



Bulletin

Vol. 80, No. 5

July 2017



Reserve Bank of New Zealand *Bulletin*

Subscribe online: <http://www.rbnz.govt.nz/email-updates>

For back issues visit: <http://www.rbnz.govt.nz/research-and-publications/reserve-bank-Bulletin>

Copyright © 2017 Reserve Bank of New Zealand

ISSN 1177-8644

A litmus test for society: Reserve Bank decimal note designs 1967–2017

by *Matthew Wright*



Banknotes are always designed with imagery relevant to the society in which they will be circulating, symbolising the national identity of the issuing country.

Reviewing the historical designs of New Zealand’s banknotes from this perspective reveals a more complex picture of the 1967 switch to decimalisation than the usual perception of a discontinuous change. Despite the switch from imperial to decimal currency, there were clear social continuities in the imagery used for the pre-decimal Series 2 and first decimal Series 3 notes. The real conceptual break came with the Series 5, 6 and 7 decimal notes introduced from 1992–93, which introduced new iconography and themes common to all three series.

While the Series 2 pre-decimal and Series 3 and 4 decimal series, by intent, reflected similar mid-20th century social values – underscoring the stable social character of the New Zealand society of their day, the decimal Series 5, 6 and 7 carried a different range of subjects which were selected through public consultation, formal public survey and independent expert analysis, for relevance to the society of the late 20th century and beyond.

1 Banknote design and New Zealand’s cultural self-image

Banknotes are sometimes referred to as a country’s ‘business card’. Aside from the requirements for security features, functionality and the need to feel like ‘money’, banknote designs also have to be socially relevant to the communities using them, appeal to a wide cross-section of the public, and represent the prevailing sense of ‘national identity’ of the issuing country.¹

For these reasons, the general themes and iconography of all Reserve Bank notes since the ‘permanent’ series of 1940 have been carefully developed by a succession of committees that have included local experts in fields as diverse as history, botany, geography and the arts. Specific additional expertise has been solicited from other leading experts in these fields, and the process of selecting the main design

¹ Reinforcing national identity was explicitly one of six criteria, for example, when selecting themes for Series 5 notes in 1991–92. Lindsay Missen, Adrienne Bateup-Carlson, W. H. Oliver and J. R. H Andrews, ‘Development of design themes for proposed New Zealand banknotes’, Lindsay Missen Design 1991.

themes has been undertaken with substantial care. This process, itself, has evolved over time.

In the case of Series 5, 6 and 7 there was also extensive public consultation and formal surveying to obtain opinion, and in the case of Series 7, specific focus-group testing once the notes had reached detail design stage.² This style of approach is consistent with international methods. As comparison, the Bank of England when seeking subjects for its banknotes, looks for 'British characters who are widely admired and who have made an important contribution to our society and culture'. Since 2014, the Bank of England has been making those selections via a Banknote Character Advisory Committee, whose processes include soliciting public nominations for a 'long list'.³

As a result of the way in which banknote designers have consciously engaged with the prevailing sensibilities and self-perceptions of New Zealand's changing society, the imagery selected for New Zealand's banknotes has been very much an unintentional litmus test of New Zealand's evolving self-image.

While historians have debated the precise details of this self-image – and the nature of analysis has changed through the period – there has been a broad consensus. New Zealand's self-vision of the mid-20th century was generally founded in the failed colonial dreams of the 19th century.⁴ The earliest settlers, and certainly promoters pushing them to come to the colony, visualised a bigger and better Britain.⁵ This dream did not

eventuate, and by the 1880s and 1890s had been overtaken by a vision of New Zealand as a colony within the British Empire – but nevertheless the 'best' of them, the most loyal of Britain's children.⁶

This self-view emerged just as Britain was altering the fundamental nature of its Empire into a Commonwealth of self-governing Dominions, a shift that continued into the 20th century with the conversion of these Dominions into independent nations bound loosely to the mother country.⁷ Meanwhile the second generation of Pakeha to be born in New Zealand were growing to adulthood and developing a sense of local identity as a nation.

This sense of local identity was given particular form in 1915 by the Gallipoli campaign, and by the socially encompassing Western Front experience that followed,⁸ but concepts were still framed by a sense of being British. New Zealand was 'our country', Britain 'our nation'. This sense of dual nationality varied as time went on, but was sustained through the 20th century in part by ongoing close trading ties with Britain, notably the First World War 'commandeer',⁹ further buoyed by the Second World War and little dented by the Korean War wool boom. Trade with Britain remained pivotal to New Zealand's prosperity into the 1970s.¹⁰ The phrase 'where Britain goes, we go', although wrapped by wartime bravado when it was uttered by Prime Minister Michael Joseph

2 For more detail see Kristin Langwasser (2014), 'Designing New Zealand's new banknote series', Reserve Bank of New Zealand *Bulletin*, Vol. 77 (7).

3 <http://edu.bankofengland.co.uk/knowledgebank/how-do-we-choose-who-gets-to-feature-on-banknotes/>, accessed 28 June 2017.

4 Matthew Wright, *The Reed Illustrated History of New Zealand*, Reed, Auckland 2004, p. 255.

5 James Belich, *Making Peoples*, Allen Lane, Auckland 1996, pp 297-314.

6 See, e.g. Wright, *The Reed Illustrated History of New Zealand*, pp. 244-249.

7 There are multiple views on why; Niall Ferguson put it down to largely economic factors, see Niall Ferguson *Empire: how Britain made the modern world*, Penguin, London, pp. 295-296.

8 Matthew Wright, *The New Zealand Experience at Gallipoli and the Western Front*, Oratia Media, Auckland 2017, pp. 166-167, 300-301.

9 W. H. Oliver, *The Story of New Zealand*, Faber, London 1960, p. 172.

10 For background see G. R. Hawke 'The Growth of the Economy' in W. H. Oliver and B. R. Williams (eds), *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1981, reprinted 1991, pp. 369-396; also Belich, *Reforging Paradise*, pp. 397-400.

Savage in 1939, effectively also summed up the practical reality of New Zealand's mid-century view of itself.¹¹

This history and the way society was evolving around it framed New Zealand's social self-image for much of the 20th century, in which a sense of independent nationhood vied with the equally powerful notion of being a part of a greater British sphere. New Zealand always saw itself punching above its weight – and with some justification when the achievements of Kiwis such as Ernest, Lord Rutherford of Nelson are considered. But, socially, this could be legitimised only if it was achieved overseas, ideally London.¹²

The nature of this self-view eventually provoked a reaction. By the late 1960s arguments were being raised that the country could not mature, economically or socially, until the issues were resolved.¹³ Exploring the meanings of this self-view has also exercised academic historians.¹⁴ As we shall see, this dual self-identity was explicitly reflected in the second and third series of Reserve Bank banknotes, spanning the decimal conversion.



Above: Series 1, one pound note; a hasty design that was always intended to be temporary, but which still conveyed a sense of 1930s New Zealand with the combination of kiwi, the national Coat of Arms and Tawhiao, the second Maori King, on the obverse; and Mitre Peak on the reverse.

11 <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/pm-declares-new-zealands-support-for-britain-in-famous-radio-broadcast>, accessed 30 June 2017.

12 Wright, *The Reed Illustrated History of New Zealand*, pp. 300-303

13 See, e.g. contemporary commentary by W. B. Sutch, *Colony or nation?*, Sydney University Press 1966, Second Edition 1968, esp. pp. 91-102; but note also Brian Easton *The Nationbuilders*, Auckland University Press, Auckland 2001, pp. 6-11, reflecting the notion of 'nation' as 'shared culture'.

14 See, e.g. James Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, Allen Lane, Auckland 2002, pp. 433-435 for speculation as to why it ended.

2 The Reserve Bank's pre-decimal note series 1934–1967



Above: the Series 2 ten shilling note of 1940. Iconography reflects New Zealand's self-image of the day; a colony of Britain, but with its own unique character, emphasised by the kiwi on the reverse.

The first Reserve Bank note series of 1934 was always considered temporary, because of the haste with which it had to be prepared.¹⁵ The designs drew on the existing Bank of New Zealand notes, developed a little earlier.

The first three Series 1 denominations - ten shilling, one pound and five pound notes - contained a good deal of Maori iconography, including Tukaroto Matutaera Potatau Te Wherowhero, Tawhiao (1822–1894), second Maori king.¹⁶

In some respects the design concepts of these 'temporary' notes, with their extensive use of Maori and New Zealand imagery and virtual absence of direct British themes, appear to contrast with the Reserve Bank's second series of 1940 and the decimal series of 1967. However, in many respects their focus was simply on a specific aspect of the same early-mid 20th century mind-set that was more broadly reflected in the later series; in this case the way that the Pakeha state had co-opted aspects of Maoritanga as part of its own self-identity, at a time when New Zealand believed that it had the best race-relations in the world.¹⁷ That style of self-identity, in turn, was more broadly framed around the concept of a colony-turned nation – one whose sense of nationhood had been

15 Gary Hawke, *Between Governments and Banks*, Government Printer, Wellington, 1973, p. 51

16 For details see <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/2t14/tawhiao-tukaroto-matutaera-potatau-te-whereowhero>, accessed 29 June 2017.

17 Discussed in Jane Stafford and Mark Williams, *Maoriland: New Zealand literature 1872–1914*, Victoria University Press, Wellington 2006, pp 10-13.

forged with blood at Gallipoli; and all of it within the wider ambit of the British Empire of the day.¹⁸

The second series of Reserve Bank notes, issued from 1940,¹⁹ directly reflected that broader place of New Zealand as 'colony' and 'nation'. The designs – dubbed 'permanent' to differentiate them from the 'temporary' first series – were developed largely by a Reserve Bank committee formed in 1937 under the Governor of the day, Leslie Lefeaux. Consultants included Sir James Shelley, who advised the principal note designers at Thomas De La Rue relative to content. It took eighteen months to develop these designs.²⁰ They were explicitly timed for release to coincide with New Zealand's centennial celebrations, scheduled for 1940.²¹

Conceptually, this series was heavily framed by New Zealand's social self-view of the day, with British and colonial symbolism on one side and characteristic New Zealand imagery and scenes on the other. This was the era when New Zealand declared itself '98.5 percent British'²² – adding the extra half-percent to beat Australia's self-declared '98 percent'. It was entirely fanciful, ignoring the Maori population as well as the Irish and Dalmatian communities among others.²³ However, it was widely upheld at a time when New Zealand trade was primarily to Britain – or Australia – and the general concept was reflected in the design choices for the 'permanent' Series 2 banknotes.



Above: the Series 2 fifty pound note of 1940, again with iconography redolent of New Zealand's mid-20th century self-image of the day as a child of Britain - and Britain's farm, underscored by the dairying images with Mount Taranaki (Egmont) on the reverse.

18 For detail and discussion see Wright, *The New Zealand Experience at Gallipoli and the Western Front*, Oratia Media, Auckland 2017, esp. chs 8 and 15.

19 Robert Pepping, *New Zealand History Noted*, Robert Pepping, Auckland 2010, p. 29.

20 Pepping, p. 27

21 Hawke, *Between Governments and Banks*, p. 183.

22 Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, p. 216.

23 For discussion see *ibid.*, and Ch 7.

The historical figure chosen for the obverse of the new notes was James Cook, the explorer who had ‘discovered’ New Zealand for Britain. This choice – again, reflecting prevailing sentiment – underscored the ways in which New Zealand, as it approached its centenary as a Crown colony, identified its origins. Maori iconography, typified by the waka on the obverse of the fifty pound note, was minimal. The centenary of 1940 also prompted the decision to add a vignette to the ten shilling note of the Treaty of Waitangi being signed, taken from low-relief decoration on a 1905 statue of Queen Victoria. The visual details were historically inaccurate, but the meaning at a time when the centenary of the Treaty was being marked was clear; and the Reserve Bank issued the note on the day of the centenary, 6 February 1940.²⁴

The reverse of the notes celebrated New Zealand as Britain’s farm: the ten pound note featured a sheep farm and the fifty a dairy herd near Mount Egmont/Taranaki. It was again very much a Pakeha New Zealand, and one that was styling itself – very explicitly – as Britain’s key food supplier. And this had a practical reality; 89.32 percent of New Zealand’s exports in 1940, mostly cheese, butter, wool and meat, went to Britain.²⁵ Thus the second series of notes – carefully developed to reflect prevailing public self-image, thinking and mood – by nature also reflected New Zealand’s mid-20th century image of being both an emerging nation and yet still part of a greater British ambit.

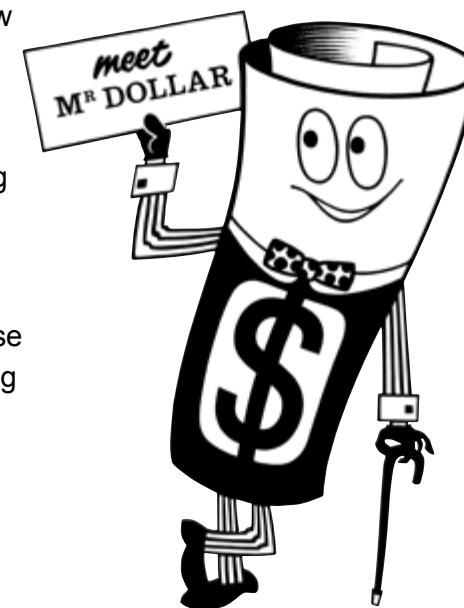
24 Pepping, p. 29.

25 Author calculation, derived from figures in David Thorns and Charles Sedgwick, *Understanding Aotearoa/New Zealand – historical statistics*, Dunmore Press, Palmerston North 1997, p. 65.

3 New Zealand’s first decimal note series

Although decimalisation was a watershed in New Zealand’s currency history, the note designs carried strong consistency at the conceptual level with those of Series 2. This was because, once again, they were carefully developed to engage with prevailing mood and self-image; and New Zealand’s self-perception had not moved particularly far in the years between 1937-40 and 1964-67. New Zealand still styled itself a nation within the British sphere, still relied very heavily on British trade – this despite the winds of change blowing through that relationship by the 1960s.²⁶

Ironically, the pressures to decimalise flowed to a large extent from growing trade to the United States and elsewhere, and by the mid-1950s Australia and New Zealand were contemplating decimalisation on the back of trade and productivity considerations. To put that in perspective, whereas in 1940 trade outside Britain had totalled just 10.67 percent of New Zealand’s exports, by 1955 about 34.5 percent was being sent to destinations other than Britain.²⁷ A private members’ bill by H. G. R. Mason in 1956 – his eighth on the matter – joined a petition by the



26 Briefly summarised at <https://teara.govt.nz/en/overseas-trade-policy/page-4>, accessed 5 July 2017.

27 Author calculation, derived from figures in Thorns and Sedgwick, pp. 65-66.

Numismatic Society, prompting the New Zealand Government to set up a Decimal Coinage Committee in May 1957. Members included Reserve Bank Deputy Governor Alan Low.²⁸

The New Zealand committee reported back in 1963 and the Decimal Currency Act was passed in 1964, with implementation in July 1967.²⁹ Part of the timing seems to have been guided by a conscious decision to keep the switch clear of a near-contemporary Australian change; but other factors included time to design and prepare the decimal notes and coins, educate the public, and to find a relatively 'quiet' period for the switch. Australia was decimalising at the same time - a process that lagged New Zealand's slightly, but which was implemented faster. Robert Muldoon – then Under-Secretary to the Minister of Finance and in charge of the decimal transition – flew to Melbourne to observe Australia's experience of the release-and-switch in early 1966.³⁰

The name of the intended decimal currency reflected the underlying social realities of New Zealand of the day. An early Australian decision – albeit soon rescinded – to call their currency unit a 'Royal' provoked debate in New Zealand over whether to follow suit. It was an explicit reference to the monarchy: but other and more local names were also suggested, including 'zeal' and 'kiwi'. In the end the American term 'dollar' was picked, on government recommendation, and despite the potential for confusion with American dollars.³¹

The cross-Pacific influence did not, however, much enter thinking when it came to developing the iconography of the new decimal notes.



Above: The engraving of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, used in the Series 3 decimal notes, based on a formal 1960 photograph by Anthony Buckley, and taken in Buckingham Palace.

28 Pepping, p. 51. Low became Governor in July 1967, see <http://www.rbnz.govt.nz/about-us/chronology-of-reserve-bank-governors>, accessed 6 July 2017.

29 Hawke, *Between Governments and Banks*, p. 184.

30 Robert Muldoon, *The Rise and Fall of a Young Turk*, Reed, Wellington 1974, p. 77.

31 Hawke, *Between Governments and Banks*, p. 185.



Above: Draft sketch for the obverse of the Series 3 \$100 note.

Designs for the first decimal notes – Series 3 – were developed from 1964 when the Decimal Currency Act was passed. While the general process, including coin design, was handled by the government-appointed Decimal Currency Board, the specifics of note design were left to the Reserve Bank. The first potential decimal design was produced, speculatively, by Thomas De La Rue in October that year – featuring, once again, James Cook. However, the Reserve Bank, under the Governor of the day, Gilbert Wilson, preferred a clean-sweep approach. The six-person Design Committee appointed in 1964 included Alexander McLintock - a historian and etcher; Stewart Bell MacLennan – the Director of the National Art Gallery – and Professor John Simpson, Dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Canterbury.³²

32 Pepping, p. 57.



Top: Obverse of the Series 3 \$1 note.



Above: Reverse of the Series 3 \$5 note, showing the tui and kowhai flowers.



Above: Reverse of the Series 3 \$100 note, featuring the endangered Takahe, a bird thought extinct but re-discovered in the late 1940s.

Despite an intention to start with a blank sheet, what emerged – once again – had to engage with prevailing sensibilities, and was framed by New Zealand’s dual concept of its national identity. The designs featured New Zealand themes and motifs on one side and a specific symbol of Pakeha New Zealand’s identification with its colonial origins on the others: Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. She featured on all the notes. Cook was removed to the watermark. This stood in contrast with the Australian decimal notes, where the Queen featured on but one denomination. New Zealand’s prevailing social concept of itself – as reflected in these themes – was clearly defined by more than the broadening of trade on the back of the Korean war wool boom.

The exact ‘New Zealand’ aspect of the mix was subject to a good deal of debate: the Design Committee considered a range of possible themes, from historical moments to scenery. In the end they settled for birds and the plants most closely associated with them, including the piwakawaka (fantail), titipounamu (rifleman) and tui, each with a plant closely



Above: Obverse of the Series 4 \$50 note, a new denomination introduced in 1984, showing the updated portrait of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, which featured on all denominations of that series.

associated with them such as the kowhai. One of the rarest birds in New Zealand at the time, the takahe, was commemorated on the highest-denomination decimal note, the \$100.

The mix of pro-British and pro-local thinking displayed in the note themes was reflected in arguments over who was best suited to design them. The Reserve Bank preferred the professional note printers, Thomas De La Rue; but Paul Beadle, Professor at the Auckland School of Fine Arts, went on record to suggest that there were New Zealanders with the talent to do the same.³³

At the specific level of artistic drawing and design, however, it was possible to implement the ‘clean sweep’ brief; the particular way in which the selected themes were physically implemented in the new notes was

33 Pepping, p. 58.

new, bringing a specific look and stylistic feel that was quite modern by 1960s standards.

The note designs were kept confidential until just a month before 'Decimal Currency' day, largely to avert risk of counterfeiting. This carried some risks in terms of public reception, particularly given that the first decimal coin designs, which were developed by the Decimal Currency Board,³⁴ met a storm of public controversy when the initial drawings emerged, and were withdrawn.³⁵

However, the decisions by the Reserve Bank and its advisors over the decimal notes proved correct. Public reception of the new notes was good, with especial plaudits from the artistic community. Peter McIntyre, former official war artist, thought they were 'twice as good' as the Australian decimal notes. The Advisory Board of the New Zealand Retailers Federation also found them 'most attractive'; far better than what they dismissed as 'Australian jam tin labels'.³⁶ There was particular support for the picture of the Queen.³⁷

34 For details see Matthew Wright, 2008, 'The themes and thinking behind New Zealand's 1967 decimal coin designs', Reserve Bank of New Zealand *Bulletin*, Vol. 71, No. 2.

35 Hawke, p. 186.

36 Pepping, pp. 60-61.

37 Pepping, p. 61.

4 'Uniquely New Zealand': the Series 5, 6 and 7 decimal notes³⁸

The broad conceptual continuity of the Series 2 pre-decimal and the Series 3 decimal notes, at the level of the visual content, continued with Series 4 from late 1981. This series emerged from the decision to switch note printing to a Bradbury Wilkinson plant near Whangarei, which meant that new plates would have to be made.

It was impractical to precisely match the older plates, so while Series 4 was conceptually identical to Series 3, it carried minor drawing changes. The opportunity was also taken to update the portrait of the Queen, and to introduce a new denomination, the fifty dollar note, which entered circulation from late 1983 and featured the ruru (morepork).³⁹ However, this facility did not last: by 1990 Bradbury Wilkinson had announced plans to close their New Zealand plant down, meaning that a new note printer would have to be found and more plates made.

This also created an opportunity to re-think the iconography. A committee was formed of Reserve Bank staff under the Governor of the day, Dr Don Brash,⁴⁰ with external membership and expert input from national leaders in fields ranging from history to botany, including Professor W. H. Oliver – former Professor of History at Massey University and general editor of the *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* – and Dr J. R. H. Andrews,

38 A 'uniquely New Zealand' quality was one of the criteria for the Series 5 note design committee, see Lindsay Missen, Adrienne Bateup-Carlson, W. H. Oliver and J. R. H. Andrews, 'Development of design themes for proposed New Zealand banknotes', Lindsay Missen Design 1991.

39 Pepping, p. 80.

40 Governor 1988-2002.

Chairman of the School of Biological Sciences at Victoria University of Wellington.⁴¹

The main choices of content that followed were a sharp break from the relatively consistent conceptual themes of the Series 2, 3 and 4 banknotes, and again emerged because of the need for any new notes to both reflect and engage with the society that would use them.

By the late 1980s, New Zealand society was changing significantly away from its identification to Britain, on the back largely of the aims, values and hopes of a generation who saw themselves as sharply dissonant from the 'wartime' generations of their parents and grandparents. They leaned instead towards increasing pluralism, practical inclusion of Maori, and a new definition of New Zealand as a viable and self-confident nation that could stand on its own merits on the world stage.

A re-discovery of New Zealand's history went with this mind-set, and with that, a re-identification of what historical New Zealanders had achieved not just internationally, but also in terms of creating a sense of valid local identity.⁴²

The fact that New Zealand's prevailing social values and self-perceptions were changing was recognised by the Reserve Bank design committee during the development of themes for the new Series 5 notes; there was a sense of the need to modernise the iconography of the currency in order to bring it up to date with late 20th century thinking – and beyond. This function was explicitly reflected in the formal criteria to which the committee worked, which included:

41 This author was also involved with the committee.

42 Reflected in a rising tide of historical publications such as Brian Easton, 2001, *The Nationbuilders*, Auckland University Press, Auckland; and the astonishing total of four new general histories of New Zealand (Belich 1996 and 2002; King 2003; Wright 2004; McLean and Dalley (eds), 2005).



Above: Series Five \$5 note obverse, featuring Sir Edmund Hillary.

- having a uniquely New Zealand quality to the notes;
- developing notes that were visually rich and appealing to a wide cross-section of the community;
- developing notes that reinforced positive aspects of the national identity;
- having a bi-cultural perspective on the notes; and
- developing notes that were politically neutral.⁴³

The decisions that followed were informed by extensive public consultation. An early consideration, which the Bank specifically put to the public, was whether to remove the Queen from all but one of the

43 Lindsay Missen, Adrienne Bateup-Carlson, W. H. Oliver and J. R. H Andrews, 'Development of design themes for proposed New Zealand banknotes', Lindsay Missen Design 1991.



Above: Series Five \$50 note obverse, featuring Sir Apirana Ngata.



Above: Series Five \$20 note obverse, featuring Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

notes, making way for four New Zealand figures. This was in line with international trend: indeed, Australia had put the monarch on just one denomination when they decimalised in 1966; and the British had been featuring prominent individuals, ranging from Charles Dickens to George Stephenson and Sir Christopher Wren, since their own decimalisation in 1970.⁴⁴ New Zealand – which had added the Queen only in 1967 – was something of an outlier by these standards.

The public response was very much a litmus test of the state of New Zealand society at the time. The suggestion provoked a modest response from elements of the public opposing the prospect, including light-hearted delegations to the Wellington and Christchurch offices of the Reserve Bank by ‘Alf’s Imperial Army’ and the Wizard of Christchurch, both in favour of retaining the monarch. More seriously intended criticism came from Muldoon, by now retired.⁴⁵

These voices opposing change were matched against a vigorous and enthusiastic public engagement with the proposal to put New Zealanders on four of the notes. A request for public submissions produced a significant range of views over who was best featured, with proposed names including Lieutenant-General Sir Bernard Freyberg, Jack Lovelock, James Hector, Te Puea Heirangi, Jean Batten, Te Rangi Hiroa (Sir Peter Buck) and Katherine Mansfield among others.⁴⁶

A ‘long list’ was prepared by consultants Lindsay Missen Design, with input from Professor W. H. Oliver, which was then extensively discussed with the Reserve Bank Design Committee.

44 <http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/banknotes/Pages/characters/default.aspx>, accessed 28 June 2017

45 Pepping, p. 90

46 Lindsay Missen, Adrienne Bateup-Carlson, W. H. Oliver and J. R. H. Andrews, ‘Development of design themes for proposed New Zealand banknotes’, Lindsay Missen Design 1991 listed some, but not all of the proposed names.

Right: Alf's Imperial Army with the Duke of Wellington (top right) visited the Reserve Bank's Wellington office in 1991 with a light-hearted and good-humoured protest at the proposal to remove the Queen from all but one of the banknotes.



A few immediate causes drove the final selection; Kate Sheppard was selected for the \$10 because of her prominent general role in New Zealand women's history, and because this note was released in 1993, the centennial year of women getting the vote.

From the historical perspective, the public response to the proposals for the new series was symptomatic of the changes flowing through New Zealand's self-view of the time. The mid-century conception of New Zealand as Britain's farm was passing. By the late 1980s this was being supplanted by a more pluralist self-view, one that instead saw New Zealand as a small but viable independent nation on the world stage.⁴⁷ This new self-view took time to emerge, and was still doing so in the early 1990s when the Series 5 notes were developed.

The decision was made to move the Queen to the watermark – following the precedent of moving Cook to the watermark of the decimal series – and to retain her portrait on the \$20. Prominent New Zealanders selected for other denominations included Sir Edmund Hillary, who became the only living person other than a monarch to be commemorated on a New Zealand banknote.

There was a general consensus to create a New Zealand feel through retaining the Series 3 concept of birds and the plants or environments with which they were most closely associated. A new selection was favoured, however, and thought within the Reserve Bank leaned towards selecting rare or threatened species; the new notes were an 'opportunity to...lend our support to conservation issues'.⁴⁸ Here again was an explicit engagement with values that had gained significant attention with the public by the early 1990s. An internally-circulated list included the kokako, karearea (New Zealand falcon) and mohua (yellowhead) among others.⁴⁹ Careful consideration, with input from independent experts, went into the final selection which included the karearea and whio (blue duck), both endangered species.

When the notes were switched to a polymer substrate instead of cotton-based paper, creating Series 6, the same designs and themes were retained with only minor modification, required to make room for new security features.

By the early 2000s, however, the need to include more complex security features demanded a more complete re-design. This implied a new note series. Planning began in 2009. The need to fully re-design the notes created potential to once again revise the themes and motifs. However,

47 See, e.g. Wright, *The Reed Illustrated History of New Zealand*, pp. 450-454, Michael King, *The Penguin History of New Zealand*, Penguin, Auckland, pp. 506-513.

48 Bank Note Designs, 'Birds/Scenes', internal memo 19 August 1991.

49 *Ibid.*



Above: Series Six \$5 polymer note obverse, featuring Sir Edmund Hillary, showing the slight alterations to the Series Five design required to introduce new security features.

the question was whether the public had any mood to change the existing selection.

A survey was therefore commissioned from ACNielsen, covering 1000 individuals, to evaluate the Series 5/6 content and designs, among other things. More than a third of respondents were happy with them, and the highest negative rating of any aspect was just four percent. Eight out of 10 responded positively when questioned about attributes such as range of denominations, whether the notes looked like New Zealand notes – meaning had a New Zealand flavour – security features, ease of handling and colours.⁵⁰ Twenty-one percent of respondents were happy with the existing notes as-is; and when asked what they might want to see on notes, 29 percent were enthusiastic for New Zealand

50 ACNielsen, 'RBNZ Bank Notes Survey 2010 Consumer', June 2010.

scenery, landscapes and landmarks, and a further 10 percent for trees and flowers.⁵¹ A similar but smaller survey, with very similar results, was conducted specifically for retailers.⁵²

The existing selection of people, birds, scenes and plants were retained, along with the overall colour palette of each note, although new and updated images of all but the four New Zealanders were procured.⁵³ The decision was also taken to expand the Te Reo Maori used on the notes; and Te Puni Kokiri and the Maori Language Commission were consulted.

All of these aspects had to be worked into note designs that pivoted around the new security features. Further evaluation work was done via focus groups, once the specifics of the new designs had been finalised.⁵⁴

6 Bibliography

ACNielsen, 2010, 'RBNZ Bank Notes Survey 2010 Consumer', June..

ACNielsen, 2010, 'RBNZ Bank Notes Survey 2010 Retailers', June.

Belich, James, 1996, *Making Peoples*, Allen Lane, Auckland.

Belich, James, 2002, *Paradise Reforged*, Allen Lane, Auckland.

51 Ibid

52 ACNielsen, 'RBNZ Bank Notes Survey 2010 Retailers', June 2010.

53 For further details see Matthew Wright, 2016, 'The imagery and themes of the Series 7 'Brighter Money' banknotes', Reserve Bank of New Zealand *Bulletin*, Vol. 79, No. 15, December.

54 Langwasser, 2014.



Left: Spread of the Series 7 'brighter money' notes introduced from 2016.

Dalley, Bronwyn and Gavin McLean (eds), 2005, *Frontier of dreams: the story of New Zealand*, Hodder Moa Beckett, Auckland.

Easton, Brian, 2001, *The Nationbuilders*, Auckland University Press, Auckland.

Ferguson, Niall, *Empire: how Britain made the modern world*, Penguin, London.

Hawke, G. R., 1981, reprint 1991, 'The Growth of the Economy' in W. H. Oliver and B. R. Williams (eds), *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Hawke, Gary, 1973, *Between Governments and Banks*, Government Printer, Wellington.

King, Michael, 2003, *The Penguin History of New Zealand*, Penguin, Auckland.

Langwasser, Kristin, 2014, 'Designing New Zealand's new banknote series', Reserve Bank of New Zealand *Bulletin*, Vol. 77 (7).

Missen, Lindsay, Adrienne Bateup-Carlson, W. H. Oliver and J. R. H. Andrews, 1991, 'Development of design themes for proposed New Zealand banknotes', Lindsay Missen Design.

Muldoon, Robert, 1974, *The Rise and Fall of a Young Turk*, Reed, Wellington.

Pepping, Robert, 2010, *New Zealand History Noted*, Robert Pepping, Auckland.

Stafford, Jane and Mark Williams, 2006, *Maoriland: New Zealand literature 1872–1914*, Victoria University Press, Wellington.

Sutch, W. B., 1966, *Colony or nation?*, Sydney University Press, Sydney.

Thorns, David and Charles Sedgwick, 1997, *Understanding Aotearoa/ New Zealand – historical statistics*, Dunmore Press, Palmerston North.

Wright, Matthew, 2004, *The Reed Illustrated History of New Zealand*, Reed, Auckland.

Wright, Matthew, 2008, 'The themes and thinking behind New Zealand's 1967 decimal coin designs', Reserve Bank of New Zealand *Bulletin*, Vol. 71, No. 2.

Wright, Matthew 2016, 'The imagery and themes of the Series 7 'Brighter Money' banknotes', Reserve Bank of New Zealand *Bulletin*, Vol. 79, No. 15, December

Wright, Matthew, 2017, *The New Zealand Experience at Gallipoli and the Western Front*, Oratia Media, Auckland.