strong and should appeal to Aboriginal Australians. The flowing depiction of the kangaroo sits well with Aboriginal culture. Traditionally the kangaroo represents the earth. It is a strong cultural icon.

The Aboriginal colours look great for the Reconciliation Flag but I agree that the red white and blue version is the right way to go for a National Australian flag. A jump to red black and yellow would be too much for non-indigenous Australians at this stage. By this I mean, in the current hostile Australian political climate of the Native Title and Pauline Hanson debates, the timing is inappropriate. (Curzon-Siggers 1997)

Sharon Firebrace, State Co-ordinator of Australians for Reconciliation made a useful suggestion regarding the design concept at a meeting on 22 April 1997:

It is a strong design in its own right. We don't require two flags. Australia needs one national flag which in some way acknowledges indigenous Australians. Perhaps the blue could change to black in recognition of Aboriginal Australia. The issue of colour is an important one and probably requires market research. (Firebrace 1997)

The Firebrace opinion suggests, like South Africa, that it may be possible to achieve design consensus with one flag. The following National/Reconciliation flag proposal was inspired by this opinion.

Sine 1999 the Advance Australia Reconciliation Ensign has established it self as a national symbol for reconciliation. Known as the Australian Reconciliation Flag, it is currently flown by Australian schools, Shire councils, Aboriginal communities and organizations. This flag has already been officially recognised at local government level in Victoria by the Nillimbick Shire Council. Monash University also supportes the initiative. In 2000 it donated a flag to every Secondary School in the state of Victoria.

Australian icons

The correct choice and sympathetic depiction of an icon is crucial to the success of the flag. Tony Burton defined an icon as:

... an artefact or representation that calls to consciousness a sense of power of which it is merely the representation. Conversely, because it has this sacramental function, it has the ability to alter states of mind. So the image acquires power in its own right. (Burton 1989)

The Southern Cross and the kangaroo have been the two most popular icons to appear in design proposals for an Australian flag.

Although the concept of simply removing the Union Jack from the current flag is logical, the use of the Southern Cross by itself has been criticised. It is seen as a symbol of the southern hemisphere, not just of Australia. The Micronesian flag features a four star constellation resembling the Southern Cross on a pale blue background (figure 2).

The kangaroo is one of Australia's most recognisable icons. The silhouetted shape of the kangaroo is unique, strong, athletic and proud in appearance. It features on the Australian coat of arms, Australian currency and enjoys national and international exposure in corporate identities such as Qantas Airlines.

An Aboriginal organisation, the Kimberley Land Council, has incorporated a kangaroo in the yellow circle of the Aboriginal flag as their logo. The kangaroo has consistently featured in Aboriginal art for thousands of years.

The kangaroo was first used in an official capacity on an Australian flag in 1982 when it was added to the roundel in the fourth quarter of Australian Air Force Flag.

The Ausflag organisation has created a number of designs which feature the kangaroo. Tony Burton comments in his 1989 paper that the kangaroo, like no other icon, lends itself to recognisable and exciting stylisation and stands alone as being readily associated with Australia.

Australians are recognised as chronic sufferers of cultural cringe. Some people are embarrassed at the very thought of featuring a kangaroo on the flag. Strangely, they see the icon as 'too Australian'. This attitude is surely the result of an inferiority complex entrained by the sycophantic symbolism of the current Australian flag.

BRAND MANAGEMENT

Wayne Rankin, National President of the Australian Graphic Design Association in 1992 likened corporate identity design to flag design:

The design of a new flag is really no different to designing a corporate identity for a corporation. It will be a much more emotive issue, of course, but the technical fundamentals are the same. A new identity can effectively instil new enthusiasm and energy into a company. Hopefully a new flag will create the same enthusiasm, energy and direction for Australia. (Rankin 1992)

Corporate identity clearly projects what makes an organisation special; it 'articulates the style, ethos, activities, philosophy, work ethics and unique capabilities' of an entity (Seddon 1992). With a clear similarity between the fundamentals of corporate identity and flag design it is useful to examine the criteria used for judging the effectiveness of visual identity devices. According to Rand (1991) they are: (a) distinctiveness; (b) visibility; (c) useability; (d) memorability; (e) universality; (f) durability; and (g) timelessness.

Further insight into the criteria for effective flag design can be gained from the committee formed to report on a new National Flag for South Africa. Their unanimous view was that a new flag must: (a) promote unity; (b) be simple in design; (c) be unique and (d) be practical from a vexillological, manufacturing and marketing point of view (Brownell & Stylianides 1994).

The above criteria are useful in evaluating the design proposal for a new Australian flag.

'ADVANCE AUSTRALIA' STATE AND TERRITORY ENSIGNS

'ADVANCE AUSTRALIA' DEFENCE, MERCANTILE SHIPPING AND CIVIL AVIATION ENSIGNS

'ADVANCE AUSTRALIA' SPORTING ENSIGN

CONCLUSION: IMPLEMENTATION AND ACCEPTANCE

Australians should be proud of its current flag whether they like its British colonial design or not. It has served the country well over the years both through times of adversity and triumph. However, it has become clear that as a nation we have outgrown it. Australia has reached a point in time where a change is not only necessary but long overdue. To feature the flag of another country on our flag is perceived by the rest of the world as illogical and by Australians as not 'fair dinkum' (genuine). It's not a unique design and it's not a national flag – it is a colonial flag.

To claim that the Union Jack on the Australian flag symbolises the historical origin of our people is insulting to the extreme, especially for Aboriginal Australians.

The kangaroo, Australia's most recognisable symbol, if depicted with style, should be the premier feature of our new flag. The southern hemisphere symbol of the Southern Cross should be retained although it is not unique enough to be used on its own.

History will view the current Australian flag as a transitional flag which smoothly and successfully carried the country from English imperialism to reconciliation, nationhood and true independence.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors wish to particularly thank the following people for their assistance in the preparation of this paper: Dr Whitney-Smith, Director, The Flag Research Centre; Ralph Bartlett, Secretary, Flag Society of Australia Inc; Sharon Firebrace, State Co-ordinator, Australians for Reconciliations; and Helen Curzon-Siggers, Director, Monash Orientation Scheme for Aborigines.

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FIGURE CAPTIONS

Figure 1: Pre-federation flag designs which preceded the current Australian National Flag.

Figure 2: Southern Cross designs proposed by Ausflag compared with the Micronesian flag.

Figure 3: 'Advance Australia' flag designs by Russell Kennedy.

ADVANCE AUSTRALIA FLAG CHART

FRONT PANNEL

IMAGES: • Colour photo of National Flag
 • Nigel Buchanan illustration

COPY: AUSTRALIA "it's time to fly"

A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE

TO A NEW AUSTRALIAN FLAG

AND SUPPORTING ENSIGNS

BACK PANNEL

AD: FULL PAGE ADVERTISEMENT (TBA)

DOUBLE SPREAD LEFT (page 2)

- IMAGES:
- Colour photo of national flag (small)
 - Colour photo of national flag (large)
 - Strip of all flags and ensigns (all blurred except national flag)
 - Parliament House Canberra with new national flag (close up of flag pole)
 - Australian Coat of Arms

HEADLINE: **ADVANCE AUSTRALIA - NATIONAL FLAG**

(Fine line to runs from headline to national flag on strip)

BODY COPY: Advance Australia National Flag is a proposed new Australian flag design.

A dark blue, forward moving, kangaroo silhouetted against a golden Australian sky has replaced the Union Jack and Federation star featured on the current Australian national flag. The leading edge of the kangaroo diagonally divides the flag into two distinct areas. The white Southern Cross appears in the same position as it does on the current Australian flag.

The kangaroo is one of the few animals, which physically cannot move backwards. It is our national symbol, the quintessential Australian icon.

It represents advancement and unity. Its posture, as depicted on the flag, is proudly determined; head held high, chest thrust forward and arms tucked back kangaroos do when travelling at full flight. The unique feature of this flag is only realised when the flag itself is in motion. When hoisted in a breeze, the kangaroo appears to be animated in a perpetual bounding motion...hence "Advance Australia".

This flag chart illustrates the new national flag along with its 16 supporting Commonwealth ensigns and flags.

www.newaustralianflag.org

LEFT MARG: Similarities to the current Australian National Flag:

- Flag ratio of 1-2
- Dark blue field*
- White Southern Cross
- Position of Southern Cross

Differences to the current Australian National Flag

- Union Flag replaced by kangaroo
- Federation Star replaced by kangaroo • White Southern Cross

- Colour red deleted
- Colour yellow introduced

References to current Indigenous Australian Flags

- Yellow from the Aboriginal flag
- Blue from Torres Straight Islands flag

DOUBLE SPREAD RIGHT (page 3)

- IMAGES:
- Colour photo of reconciliation ensign (small)
 - Colour photo of reconciliation ensign (large)
 - Strip of all flags and ensigns (all blurred except reconciliation ensign)
 - Cathy Arnott holding reconciliation ensign at Colonial Stadium
 - Supporting Reconciliation Logo

HEADLINE: **ADVANCE AUSTRALIA - RECONCILIATION ENSIGN**

(Fine line to runs from headline to reconciliation ensign on strip)

BODY COPY: The Advance Australia Reconciliation Ensign has established it self as a national symbol for reconciliation. Known as the Australian Reconciliation Flag, it is currently flown all over Australia by schools, Shire councils, Aboriginal communities and organizations. This flag has already been officially recognised at local government level in Victoria by the Nillimbick Shire Council. Monash University has also donated a flag to every Secondary School in the state of Victoria.

The Australian Reconciliation Flag was developed at Monash University with extensive consultation with indigenous groups around Australia. As with Advance Australia National Flag the kangaroo serves as a unifying symbol.

It is an earth creature for indigenous Australia and its pouch rearing capability symbolises parental caring. This ensign has been designed as a potent symbol for the way ahead. It was not designed to replace the existing indigenous flags but instead to sit comfortably between them and the current Australian National Flag.

Advance Australia Reconciliation Ensign shares the same design as the proposed Advance Australia - National Flag but instead it features the colours of the aboriginal flag. It is important that the colours of the ensigns differ as visual reminder that reconciliation is yet to be achieved in Australia. By sharing the design it is suggested that at least we are united under one design.

Advance Australia - Reconciliation Ensign would fly alongside the new national flag until such time that reconciliation is achieved. At this point the reconciliation ensign would be retired as an official flag. No longer required but satisfied with its contribution to the reconciliation process and to the development of a truly Australian national flag design.

www.reconciliationflag.org

RIGHT MARG: **References to Indigenous Australia**

- The combination of yellow, red and black is a direct reference to the Aboriginal flag which was designed by

Harold Thomas in 1972?. The colours red, yellow and black represents the land, the sun the people respectively.

- The use of black in this flag is slightly different in that it represents all indigenous peoples of Australia including Torres Strait Islanders.

References to current Australian Flag

- Flag ratio of 1-2
- Stylisation, positioning and scale of Southern Cross.

Unifying Elements

- The Kangaroo is a respected symbol of both indigenous and non-indigenous Australians.
- Forward moving aspect of flag instils confidence in the future.
- Combination of elements from both the Aboriginal flag and the current Australian flag
- Shared design (apart from colours) with proposed new Australian national flag.

QUAD SPREAD (1)

- Australian national flag (flat graphic)
- Australian Coat of Arms

WHY DOES AUSTRALIA NEED TO CHANGE IT'S FLAG?

Australians should be proud of its current flag whether they like its British colonial design or not. It has served the country well over the years both through times of adversity and triumph. However, it has become clear that as a nation we have outgrown it.

Australia has reached a point in time where a change is not only necessary but long overdue. To feature the flag of another country on our flag is perceived by the rest of the world as illogical and by Australians as not 'fair dinkum'. It's not a unique design and it's not a national flag – it is a colonial flag. To claim that the Union Jack on the Australian flag symbolises the historical origin of our people is insulting, especially to Indigenous Australians.

The kangaroo, Australia's most recognisable symbol should be the premier feature of our new flag. The southern hemisphere symbol of the Southern Cross should be retained although it is not unique enough to be used on its own.

HEADLINE: **ADVANCE AUSTRALIA FLAG AND SUPPORTING ENSIGNS**

BODY COPY: This proposal considers the Advance Australian Flag in the context of an extended visual identity program. Like the current Australian flag, the Advance Australia Flag has been designed in a 1-2 ratio. This link to the current flag enables supporting ensigns to accommodate the individual identity requirements of the Australian Commonwealth.

CAPTIONS: AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL FLAG

AUSTRALIAN COAT OF ARMS

TAG COPY : HERALDRY

A change to our current Coat of Arms (above) is not proposed unless the individual states decide to change their symbol at some time in the future. These state symbols appear on the shield featured within the Coat of Arms.

The colours of Advance Australia - National Flag were inspired by the colours of Australia's original Coat of Arms, blue, white and yellow. It is proposed that yellow replace red in our national flag represents the Australian sun and our goldern beaches.

QUAD SPREAD (2)

- IMAGES:
- Australian reconciliation ensign (flat graphic)
 - New South Wales state ensign (flat graphic)
 - Queensland state ensign (flat graphic)
 - Australian Aboriginal flag (flat graphic)
 - Victorian state ensign (flat graphic)
 - Western Australia state ensign (flat graphic)
 - Torres Strait Islands flag (flat graphic)
 - Australian mercantile shipping flag (flat graphic)
 - Australian naval ensign (flat graphic)

CAPTIONS

(left to right): AUSTRALIAN RECONCILIATION FLAG

NEW SOUTH WALES STATE ENSIGN

QUEENSLAND STATE ENSIGN

AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL FLAG

VICTORIAN STATE ENSIGN

WESTERN AUSTRALIA STATE ENSIGN

TORRES STRAIGHT ISLANDS FLAG

AUSTRALIAN MECHANTILE SHIPPING FLAG

AUSTRALIAN NAVAL ENSIGN

TAG COPY: INDIGINOUS FLAGS

The Australian Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islands Flags were designed to highlight difference. The Advance Australia - Reconciliation Ensign was designed to promote unity. All flags are important to Australia and should all be recognised as official Australian flags.

STATE & TERRITORY ENSIGNS

This proposal has not redesigned state and territory emblems or badges. It is suggested that states have the option to redesign their own badges in line with visual identity guidelines established by the Commonwealth.

DEFENCE, SHIPPING AND AVIATION ENSIGNS

This proposal has adapted the design of existing ensigns to the Advance Australia concept.

QUAD SPREAD (3)

- IMAGES:
- South Australia state ensign (flat graphic)
 - Tasmanian state ensign (flat graphic)
 - Australian sporting ensign (flat graphic)
 - Northern Territory ensign (flat graphic)
 - Australian Capital Territory ensign (flat graphic)
 - Australian Air force ensign (flat graphic)
 - Australian Civil Aviation ensign (flat graphic)

SPORTING ENSIGN

This ensign features Australia's official sporting colours:

Dark green kangaroo silhouetted against a golden Australian sky, white Southern Cross. It may be that our sporting colour change to fall inline with the new colours of the national flag (blue, yellow and white). A sporting ensign would not be required if this happened.

CAPTIONS

(left to right): SOUTH AUSTRALIAN STATE ENSIGN

TASMANIAN STATE ENSIGN

AUSTRALIAN SPORTING ENSIGN

NORTHERN TERRITORY ENSIGN

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY ENSIGN

AUSTRALIAN AIRFORCE ENSIGN

AUSTRALIAN CIVIL AVIATION ENSIGN

QUAD SPREAD (4)

- IMAGES:
- Supporting reconciliation logo (colour)
 - Supporting reconciliation logo (black and white)
 - Technical drawing of Advance Australia Flag (include captions)
 - PMS panels for reconciliation logo
 - PMS panels for Advance Australia Flag specifications

HEADLINE: SUPPORTING RECONCILIATION LOGO

BODY COPY: A graphic representation of the Advance Australia - Reconciliation Ensign is supported by a stylised symbol of a black and white handshake. This logo is to be used by organizations or individuals who wish to publicly display their support for reconciliation. This initiative will appeal to companies' organizations and individuals who understand the good will benefits of maintaining a positive community profile. Please feel free to feature this logo on your stationary, advertising and promotional material.

HEADLINE: ADVANCE AUSTRALIA FLAG SPECIFICATIONS

(see reference)

Flag loyalist claim that the current Australian flag emerged divinely as a truly Australian flag from the 1901 national flag design competition. This is clearly not the case. The path to our current flag was very much a process of selection with the fittest of all survivors remaining proudly perched in the canton. Regarding the Union Jack as a biological blueprint of our origin is no longer appropriate given Australia's pursuit of Aboriginal reconciliation and respectful acknowledgment of their history.

In August 1998 the author attended the 17th International Congress of Vexillology in South Africa as part of the research for this thesis. There was a large Australian contingent and to his delight, six papers were presented on the subject of the Australian flag. This included a paper co-written by the author and his Masters supervisor at the time, Brian Seddon. The paper was structured as a skeletal version of this thesis, which enabled the author to gain feedback from an international audience (see appendix II)³. This academic forum provided a unique opportunity to air various thoughts and concepts to the international vexillological community. Many of the delegates attending the congress had featured prominently in the author's research.

Harold Thomas, during a 1998 interview with the author spoke about a new Australian flag. He made the following points:

To design a new Australian flag is a difficult task because it has to achieve two very important criteria. A new Australian flag has to *look good and feel good*.

The problem with our current flag is that it *feels bad*, the symbology is wrong. The strength of the current flag is that it *looks good*. It is a very strong design. Many design proposals so far have satisfied the *feel good* criteria but in my opinion none have bettered the current flag as an appealing design.⁴

³ Kennedy, R. & Seddon, B. 1997, 'Designing a new Australian flag: A theory of evolution and reconciliation', paper presented to the 17th International Congress of Vexillology, Cape Town.

⁴ Thomas, H. 1998, telephone interview by author on 12 February.

