Choice

Whiriwhiria

The New Zealand Citizenship Story

Te Korero Raraunga o Aotearoa
The cover design is based around the idea of Matariki, and the alignment of the stars. Each town represents an individual star coming together to form a small constellation which takes the shape of New Zealand. Matariki itself indicates the beginning of the Māori New Year in the middle of June, but is also about celebrating new life, new beginnings.
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Te Kōrero Rāraunga o Aotearoa
This book is a general introduction to citizenship matters and should not be relied on as a full explanation of citizenship law, or the legal rights and responsibilities of anyone in New Zealand.
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Introduction

This book is called Choice. ‘Choice’ is a word that has two meanings in New Zealand. One meaning is to decide on an action or an option. The other, more informal, meaning is ‘good, great, excellent.’ "It's choice!"

Choice is expressed here as Whiriwhiria. ‘Whiri’ is the word which means 'choice' in Māori. It also means 'plait', and the two meanings are thought to originate from the constant choices made as weavers selected each thread to plait together. It’s a great image of the way different people and cultures draw together to create New Zealand society.

Eleven people who chose New Zealand citizenship share their inspirational stories with us. They have come to New Zealand from many different parts of the world, each with a unique story of why they have chosen to call New Zealand home. The words they use tell us there is more to citizenship than a simple calculation of personal advantage.

These are the words of people who are making New Zealand stronger through diversity. They are maintaining international links, retaining pride in their origins, and committing to their new country. In becoming citizens, the threads of their traditions, cultures and languages join with those of all other New Zealanders to build a future for us all, and further strengthen New Zealand’s place in the world.

We thank all those who contributed to this book, and all new citizens for your contribution to New Zealand. We hope you will keep this book as a memento of your citizenship ceremony, and share it with others in your family and community who may be considering becoming New Zealand citizens.

There is information in this book about New Zealand, New Zealanders and our history and society. We are indebted to the Ministry for Culture and Heritage for their contribution and there is further information available at their website www.mch.govt.nz.

You can also find more information about citizenship at www.citizenship.govt.nz and in Te Ara, the online encyclopedia of New Zealand: http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/citizenship.

"I was reminded of how much this country had given me and how I was determined to pay that back"

"It makes me feel strong and proud to be a New Zealander"

"I wanted to show my commitment to New Zealand"

"At that moment, getting my citizenship, New Zealand truly felt like home"

"I now have a stronger sense of belonging here"

"I didn’t want to have a foot in both countries"

"I wanted to have a permanent base here and to feel I belonged"
Whiri means choice or plait and draws to mind the saying of the first Māori King Pōtatau te Whero. It is now widely quoted as a saying symbolising unity in diversity. He said:

“Kotahi te kōhao o te ngira.
E kuhuna ai te miro ma te miro whero me te miro pango. A muri i a au kia mau ki te ture, ki te whakapono, ki te aroha.
Hei aha te aha! Hei aha te aha!”

“There is only one eye of the needle, through which white, black and red threads must pass. Hold fast to the law, hold fast to faith, hold fast to love, Forsake all else!”

Further information available at www.kiingitanga.com
Who grants citizenship?

Citizenship is granted by the Minister of Internal Affairs. Before considering any application the Minister considers advice from the Department of Internal Affairs. The Minister must make up their mind under the criteria set out in the law.

New Zealand has the proud status of being one of the least corrupt countries in the world. There are procedures in place to make sure that people making citizenship applications are treated fairly under the law. All those taking part in the process, including public servants and the Minister, must abide by the law. They cannot use their roles for personal or political advantage and it is against the law to ask them to do so.

If the Minister decides not to grant citizenship, this may be challenged in the courts. The court will review whether the right legal steps were taken and may also consider whether the Minister’s actions were reasonable. But the court is not able to make a decision on citizenship. If a Minister’s decision is overturned by the court, a further Ministerial decision will have to be made. Normally, if this happens, the Minister will ask another Minister to make the second decision.

In citizenship, we can see the three branches of government in New Zealand in action. The three branches are Parliament, the Executive (mainly Ministers) and the Judiciary (courts). We have only a single chamber of parliament, and all Ministers are drawn from among the members of parliament elected by the people. Judges are appointed by the government, but cannot be removed, criticised or penalised by the government after their appointment (except in extreme and unusual cases). The Judiciary is therefore independent of Ministers and members of parliament. In summary, Parliament passes the citizenship law, and grants to a Minister the right and responsibility to make decisions. The Minister’s decision can in turn be challenged in the courts.
Responsibilities and privileges

Responsibilities

As a New Zealand citizen, there are things that you must do. These include:

• Obey the laws of New Zealand.
• Not act in a way that is against the interests of New Zealand.
• Register to vote.
• Pay tax.
• Contribute to the defence of the nation if able to.

Privileges

Being a New Zealand citizen gives you a range of privileges. Citizenship lets you:

• Have the unfettered right to live in New Zealand and come and go as you please.
• Travel overseas and return to New Zealand on a New Zealand passport.
• Stand for Parliament or local councils.
• Have full access to education (for example, only New Zealand citizens qualify for some scholarships and awards).
• Have full access to economic rights (for example, some public service positions may only be held by New Zealand citizens and ownership of some rural land can be more difficult for people who are not New Zealand citizens).
• Represent New Zealand in many international sports (for example, some sports require that international players are citizens of the country they represent).

The New Zealand Flag is New Zealand’s national symbol. Its royal blue background represents the blue sea and sky surrounding us, and the stars of the Southern Cross signify our place in the South Pacific Ocean. The Union Flag recognises our historical foundations and that New Zealand was once a British colony and dominion. The New Zealand Flag can be flown any day of the year, especially on days of national commemoration, such as Anzac Day, and other important occasions. The New Zealand Flag represents the people of New Zealand and should be treated with respect. To use, display, destroy, or damage the Flag in or within view of a public place with the intention of dishonouring it is an offence. It’s also an offence to place any letter, emblem, or representation on the Flag, with the exception of some advertising contexts.
The sixth of a family of 14, he spent every minute he wasn’t at school working in his family’s coconut, coffee and pineapple plantations in the tiny Malaysian village of Senggarang, sharing beds with his siblings. Back then he was familiar with poverty and its close cousins, hardship and limited choice.

Many thought it inconceivable that a boy with calloused hands would end up healing so many.

“People scoffed at the idea that a poor boy from a plantation could become a doctor. I didn’t speak English, but my parents believed in me and always encouraged me,” says Swee Tan.

His long and winding road to medical acclaim started in Melbourne, where he juggled lectures with rising at 4.00am to clean floors in a supermarket. Prior to that, he had spent a year working in a bookshop in Singapore to save enough money to attend university.

His tenacity and desire for success saw him complete plastic surgery training in Lower Hutt and, following stints in Oxford and Boston, he and his wife and two daughters returned to New Zealand in 1995 and various roles including the Director of Plastic Surgery, Director of Surgery and the Director of the Centre for the Study and Treatment of Vascular Birthmarks (Hutt Valley DHB). In 1998 he founded the Reconstructive Plastic Surgery Research Foundation which established the Gillies McIndoe Research Institute, of which he is the Executive Director.

Since then, the father of three’s mantelpiece has been piled high with accolades including the Royal honour of The New Zealand Order of Merit for Medicine and the Wellingtonian of the Year (Science & Technology Award).

Ask Swee Tan why he brought his considerable talents to New Zealand and he’ll tell you it’s all about people.

“New Zealanders are so accepting and interested. And, happily, most appear to be colour blind!”

If you’d told Swee Tan 34 years ago that he would one day become a ground-breaking plastic surgeon and cancer researcher in Wellington, he would probably have laughed at you.

“New Zealanders are so accepting and interested. And, happily, most appear to be colour blind!”

Ironically, he received his citizenship at the New Zealand High Commission in London, where he was living in 1993.

“It was a little odd to receive my citizenship in a foreign land thousands of miles away. But I was very excited and proud to be a New Zealander and so happy that day to swear allegiance to this country and the Queen.”
How people become citizens

There are three main ways of becoming a New Zealand citizen – by birth, by descent, or by grant.

Most people born in New Zealand or its territories (including the Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau)

People born overseas to a New Zealand citizen parent (provided the parent is not a citizen by descent). However, under section 9(1)(b) of the Citizenship Act, the Minister of Internal Affairs can grant citizenship to the child of a citizen by descent. This provides an option to those born overseas to a citizen by descent who have strong links to New Zealand.

Citizens by grant are migrants to New Zealand who have successfully applied for, and received, the grant of New Zealand citizenship. A person who received his or her permanent residence on or after 21 April 2005 needs to have lived in New Zealand as a permanent resident for most of the previous five years before applying for citizenship. A person who received his or her permanent residence before 21 April 2005 needed to have lived in New Zealand before applying for citizenship for most of the previous three years.

A citizen by grant is someone who has usually come to New Zealand from another country and has successfully applied to become a New Zealand citizen.
Realm of New Zealand

New Zealand is an independent sovereign nation. Because it is a monarchy, New Zealand is called a “Realm.” The Realm of New Zealand comprises New Zealand, Tokelau, the Ross Dependency and the self-governing states of the Cook Islands and Niue.

The Cook Islands and Niue were formerly a part of New Zealand, and are now self-governing, in free association with New Zealand. When they became self-governing, each adopted constitutions that empowered the Sovereign ‘in Right of New Zealand’, and each remained part of ‘the Realm of New Zealand’. Tokelau is a New Zealand dependent territory and also part of the Realm of New Zealand.

Samoan citizens

Samoan citizens may be considered for the grant of New Zealand citizenship under the Citizenship (Western Samoa) Act 1982. Under this Act, applicants only need to fulfil the requirements that they have entered New Zealand lawfully and have the right to reside here indefinitely, or that they were physically present in New Zealand on 14 September 1982. Applicants under this Act do not have to meet any other standard grant requirements such as good character, a minimum period of residence in New Zealand and a sufficient knowledge of the English language.

The different requirements afforded to Samoan citizens under this Act reflect the special relationship between New Zealand and Samoa (New Zealand administered Western Samoa, as it was then called, from 1914 until it gained independence in 1962).
So passionate was Somali refugee Khadra Abdille about becoming a New Zealand citizen, she worked two cleaning jobs to pay the citizenship fee for her father, two brothers and herself.

"As soon as I arrived, I wanted to become one of these people!"
The Treaty of Waitangi, the founding document of New Zealand/ Aotearoa, was also the first to deal with citizenship.

Māori are the tāngata whenua (the indigenous people) of the land of New Zealand and this culture is an integral part of the fabric of life in New Zealand. ‘The Natives of New Zealand’ — meaning Māori — became British subjects following the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840.

The key words in the Māori text affirmed that Māori had:

- ...ngā tikanga katoa rite tahi ki ana mea ki ngā tāngata o Ingarangi
- ...the same rights and duties of citizenship as the people of [the United Kingdom]

The English text of the third article of the Treaty provides that the Queen “extends to the Natives of New Zealand Her royal protection and imparts to them all the Rights and Privileges of British subjects”. Present-day New Zealand citizenship replaces the concept of “British subject”.

As well as the obvious meaning of the words in the Treaty, there are deeper considerations. Citizenship was not restricted to one people. The citizenship of those who immigrated here and those born here was understood to be the same. And in each case citizenship created not only rights, but duties.

The Treaty also, of course, established the authority of the Crown, the governing authority which continues to this day as part of our modern democracy.

Using the governance, or kawanatanga authority established initially by the Treaty, the Crown has provided for immigration, first from a few source countries and now from many.

It has passed laws protecting the human rights of all, continued to provide for immigration, and to uphold the principle of equal citizenship.

Sometimes people see the Treaty as being of relevance only for Māori and Māori relations with the Crown. In fact, it is the origin of our common citizenship and common nation. It also provides, through consideration of our shared citizenship, a way for all ethnic and cultural groups to relate to Māori, giving a bicultural foundation to our multiculturalism.

The signing of the Treaty is commemorated on 6 February each year. You can see the original treaty documents signed in different parts of the country in Wellington, where they are cared for by Archives New Zealand.

Special citizenship ceremonies may be held on Waitangi Day, including at the Governor-General’s official residence at Government House in Wellington, providing a visible link between our founding document and modern citizenship.
Treaty of Waitangi - 6 February 1840:

Archive Reference: R21434437 ACGO 8341  IA9 8/9
Mark Du Plessis didn’t clap eyes on a horse until he was eight years old. But that didn’t stop the Zimbabwean from becoming one of New Zealand’s top jockeys.

“It grew up in Kariba, north of Harare, which is famous for having the world’s third biggest freshwater lake,” says Mark. “The nearest horse was probably 300km away.”

His parents – who owned a boat marina – were also not from a racing background. When a family friend suggested Mark had the right height and build to be a jockey, he visited his first racecourse. The rest, as they say, is history.

At 14, he started an apprenticeship with the Zimbabwe Jockey Academy, graduating five years later with the top apprenticeship title. At the time there were only two racecourses in Zimbabwe and after 18 months, Mark was keen for more overseas experience.

“But travelling on a third-world passport meant it was difficult getting a work visa.”

Fortunately, a contact helped him to come to New Zealand when he was 22.

“I'd never been overseas before, but as soon as I arrived in Cambridge, I loved it. There was no future for me in Zimbabwe and I'm so grateful to New Zealand for giving me the opportunity to develop my career.”

That includes wins in prestigious races such as the Auckland Cup, NZ Oaks and New Zealand’s richest race, the Karaka Million, which he won in 2014. It also opened the door for a five-year stint in Singapore, where a career highlight was winning the Singapore Gold Cup on a New Zealand horse owned by, ironically, the contact who had brought him to New Zealand (“It was a great way to pay him back”).

Since then, the 38-year-old has clocked up numerous frequent flyer miles riding in Hong Kong, Dubai and Melbourne.

The latter is where he achieved something he never imagined as a child growing up in the Zimbabwean bush: riding in the Melbourne Cup in 2004, 2009 and 2010.

Mark says it was a long process to gain New Zealand citizenship.

“The issue was that I was riding overseas so much, I was never able to accumulate the continuous time needed to qualify for citizenship. But a friend helped me work through the paperwork and I finally realised I did qualify!”

That was in mid-2013 and by November, Mark had joined his parents who immigrated to New Zealand in 2005 and had already become citizens. His citizenship ceremony was in Papakura, close to the rural Karaka lifestyle block where Mark and Vicki, his Kiwi partner, live with their three children – Isabella (13), Daniel (12) and 18-month-old son Cruze.

“There were about 300 people becoming citizens that day and I was overwhelmed by the whole experience. To be able to say ‘I’m a New Zealand citizen’ was pretty emotional.”
General criteria for the grant of New Zealand citizenship

Anyone can apply to become a New Zealand citizen by grant but to be granted New Zealand citizenship a person must meet the requirements of the law. This is set out in Acts of Parliament: the Citizenship Act 1977 or, if the person is Samoan, the Citizenship (Western Samoa) Act 1982.

Under the Citizenship Act 1977 the Minister of Internal Affairs can grant New Zealand citizenship if applicants:

• are able to understand and speak English;
• are of good character and have not been convicted of certain criminal offences;
• understand the responsibilities and privileges of New Zealand citizenship;
• intend, if granted citizenship, to continue to live in New Zealand;
• are legally entitled to live in New Zealand permanently (i.e. are a permanent resident or an Australian citizen); and
• have lived in New Zealand for most of five years.

If a person is unable to fulfil all of the general requirements, they may still be granted citizenship in rare circumstances.

What does intend to continue to live in New Zealand mean?

A person must intend, if granted New Zealand citizenship, to continue to reside in New Zealand. This intention must continue up until the point of becoming a citizen – usually by attending a citizenship ceremony.

There are some exceptions to this intention requirement, however, such as people who are going to go overseas because they will be undertaking:

• Crown service for the New Zealand Government; or
• service for an international organisation of which the New Zealand Government is a member; or
• service in the employment of a person, company, society or other body of persons resident or established in New Zealand.

The purpose of the intention requirement is to ensure that applicants have a commitment to remaining in New Zealand, although people are, of course, free to leave New Zealand once granted citizenship.

What does of good character mean?

If someone has broken the law (for example, things such as traffic offences or benefit fraud), this may indicate they are not of good character. Other things such as protection orders and debts with government agencies can also be taken into account. Checks are made with the Police about applicants’ backgrounds.
Presence in New Zealand

One of the requirements for the grant of New Zealand citizenship is that the applicant is entitled to reside permanently in New Zealand.

This requirement is sometimes called the presence in New Zealand requirement. The overall purpose of this presence requirement is to ensure that those who are granted citizenship have a genuine connection to New Zealand. The presence requirement also provides a sufficient period of time for applicants to learn English and gain an understanding of the New Zealand way of life.

Prior to 21 April 2005 the requirement was that applicants had to have lived in New Zealand for most of the last three years. However, in 2005, Parliament changed the presence requirement from three to five years. One of the reasons for this was to ensure that all applicants reside in New Zealand for long enough to demonstrate their commitment to the country and suitability for a grant of citizenship.

What does able to understand and speak English mean?

A person must have enough knowledge of the English language to demonstrate they can manage independently in everyday situations, for example catching a bus, going into a bank or shopping. They may be asked to attend an English language interview to assess this. The purpose of this requirement is to ensure that successful applicants for the grant of citizenship have sufficient language skills to cope in the community.
Imad Ballo flings the word ‘peaceful’ around a lot. But that’s as it should be for a man who has seen his homeland ripped apart by war.

“New Zealand is such a beautiful, peaceful country,” says Imad. “Coming here changed my life and there’s nowhere else in the world I’d rather live.”

Born in Aleppo, one of six children, Imad left Syria when he was one.

“My father was an Imam (religious leader) and he was sent to Malta as the Head of the Islamic Mission there.” Four years later his father’s job moved the family again – this time to Cyprus.

School, however, wasn’t for him. “I love cars and motorbikes and spent most of my time working on them.”

Or he was out on the water, where Imad taught water sports to tourists, including a group of Kiwis who impressed him with talk of their country.

It was also where the 40-year-old met his first wife, a Wellingtonian, whom he followed to New Zealand in 1994. Imad spent a year working as a mechanic but returned to Syria when the marriage ended.

Five years later Imad says the political situation in Syria saw him longing for the peaceful suburbs of New Zealand.

“Tensions were starting to build and I thought things might turn bad there.”

Imad returned to Wellington in 2000 and although it was 19 months before his second wife Hamida and his children (daughter Widad, now 16, and son Mohammed, now 13) were allowed to join him, he was determined to work hard and build a future for his family.

“I didn’t have any formal qualifications and very little money but I went to a garage and told them I’d work two days for free to show that I could work as well as a Kiwi.”

They took him up on his offer and as well as proving himself, Imad completed the four year automotive technician apprenticeship in just two years.

Fast forward to 2014 and Imad now owns a house and his own garage, ISpeed Motors, in Wellington’s Hopper Street. He and Hamida also have two “Kiwi kids” – Imran (11) and Hannah (15 months).

He became a New Zealand citizen in 2011, not only for passport reasons (“Although the New Zealand passport is the best passport in the world. I never get stopped at airports now!”) but because he is a proud Kiwi.

“New Zealand has given me so much and let me work hard to get a nice house and a good business. I never imagined my life could be this good.”

Photo: Simon Woolf
Citizenship and permanent residence

There are some important advantages to citizenship in law. These legal differences between New Zealand citizenship and permanent residence may not be as great for many people as the public demonstration of a personal and emotional commitment to a new nation. This sense of belonging is shown by many of the citizens’ comments in this book.

Here are the key differences between permanent residence: “being allowed to be here” and citizenship: “having an enduring right to be here”.

A citizen is a person who is recognised by law as a member of a state or country and who has the full rights and responsibilities of that status. Other people may be allowed to be in a country but not have full legal rights and responsibilities (for example, tourists or people on student visas).

In New Zealand, a permanent resident is a person who the government has granted the right to remain indefinitely in New Zealand, but who does not have the full rights and responsibilities of a citizen. Permanent residents who want to travel outside New Zealand need a ‘returning resident’s visa’ to come back. A permanent resident can lose their residence status if they leave New Zealand without a returning resident’s visa or the visa expires while they are overseas. Permanent residents may also lose their resident status if they commit a criminal offence and are removed from New Zealand.

For many, the most important right on obtaining New Zealand citizenship is a New Zealand passport, which is one of the most respected and secure travel documents in the world. But there are other significant differences between permanent residents and citizens.

Only citizens have the right to stand for parliament or local councils, and to represent New Zealand in some other ways such as in the Olympic Games. A citizen’s right to vote and stand for parliament is specifically stated in the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990.

A citizen cannot be deprived of citizenship if they have been honest when making their application except in most unusual circumstances involving acting against the interests of New Zealand. This is set out in law, and citizens have extensive legal rights to be informed about, and challenge, any action to deprive them of citizenship.

Australians are entitled to live in New Zealand indefinitely and do not need to apply to become a permanent resident (just as New Zealanders are entitled to live in Australia permanently).
Most applicants over 14 years old must attend a public citizenship ceremony where they take the Oath or Affirmation of Allegiance. Those under 14 years old may attend a ceremony if they wish. Sometimes permission is given in special circumstances for a private ceremony, for example when the person granted citizenship is old or unwell.

The first citizenship ceremony was held in 1949, with the establishment by law of New Zealand citizenship to replace the old “British subject” category. But old habits die hard, and until 1996, citizens from Commonwealth countries with which New Zealand shared the monarch were exempt from attending ceremonies. They just had to register. Now, no matter where someone comes from the grant of citizenship is not finalised until they attend a citizenship ceremony.

Right from the start, the ceremonies created an opportunity to involve the community and its local leaders in welcoming new citizens. Mayors often take the lead in the ceremonies and organisation is a matter for local decision-making. The Department of Internal Affairs is also represented, but plays a secondary role. Depending on the area, a ceremony can involve hundreds of people, or as few as one new citizen.

The key step is taking an oath or affirmation of allegiance. In New Zealand law an oath is a statement which invokes a god or spiritual forces. Those who choose can instead make an affirmation, which is a purely secular statement. Each has the same status in law. Each means that from then on the person making the oath or affirmation has a duty of loyalty to New Zealand, as represented by the nation’s head of state.

Apart from this step, and the signing of the oath or affirmation and the distribution of certificates, all other parts of the ceremony are decided by the local authority. Usually, the mayor will make a speech outlining the significance of the event. Very often the mayor will encourage activity in the local community and local politics. There may be a significant role played by tāngata whenua, Māori people with standing in the area or in council affairs. Māori speeches or words of welcome and Māori songs or waiata will link the event back in time to the first generations which called New Zealand home. It is always appropriate, and respectful, to ask Māori leaders questions about the meaning and significance of their words and actions. Although they may be entertaining, there is always a deeper meaning which adds to the mana or prestige of the event and the people taking part. The national anthem is sung, after which there may be some light refreshments and a chance to mingle.

Several of the people interviewed for this book mention the emotional impact of the ceremony, and New Zealanders who attend are often surprised at the way the ceremonies raise their own feelings of pride in our nation, its heritage and future.
Inge Woolf
Originally from Austria

One of Inge Woolf’s earliest memories is of her neighbours hanging swastikas from their windows in Vienna’s Jewish district.

“I was three years old and can remember peeking over the balcony to see these people we thought were our friends turning against us,” says the matriarch of the well-known Woolf photography family.

Thanks to her father’s Czech passport, Inge and her parents were able to flee to Prague in 1938 where they spent a year getting their papers together to emigrate to England. As an additional precaution, they also underwent a ‘conversion ceremony’ to renounce Judaism before they moved to London, where Inge’s mother made and sold children’s clothing at Portobello Road Market and Inge did clerical work for a Bond Street department store.

“Of course we were only pretending to give up our Jewish religion but we did what we had to do to survive. So many Jewish people ended up in the camps and were killed. We were really lucky.”

When Inge speaks to visitors at the Holocaust Centre of New Zealand, where she is the Director, she always tells them, “Something good came out of all the bad – I became a New Zealander”.

Inge and her mother arrived in Auckland when she was 23, shortly after her father died. Two of her uncles were already living here.

“They said New Zealand was a great country, it was peaceful and people didn’t really know what a Jew was!”

Not long after, Inge moved to Wellington to take up a job at a department store and met her husband, the late photographer Ronald Woolf, who had immigrated to New Zealand from London when he was seven.

“Ron gave me a 35mm camera as a wedding present and I joined him in the business. He would do the studio shots and darkroom work and I would do all the informal wedding photography as well as the administration and sales.”

Inge juggled work with raising two children – daughter Deborah and son Simon, who now runs Photography by Woolf - but gradually eased out of the business when her husband was killed in a helicopter crash in 1987. Long active in the voluntary sector, she took up the role of Director of the Holocaust Centre when it was founded in 2007.

“I wanted to find something I’m as passionate about as photography.”

The 80-year old grandmother says she will always be grateful to New Zealand for giving her a new life, husband, family and career.

Citizenship seemed like the “natural thing to do” and she became a New Zealand citizen in 1960 at a ceremony presided over by then Mayor, Frank Kitts.

“I didn’t become a citizen for a passport but because I felt secure and wanted to show my commitment to New Zealand.”

“Of course we were only pretending to give up our Jewish religion but we did what we had to do to survive. So many Jewish people ended up in the camps and were killed. We were really lucky.”
The New Zealand system of government

Sovereignty

New Zealand is a constitutional monarchy with its own Sovereign. The Sovereign and the House of Representatives together make up the Parliament of New Zealand.

As a constitutional monarch, the Sovereign acts on the advice of New Zealand Government Ministers. The Sovereign is responsible for appointing a Governor-General for New Zealand, which is done on the advice of New Zealand's Prime Minister. The Governor-General is the Sovereign's personal representative in New Zealand, who usually serves for a term of five years.

The Sovereign – our Head of State

New citizens make their oath or affirmation of allegiance to the sovereign, who is the New Zealand head of State. The Constitution Act 1986 is the law that establishes who will be New Zealand's head of State. In the law, this person is not called 'King' or 'Queen' but the 'Sovereign'.

The law says the Sovereign is the head of State of New Zealand, and shall be known by the royal style and titles proclaimed from time to time. That's where 'King' and 'Queen' come from. They are royal titles. The law also says that the Governor-General appointed by the Sovereign is the Sovereign's representative in New Zealand.

The Sovereign, under New Zealand law, is the same person who, on the death or abdication of the previous sovereign, becomes King or Queen under a law of the United Kingdom called 'The Act of Settlement'. When the law of succession changed in the United Kingdom, agreement was obtained from other countries with the same Sovereign as head of State, including New Zealand. New Zealand's Royal Succession Act 2013 means that male and female children of the sovereign succeed according to age, without regard to sex. It also removed an old provision prohibiting succession by anyone who married someone of the Roman Catholic faith.

New Zealand law also deals with the problem that arises when the sovereign cannot act as usual and is replaced with a 'Regent'. That Regent becomes New Zealand's head of State.

So although the New Zealand head of State is the same person as the head of State of other countries, the role is established by New Zealand law, and the Sovereign is the Sovereign of New Zealand.

Despite the previous preference for male heirs, now abolished, New Zealand has for most of its history had a Queen as head of State. Queen Victoria ruled in New Zealand from 1840 until her death in 1901. Queen Elizabeth II began her reign in 1952. Between their reigns there were four kings: Edward VII, George V, Edward VIII and George VI.

Parliament and government

New Zealand law is made by Parliament. Since the abolition of the Legislative Council in 1951, Parliament has had only one house. There is no 'senate' or 'upper house'.

New Zealand is a unitary state. It has no provinces, or states. It therefore has no 'federal' government, since it is not a federation. There were provinces in New Zealand until 1876. Anniversaries associated with these provinces are still celebrated as holidays, but the provinces themselves have long gone.

The group of people known as “the government” in everyday language are selected from the party or parties in Parliament able to form a majority. The people selected in this way usually become “Ministers” and may sit in Cabinet – the key decision-making body of government.

Judges of our various courts are appointed as a result of government decision, but once appointed are independent, and cannot be directed by Ministers, or removed by them. Courts (including judges) are independent.

Members of Parliament (MPs) must be citizens and are elected by registered electors. People living permanently and legally in New Zealand must register as electors. But they are not required to vote.

People have two votes under our Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) system. Using one, people can vote for their local
electorate MP. Using the other, they can vote for the party they want to lead the government. When the votes are counted, parties who do not have at least the same proportion of electorate MPs as they have party votes get extra “Party List MPs” until representation is in proportion to the votes cast. If a party gets less than five per cent of the party vote, it does not get any representation unless one of its candidates wins an electorate seat. Then it gets a proportional number of list MPs. The party vote therefore determines the makeup of Parliament, and is often described as the ‘more important’ vote for this reason.

People of Māori descent can choose if they want to vote alongside everyone else in General Electorates or in Māori electorates. The number of Māori electorates depends on the number of people who enrol as voters on the Māori electoral roll (the list of electors). There’s an opportunity to change from one roll to the other every five years. Voters in Māori electorates vote for party lists in the same way as everyone else, and like everyone else have another vote for their electorate Member of Parliament. Any qualified person, of any descent, can stand in a Māori electorate.

There are two voting systems used in local government. Local government does not use the MMP system used for parliamentary elections.

Instead the main local system is “First Past the Post”, under which the person with the most votes wins, even if they don’t win a majority of the votes.

For all District Health Boards, and some Councils, the system of “Single Transferable Vote” is used. Voters rank their candidates in order of preference, and votes are transferred from candidates with the least support to those with greater support until one candidate has a majority.

These are simplified explanations, and there is a lot of information available online describing each system in detail at elections.org.nz.

There are many opportunities for citizens (at the highest levels) and for residents (at other levels) to get involved in communities as elected representatives. As we say: give it a go!
Candy Wu Zhang
Originally from China

Were it not for a work trip to New Zealand in 1998, Candy Wu Zhang would probably still be living in China.

“...New Zealand is a beautiful country and everyone was so friendly. I immediately felt comfortable here.”

When Candy Wu Zhang was in her 20s she was, she admits, “living the dream”.

“I was the entertainment journalist and producer for a major Chinese TV station in Guangzhou and got to travel around China and Hong Kong to interview stars such as Jackie Chan. It was a great life!”

The 42-year-old beat thousands of others to land the job straight out of university.

“I was the envy of all my friends! It was a good salary and my parents were very proud of their only daughter.”

“NZ Trade & Enterprise invited us to New Zealand to film stories to attract Chinese students to study here. It was my first time out of China and I came here for ten days.”

Now resident in Christchurch, Candy says it was a defining experience.

“It was as though a door had opened in front of me. New Zealand is a beautiful country and everyone was so friendly. I immediately felt comfortable here.”

Roll forward two years and Candy was back.

“I couldn’t cope with the fast pace of China anymore. I knew I wanted to live in New Zealand, so I took six months leave from my job, got a student visa and came back to Christchurch to learn English.”

Her father, a doctor and university lecturer in China, couldn’t believe what she’d done.

“He didn’t understand how I could give up a good job and salary. But I was tired of working 24/7 and I wasn’t happy.”

Ironically, Candy’s elderly parents have now joined her, husband Regan and their two children Sean (5) and Ellise (3) in Christchurch.

“They saw how much I loved New Zealand and how we have made a home here.”

Candy, who gave up journalism to become a public servant, became a New Zealand citizen in 2004, a decision prompted by a desire to be “more secure than those people I see going back and forth between New Zealand and China”.

“I didn’t want to have a foot in both countries, I wanted to have a permanent base here and to feel as though I belonged. It was hard giving up my Chinese passport and I’m still proud of my ethnicity, but becoming a citizen was about committing to this country which has given me so much.”
Your rights under the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act

The New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 sets out some basic rights. These rights must be respected by the police, the courts and all other state services. The government may limit some of these rights and show why limitations are necessary, although Parliament can choose to override rights by law. Everyone has the same rights, and sometimes your rights are restricted to protect the rights of others.

No one has the right to take your life, to torture you or to treat you with cruelty.

If you are an adult citizen or resident, you can vote for Parliament.

If you are an adult citizen, you can stand for Parliament.

You have the right to think what you want.

You have the right to observe a religion of your choice or to have no religion.

You can say what you like and can share information and ideas with other people.

You can join together with other people and hold peaceful meetings to share or express your views.

You can come and go as you wish within New Zealand and are free to leave New Zealand. If you are a citizen, you have the right to enter New Zealand. If you are not a citizen but are in New Zealand lawfully, you can only be made to leave by law.

No one may treat you unfairly:
- because of your sex, race, nationality, age, sexual orientation, political or religious beliefs or absence of such beliefs; or
- because you are pregnant or have a family, are disabled, are unemployed, are related to a particular person; or
- because you are, or are not, married, in a civil union or in a de facto relationship.

No one can search you, your belongings or your home without good reason and only if the law allows it. Any search must be carried out in a reasonable way.

No one can imprison you without good reason and then only if the law allows it.

If you are imprisoned, you must be told why, must be allowed to see a lawyer and must be brought before a court without delay.
The New Zealand Coat of Arms is a symbol of Crown authority. It is restricted to use by government, including in the courts. The Coat of Arms can only be used or published with the permission of the Ministry for Culture and Heritage.

The first quarter of the shield shows four stars that represent the Southern Cross, then three ships symbolising the importance of New Zealand’s sea trade. In the second quarter a fleece represents the farming industry. The wheat sheaf in the third quarter represents the agricultural industry, and the crossed hammers in the fourth quarter represent mining.

The supporters on either side of the shield are a Māori chief holding a taiaha (a Māori war weapon) and a European woman holding the New Zealand Ensign. St Edward’s Crown, shown above the shield, was used in the Coronation ceremony of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

If you are charged with a crime:
- you must be told the charge against you;
- the charge must be heard promptly, almost always in public and by an independent court and, in serious cases, by a jury if you wish;
- you have the right to have legal assistance, to prepare and present your defence, to question any witnesses and, if you need one, to have an interpreter;
- you cannot be made to admit the crime or to say anything else;
- you must be considered innocent unless you are found guilty by a court;
- if you are a child, you must be treated as one;
- if you are convicted of a crime, you have a right to appeal; and
- if you are found not guilty, you can be retried for the same crime only in certain circumstances.

No one can give you medical treatment or make you take part in a medical or scientific experiment without your consent.

You have the right to enjoy your culture and your language.

You cannot be punished for doing something that was not a crime.

The government must act fairly when making decisions about you.

You have the right to take the government to court and to challenge any decision about your rights in the courts.
Flashback to 1974: Tolufale (Fara) Leasuasu has just moved to Wellington from her native Samoa and tags along with her foster mother who is applying for New Zealand citizenship.

“The fee back then was only $10,” recalls Fara. “My adopted mother encouraged me to apply but in those days you had to give up your passport if you became a New Zealand citizen, so I refused.”

Eighteen years later, when Fara eventually got around to becoming a citizen, it cost close to $400! “I should have done it when my adopted mother did it. It would have saved me a lot of money,” laughs the 62-year-old.

It’s not overstating it to suggest that moving from a remote village of less than 1,500 to Wellington in 1972 was something of a culture shock. “For an 18-year-old, coming to a new country and a new home and getting used to the cold was very hard. But I knew that I’d have a better future in New Zealand, so I just got on with it.”

Having worked in administration for a Samoan hotel, Fara was keen to land an office job. When she couldn’t, she found work in the Feltex carpet factory. “The pay was good and I was able to send money back to my siblings in Samoa.”

She did so well at her next job, a rest home, that the nurses there suggested she follow their lead. And so Fara did, moving into Wellington Hospital’s nursing quarters where she spent two years working towards her enrolled nursing qualifications. Not long after, she met husband Taamilo through the Samoan Congregational Church and the couple moved to Lower Hutt.

Five children followed – now aged between 30 and 40 – and these days there are also five grandchildren.

Fara has nursed everywhere from the Lower Hutt Public Hospital to Hutt Primary Health and, for the last five years, has worked as the Pacific Health Facilitator and Adviser at the Hutt Valley DHB.

The decision to become a New Zealand citizen followed her realisation that she was the only one in her family without a New Zealand passport. “All my children are New Zealanders and my husband became a citizen when I was away on holiday in Samoa. It was a bit of a hassle applying for a re-entry permit every time I flew back into New Zealand, so I decided it was time to become a citizen.”

Fara remembers leaving the Lower Hutt Mayor’s Chamber, where her citizenship ceremony was hosted by then Mayor John Terris, with a “greater sense of belonging”. “Getting that bit of paper made me feel more secure. Before, it felt like I had a foot in both countries but after becoming a New Zealand citizen, I really felt like I belonged here.”
Our history of citizenship rights and human rights

New Zealanders are proud that we have often led the way among nations in recognising and extending the rights of citizens and others. We are proud, for example, of being the first to give women the right to vote in 1893. Earlier, in 1879, we had extended voting rights to men whether they owned property or not. And Māori rights to participate in Parliament with specific representation were recognised from 1867. There was never an established Church in New Zealand, and people have always been free to practise their own religion and, generally, express their beliefs.

New Zealand has also recognised specific injustices of the past in which the rights of citizens were violated.

There have been formal apologies to many iwi over violations of Treaty rights and the general rights of Māori citizens as part of the process of resolving historic Treaty grievances. We cannot be proud of the events that gave rise to the resolution process, but the process itself has been recognised by iwi, New Zealanders generally and many indigenous and other people around the world as a success.

There was specific discrimination against Chinese wanting to come to New Zealand, and those already in the country, from the 19th century through until the 1930s. This led to the government making a formal apology in 2002 to those who paid the discriminatory poll tax and their descendants.

New Zealand administered Western Samoa after the start of World War One. Previously it was administered by Germany. In 2002 New Zealand apologised for the injustices arising from New Zealand’s administration of Samoa in its earlier years and the special state of the relationship is acknowledged in our citizenship laws.

We have also established a range of agencies to advance and protect human rights and advise government on improving our diverse society. These include the Ombudsman, the Human Rights Commission, the Independent Police Complaints Authority, the Privacy Commissioner, and Ministerial portfolios with supporting staff for Māori, Pacific Peoples and Ethnic Communities. New Zealand is a strong advocate of human rights at the United Nations and in all its dealings with other countries.

In New Zealand it is unlawful under the Human Rights Act 1993 to discriminate (except in rare cases) in providing services or employment on the grounds of:

a. sex, which includes pregnancy and childbirth:

b. marital status:

c. religious belief:

d. ethical belief, which means the lack of a religious belief:

e. colour:

f. race:

g. ethnic or national origins, which includes nationality or citizenship:

h. disability,

i. age,

j. political opinion, which includes the lack of a particular political opinion or any political opinion:

k. employment status:

l. family status:

m. sexual orientation, which means a heterosexual, homosexual, lesbian, or bisexual orientation

One change in citizenship law as a result of strengthening human rights legislation was a change in 1977 to allow citizenship by descent to be passed on through mothers as well as fathers and providing New Zealand citizenship status to those previously discriminated against.
Federico Monsalve
Originally from Colombia

Federico Monsalve is no stranger to being pulled over at airports and having his luggage searched.

“But that’s what happens when you travel on a Colombian passport, says the Auckland magazine editor.

“I once flew into Australia and was the only one who got pulled out of the arrivals line. When I rolled my eyes, the immigration officer told me I should get a new passport!”

And so the 38-year-old did – becoming a New Zealand citizen in 2004, five years after following a former girlfriend to Wellington.

It was, says Federico, “love at first sight”.

“Kiwis are so incredibly nice and the standard of living is amazing. You can do a lot more with a lot less in New Zealand. Compared with every country I’ve ever been to, it’s easily one of the best places to live.”

That’s a bold claim, given Federico has more stamps in his New Zealand passport than most.

Born in Medellin and raised in Bogota, Federico was 15 when his accountant father moved the family to Los Angeles. Despite not knowing a word of English, he picked up the language quickly and ended up at Boston University where he studied literature and philosophy.

But the lure of journalism proved too much and after a couple of years Federico was back on the west coast, working on the Los Angeles Magazine and La Opinion, a Spanish-language newspaper.

He met his former Kiwi partner in Los Angeles and came to New Zealand in 1999 for a “short visit”.

“I never went home! As well as the great lifestyle, I was attracted by what New Zealand was doing politically and its liberal ways. Our anti-nuclear stance, our welfare and health systems ... in many ways, we are a moral beacon in the world.”

Since then, he’s worked, variously, as an apple picker and waiter, studied English literature at Victoria University and publishing at Whitireia Polytechnic, edited the capital’s now defunct City Voice newspaper, written for publications such as North & South magazine, the New Zealand Listener and the New Zealand Herald, and recently became editor of Interior magazine.

He’s also squeezed in two stints overseas: one working for the New Zealand Embassy in Buenos Aires and three years in Mexico where he completed a film degree.

Now married to Kate, a Kiwi, and living in Auckland’s North Shore with their two-and-a-half-year-old daughter Sofia, Federico says he’s happy he “put down roots” in New Zealand.

His decision to become a New Zealand citizen was borne of a desire to become “part of a larger family”, and he describes his citizenship ceremony, held at Auckland’s Aotea Centre, as “incredibly touching”, particularly the Māori waiata.

“When you become a citizen, you feel more a part of the community. I’m from a totally different place but at that moment, getting my citizenship, New Zealand truly felt like home. Now, whenever I’m overseas, I’m proud to mention where I live and to show my New Zealand passport. My family and friends back in Colombia are jealous of me and the freedom I have to travel without hassle. I certainly never get stopped at airports now!”
Chuni Vallabhb
Originally from India

When Chuni Vallabhb arrived in New Zealand in 1972, he had $8 in his pocket and a desire to make this foreign land his home.

Forty-two years later, the telecommunications engineer admits it’s the best thing he’s ever done.

“I’ve lived in New Zealand for longer than I lived in India,” says Chuni. “This country has offered me great opportunities to get ahead in life. Both my children have tertiary qualifications, good jobs and are well settled here, and I feel like I belong to this country more than to my country of birth.”

In fact, when the 64-year-old goes back to India to visit family and friends, he admits he “feels like a foreigner” and no longer has the emotional attachment to his birthplace he once had.

It’s a long way from Varad, a small village in the state of Gujarat, where Chuni was born, the second of four children.

While completing a Bachelor of Science degree in physics and mathematics, Chuni met his Indian-born wife Lili, who had moved to New Zealand when she was 10 months old. Like so many Indian marriages of the time, it was an arranged marriage.

“My best friend’s wife lived in the same village as Lili, so a meeting was arranged by our respective relatives. After about a month we got engaged and then married.”

Arriving in Wellington shortly afterwards, it didn’t take Chuni long to sign up to the New Zealand fan club.

“I fell in love with the natural beauty, peaceful environment and small population of this beautiful country. New Zealand is safe and friendly and doesn’t have the corruption that other countries have, plus it offers everything that large countries offer in terms of education, medical system and employment.”

Buying a house and gaining permanent employment (at the then Post Office) cemented the keen cricketer’s desire to become a citizen, as did an impending visit to India.

“I was going back to see my grandfather who wasn’t well and thought I might have issues travelling via the US and UK with my Indian passport. So I applied for citizenship and got a New Zealand passport which, of course, is highly respected throughout the world and means fewer hassles when travelling internationally.”

Chuni became a New Zealand citizen in 1978 at a ceremony presided over by Wellington’s then Mayor, Sir Michael Fowler. He remembers the feeling of joy when he received his certificate.

“The Mayor gave a speech about the responsibilities and duties new citizens have to their country of residence and I was reminded of how much this country had given me and how I was determined to pay that back. I came to New Zealand with nothing, and was so proud that day to become a Kiwi. Citizenship is viewed as a great achievement in the Indian community and I’m pleased that I was given that chance.”
In Māori society performing arts are an important part of life, and are not restricted to professional performers. Many visitors to New Zealand and new arrivals take the opportunity to see Māori performances, especially in Rotorua, where there is a long tradition of sharing these arts with tourists. But these traditions are living, and are expressed every day in communities big and small.

Sometimes performances include exhibitions of skills with traditional weapons. In Māori thinking the unity and force of expression of those performing has a name: ihi, “the ability to inspire awe”. The feeling that people have in response (that spine-tingling experience) is called wehi. Together, the experience of ihi and wehi is at the heart of all Māori performance.

This includes formal oratory (whaikōrero); karanga (the call of welcome); singing, including singing accompanied by poi, both as a visual stimulus and as a percussion instrument; and mau rākau – individual performance with weapons, which included the traditional wero, or challenge. Sometimes very powerful facial expressions known as pūkana are used to provide emphasis in performance. Tongues, eyes, chin and head movement are used to enhance the message and the commitment of individuals to what is being communicated. Audiences show their admiration when this is done well. It is often startling to those of other cultures, but has been maintained as an important and impressive part of tradition.

In many schools and Māori centres such as marae people from all sorts of backgrounds learn Māori performance skills, and if you enquire, you are sure to be made welcome. Māori have a tradition of choral singing, and this provides a point of contact with many other people. There is also often strong interest in martial arts, which are seen as similar to some aspects of Māori performance.

Performances for entertainment are typically applauded with clapping. Performances in more formal settings are usually not applauded in this way, but with expressions such as “kia ora!” and “ka mau te wehi”, and most traditionally, with performances in response, fuelled by the wehi experienced as a result of the earlier performance.

The haka is performed by families or small groups in cultural and private settings, and is also performed by many sports teams. There are many haka, although you will hear people say ‘the haka’ as if there were only one. New haka are composed all the time. The words can be about ancestors, historical events, criticism of policies, or celebrations of success – in fact anything the composer might feel strongly about. Specific haka are associated with particular iwi (tribes) or sub-tribes (hapū), or with institutions such as schools or government agencies.

There is a great deal of literature on Māori performing arts, and it is studied at university level because of its depth of cultural meaning and links both to Māori traditional literature and to modern expressions of New Zealand as a nation.
Official languages

New Zealand has three official languages, English, Māori and New Zealand Sign Language.

English has never been made an official language by law, but as a language of Parliament and the courts, it has official recognition. New Zealand English is very close in vocabulary and pronunciation to Australian English, and each is closely related to forms of British English.

Māori is closely related to other west Polynesian languages, such as Cook Island Maori, Tahitian, Marquesan, Hawaiian and, somewhat more distantly, Samoan, Tongan, Tokelauan and Niuean. In 1987, Māori became an official language of New Zealand by law.

The Māori and New Zealand Sign languages have special status under the law. They can be used in legal proceedings with interpreters. Māori is also taught in most schools and there are Māori immersion educational facilities.

New Zealand Sign Language became a third official language by law in April 2006. It is closely related to British Sign Language and Australian Sign Language. It is thought that the beginnings of the modern language arose among the pupils of the world’s first residential school for the deaf, which opened in 1880 at Sumner, Christchurch.
Darragh Hughes
Originally from Ireland

Becoming a winemaker wasn’t high on Darragh Hughes’ to-do list. But growing up in Sligo, on Ireland’s west coast, didn’t expose him to many vineyards.

“I knew about wine but it wasn’t a big thing in Ireland back then,” says Darragh.

Instead, the middle of five children whose father ran a crystal glass business, he channelled his energies into studying business and accounting in Dublin.

And travel. In fact, the ink on Darragh’s diploma was barely dry when he bought a ticket to the United States.

“I went to New York and Florida for a year, working in bars and playing Gaelic football at a state level.”

Back in Ireland, Darragh worked in finance for a couple of years before scratching his itchy feet again with a one-way ticket to the Antipodes.

“I planned to spend a year in New Zealand and a year in Australia, but felt so at home in New Zealand I never even made it to Australia!”

That was in 2003, and Darragh then spent five years working his way up the hospitality food chain, managing bars and restaurants and fine-tuning his wine palate. It’s also where he met several winemakers and decided to move from the selling side and have a go at the ‘creating’ end of the spectrum.

“It was a good opportunity to change my whole life, so I spent a year at Tairawhiti Polytech in Gisborne studying winemaking.”

Jobs at Nobilo Wines in Auckland, and Kim Crawford and Drylands Wines in Marlborough followed, as well as a four-month stint in California’s Napa Valley.

Between marrying his Kiwi girlfriend, Charlotte, relocating to Hawke’s Bay to take up an assistant winemaker’s role and having his first child (son Digby), Darragh also found time to study for a post-graduate wine science qualification through Auckland University.

And despite his deep Irish roots, Darragh says New Zealand is home.

“This country has been good to me. It’s given me a wife and child and work opportunities that I would never have had if I’d stayed in Ireland. I plan to be here for the rest of my life.”

Becoming a New Zealand citizen, then, was something of a no-brainer.

Photo courtesy of Hawke’s Bay Wine Company, where Darragh now works.
Citizenship over the years

1840–1948
New Zealanders had the status of British subjects.

1844 - Naturalisation in New Zealand began – those naturalised became British subjects. Those who were not British subjects were known as ‘aliens’.

1866
‘Alien’ women married to British subjects (including men who were naturalised British subjects) became British subjects themselves. The Aliens Act discouraged some immigrants from becoming naturalised citizens by imposing a £1 naturalisation fee. Chinese people had to continue to pay this fee after it was abolished for all other applicants in the 1890s. Later, the poll tax discriminated further against Chinese. Chinese were denied naturalisation (or even permanent residence) between 1908 and 1951. The Aliens Acts of 1866 and 1870 permitted the subjects of ‘friendly States’ to hold personal property and real estate under the same conditions as British subjects.

1882
Children of naturalised fathers or naturalised widows who had accompanied them to New Zealand became automatically naturalised, unless they were Chinese.

1901
The Cook Islands and Niue both became New Zealand territory; their inhabitants were already British subjects.

1914–1918
During the First World War, there was no naturalisation.

1914
Western Samoa came under New Zealand control.

1916
Tokelauans became British subjects.

1917
During and immediately after the First World War all adult ‘aliens’ had to register with the police. Some 9,000 had registered by 1921.

1920
New Zealand administered Western Samoa from this year under a League of Nations mandate.

1923
The criteria for citizenship took on a more modern appearance: applications for naturalisation could be made to the Minister of Internal Affairs by those of ‘good character’ who had lived in New Zealand for at least three years, had ‘an adequate knowledge of the English language’, and did not suffer from any ‘disability’.

1923
British Nationality and Status of Aliens (in New Zealand) Act allowed naturalisation of residents of Western Samoa without the English language requirement.

1926
‘Aliens’ gained the right to vote – but not to stand as candidates – in local authority elections.

1929
‘Alien’ women were no longer automatically naturalised along with their husbands, but had to make their own statutory declaration. British women whose husbands took up another nationality could retain the rights (and after 1946, the legal status) of British citizens. The poll tax was abolished in practice and by law in 1944.

1939–45
Second World War. ‘Aliens’ were again required to register with the police. Naturalisation suspended for the duration of the war, except for ‘aliens’ serving in the armed forces.

1948
Tokelau was formally annexed by New Zealand. Tokelauans along with Cook Islanders and Niueans were New Zealand citizens from 1 January 1949.

The Aliens Act bans ‘aliens’ from owning shares in New Zealand-registered ships, holding parliamentary office, or voting in parliamentary elections. They could be deported if convicted of any offence punishable by more than a year’s imprisonment, or if it was ‘not conducive to the public good’ that they remain in the country. ‘Aliens’ could not be admitted as barristers or solicitors, or as members of some other professional bodies. Parts of the Act remained in force until 1977.

New Zealand citizenship was established by law in 1948, but citizens were also legally ‘British subjects’.

1948–1973
The British Nationality and New Zealand Citizenship Act 1948 gave New Zealand citizenship to all current New Zealand residents who had been either born or naturalised as British subjects. Almost all children subsequently born in New Zealand would become New Zealand citizens. New residents who were citizens of the British Commonwealth or Ireland could become New Zealand citizens simply by registering.
The modern form of citizenship ceremony was introduced – with groups of new citizens publicly swearing or affirming allegiance. At first new citizens from countries where Queen Elizabeth was the head of state did not have to attend ceremonies.

The registration of Commonwealth citizens as New Zealand citizens was tightened: the criteria for registration became basically the same as for naturalisation.

Western Samoa became independent.

The words 'British subject' were removed from new passports.

All people ‘ordinarily resident in New Zealand’ were permitted to vote in general elections, but only citizens were able to stand as candidates (as now).

'Naturalisation' became known as ‘citizenship by grant’. The Citizenship Act 1977 imposed the same requirements on all people who applied for citizenship by grant regarding length of residence in New Zealand, character, and knowledge of the English language. The distinction between Commonwealth and foreign citizens was replaced by one between New Zealanders and foreigners. Resident ‘aliens’ were no longer required to register with the police, and to notify changes in their circumstances.

The Privy Council reinterpreted the 1923 and 1928 British Nationality and Status of Aliens (in New Zealand) Acts and ruled that all Western Samoans born between 1924 and 1948 were British subjects. Therefore, in 1949 they and their descendants (more than 100,000 living people) had become New Zealand citizens. New Zealand was reluctant to give citizenship to almost all Western Samoans, as the Privy Council ruling required. The New Zealand and Western Samoan governments negotiated a compromise. The Citizenship (Western Samoa) Act 1982 overturned the effect of the Privy Council ruling. But all Western Samoan citizens who were in New Zealand on 14 September 1982, and those subsequently granted permanent residence, became entitled to New Zealand citizenship.

New Zealand citizens ceased legally to be ‘British subjects’.

From this year immigrants seeking citizenship had to prove their intention to remain ordinarily resident in New Zealand.

From this year all citizens by grant were required to attend a public ceremony unless in special circumstances. Before, those from countries with the same head of State as New Zealand were not required to attend public ceremonies.

In 2005, the law was changed to limit citizenship by birth to people born here with at least one parent who is entitled to live in New Zealand indefinitely. Before, in almost all cases, everyone born in New Zealand was a citizen. This applied from January 1 2006. In 2005 the Citizenship Act 1977 was amended to:

- ensure recent and serious criminal convictions would, except in exceptional circumstances, prevent the granting of citizenship. (s9A)
- make clear that public citizenship ceremonies are the usual practice. s11(2).
- change the old residence requirement from three years ‘ordinary residence’ to the current five year presence requirement. This also removed the reduced residence period for spouses of citizens. Transition arrangements brought this completely into force in 2010.
Victoria Miller
Originally from Canada

Victoria Miller had never even heard of New Zealand when she decided to go travelling in 1998.

“My friend and I had plans to go to Australia on a working holiday,” explains the 42-year-old. “But while researching our trip, we discovered this magical place called New Zealand. We figured we’d give it a go and if we didn’t like it, we could always head to Australia.”

As it turns out, the pair preferred New Zealand to Australia and, 13 years later, both are still here. “Maybe it’s because New Zealand has a lot in common with Canada, but we slotted into life here easily. For the first few years we were on temporary work visas and working in the hospitality industry, which was a great way to see the country because we worked everywhere from the West Coast to the Bay of Islands.”

Born and raised on Vancouver Island, Victoria planned to return home to study veterinary science. Instead, she ended up in Christchurch where she now works for a government agency. But the keen runner has always lived by the mantra ‘act first, plan later’. “I prefer to take each day as it comes because you never know what’s just around the corner.”

As a result, Victoria has probably been around more corners than most – including rafting on the Zambezi River, skydiving in Hawaii and being chased by elephants at Victoria Falls.

New Zealand, however, felt like home from the moment she arrived. “I feel really privileged to live here. I absolutely love being a Can-Iwi!”

Victoria became a New Zealand citizen in 2011. “It was after the Christchurch earthquakes and my family was keen for me to return home. But I was committed to my life in Christchurch and didn’t want to leave. I was also really impressed with the sense of community that came out of the earthquakes. A Scottish friend from work had been talking about getting his citizenship so I suggested we do it together.”

It helped that Victoria didn’t have to relinquish her Canadian citizenship; making the decision might have been harder if she’d had to. “I was surprised at how emotional I felt at the citizenship ceremony. It was really cool to watch the Kapahaka group and sing the national anthem as a Kiwi.”

There was only one hitch – the Council miscalculated the number of new citizens and ran out of the trees they presented to each person. “They were really apologetic and said they would deliver one to my house the next week, which they kindly did. However, the tree got blown into the garden and was too damaged to save.”

Three months later, Victoria was given a second tree at a friend’s citizenship ceremony – but also managed to kill that one! “It’s a good thing the citizenship requirements don’t include having a green thumb or I may have been in trouble,” she laughs.

“I feel really privileged to live here. I absolutely love being a Can-Iwi!”
Changing answers to “where are you from?”

1855–1866
Almost two-thirds of the 650 people naturalised were Germans. The next largest source country was France, with 38. There were 56 from Scandinavian countries. The only non-European was John Tong, a Wellington cabinet-maker naturalised in 1866, who was a native of Canton (now Guangzhou), China.

1882–1894
3,000 people were naturalised: nearly two-fifths were Scandinavians and a third Germans. Easily the next largest group was 298 Chinese.

1900–1914
Of the 6,000 naturalised, about a third were Scandinavians, a quarter were Austro-Hungarians (Dalmatians) and a fifth Germans. The only significant groups of non-Europeans naturalised in this period were 147 Syrians (Lebanese) and 146 Chinese.

1914–1945
Some 3,250 naturalisation certificates were issued between the world wars, roughly half the previous annual rate. About 30 per cent went to Yugoslavs (nearly all Dalmatians), 25 per cent to Scandinavians, and 10 per cent each to Germans and Italians.

1945–2013
Between 1949, when people were first granted New Zealand rather than British citizenship, and 2013, almost 200,000 people from the United Kingdom have become citizens by grant – just over a quarter of the total. People from China are the next largest group at almost 70,000 (10 per cent), closely followed by Samoa (nine per cent). About six per cent have come from India and from South Africa, five per cent from Fiji, and between two and three per cent have come from the Philippines, Korea, Taiwan and the Netherlands.

We gratefully acknowledge the following article for information in this section: *David Green, ‘Citizenship - 1840–1948: British subjects’, Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, updated 4-Jul-13. URL: http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/citizenship*
National holidays

The anniversary of the landing of New Zealand troops at Gallipoli is commemorated as Anzac Day on 25 April. Everyone is welcome to attend the events, often with a military flavour, held at dawn and later in the morning. The afternoons of Anzac Day are traditionally given over to relaxation.

New Zealand marks the anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi on 6 February. There are many local events held on the day, and national commemorations at Waitangi itself.

Although church and state are separate in New Zealand, Easter and Christmas are observed as holidays, as is New Year.

There is also a holiday to celebrate the monarch’s birthday, and Labour Day is marked by a holiday. ‘Provincial’ holidays are held at different times, marking anniversaries associated with the long-abolished provinces.
New Zealand has two national anthems of equal standing – God Defend New Zealand and God Save The Queen. God Save The Queen (or King) has been the traditional anthem of New Zealand since 1840. The words to God Defend New Zealand were written in the 19th century by Thomas Bracken, and it was soon set to music by New Zealand composer John Joseph Woods. It was made New Zealand’s National Hymn in time for the 1940 Centennial celebrations. In 1977 with the permission of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, the government adopted God Defend New Zealand as a national anthem of equal status in New Zealand with God Save The Queen.

In 1878 the Premier, Sir George Grey, requested a Māori translation. The translator was Thomas H. Smith of Auckland, a judge in the Native Land Court. The Māori version is not a direct translation from the English.

**ENGLISH ANTHEM**

God of Nations at Thy feet,  
In the bonds of love we meet,  
Hear our voices, we entreat,  
God defend our free land.

Guard Pacific’s triple star,  
From the shafts of strife and war,  
Make her praises heard afar,  
God defend New Zealand.

Men of every creed and race,  
Gather here before Thy face,  
Asking Thee to bless this place,  
God defend our free land.

From dissension, envy, hate,  
And corruption guard our state,  
Make our country good and great,  
God defend New Zealand.

Peace, not war, shall be our boast,  
But, should foes assail our coast,  
Make us then a mighty host,  
God defend our free land.

**MĀORI ANTHEM**

E Ihowa Atua,  
O ngā iwi mātou rā  
āta whakarongona;  
Me aroha noa

Kia hua ko te pai;  
Kia tau to atawhai;  
Manakitia mai  
Aotearoa

Ōna mano tāngata  
Kiri whero, kiri mā,  
Iwi Māori, Pākehā,  
Rupeke katoa,

Nei ka tono ko ngā hē  
Māeu e whakaahu kē,  
Kia ora mārire  
Aotearoa

**ENGLISH TRANSLATION**

Lord of battles in Thy might,  
Put our enemies to flight,  
Let our cause be just and right,  
God defend New Zealand.

Let our love for Thee increase,  
May Thy blessings never cease,  
Give us plenty, give us peace,  
God defend our free land.

From dishonour and from shame,  
Guard our country’s spotless name,  
Crown her with immortal fame,  
God defend New Zealand.

May our mountains ever be,  
Freedom’s ramparts on the sea,  
Make us faithful unto Thee,  
God defend our free land.

Guide her in the nations’ van,  
Preaching love and truth to man,  
Working out Thy glorious plan,  
God defend New Zealand.