

New Zealand Coat of Arms 1911-1956



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The first New Zealand Coat of Arms (officially the Armorial Bearings of the Dominion of New Zealand), which was warranted on 26 August 1911. Note that 'dexter' and 'sinister' are Latin for 'right' and 'left' respectively.

From 1840 until 1911 New Zealand used the British Royal Arms. The first known move to establish a Coat of Arms for New Zealand was a design competition in 1906. Unfortunately the submissions were destroyed by a fire in the old Parliament Buildings the following year.

When the competition was rerun in 1908, 75 designs featuring everything from kiwis, sheep, cows, moa and lions to stars, ships, British soldiers, Māori warriors and Union Jacks were received. Three entries were sent to England for the final judging.

The winner was James McDonald, a draughtsman in the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts. A Royal Warrant granting armorial ensigns and supports was issued on 26 August 1911 and published in the *New Zealand Gazette* on 11 January 1912.

The 1911 Coat of Arms was replaced in 1956 by the current coat of arms:

3rd

MCH 2011



The main alterations included:

- adding St Edward's Crown to symbolise Queen Elizabeth II as Queen of New Zealand
- redrawing the quarterings in the shield
- facing the supporters inwards instead of to the front, with the Māori chieftain gaining a kapeu (a greenstone ear pendant)
- replacing the scroll with two fern leaves
- replacing 'onward' with 'New Zealand'.

Credit:

New Zealand Official Year-Book, 1912

See also: National Coat of Arms of New Zealand on the Heraldry of the World website

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