

# New name for New Zealand

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**In news**— Recently, the Maori Party of New Zealand has launched a petition to officially change the country's name to "Aotearoa", which means "land of the long white cloud" in the indigenous Te Reo Maori language.

## Why such a campaign?

- As per the Maori Party, only 3 percent of the people living in the country currently speak the Te Reo Maori language.
- Hence the Maori Party has demanded to rename New Zealand as well as restore the Maori names for all towns, cities and place names.

## History of the name Aotearoa-

- **New Zealand's tribal population believes the name Aotearoa was first given by Kupe**, an East Polynesian explorer who figures in Maori tales somewhere around 1200-1300 AD.
- As per legends, when Kupe, his wife Kuramarotini, and crew were sailing to find out what lay beyond the horizon, they spotted a large landmass shrouded in white cloud in the distance.
- It was then Kuramarotini shouted "He ao! He ao! He Aotea! He Aotearoa (A cloud, a cloud! A white cloud! A long white cloud!)".
- **Earlier Māori names for New Zealand included Nu Tirani, which was used in Te Tiriti o Waitangi**, along with Nu Tirene, used in the He Whakaputanga Declaration of Independence.
- **Aotearoa was originally used by the Māori people in reference to only the North Island but**, since the late 19th century, the word has come to refer to the whole archipelago.

## History of the name- New Zealand-

- **The history behind the country's present name goes back to the 1640s when Abel Tasman**, a Dutch explorer with the Dutch East India Company (VOC), sighted the South Island.
- The country then subsequently appears on **Dutch maps as "Nieuw Zeeland"**, named after the Dutch province of Zeeland.

A century later, **English navigator Captain James Cook set foot on the Island and in his map** he mentioned the country as "New Zealand".

## About New Zealand-

- New Zealand is a wealthy Pacific nation dominated by **two cultural groups – New Zealanders of European descent, and the Maori**, who are descendants of Polynesian settlers.
- It is bordered by **the South Pacific Ocean and the Tasman Sea**.
- It gained **full independence from Britain in 1947**.
- It is made up of two main landmasses—the North Island (*Te Ika-a-Māui*) and the South Island (*Te Waipounamu*)—and more than 700 smaller islands.
- Around three-quarters of the population lives on the North Island, which is also home to the **capital, Wellington**.
- Its most populous city is **Auckland**.
  - While the vast majority of New Zealanders speak English, Maori, New Zealand Sign Language also has official language status in the country.
  - **Currency:** New Zealand dollar.
  - The **endemic flightless Kiwi is a national icon** of New Zealand.
  - Agriculture is the economic mainstay, but

manufacturing and tourism are important.

- It has a largely temperate climate and as it lies in the Southern Hemisphere, the average temperature decreases as you travel south.

### **Major tribes:**

- The status of **Māori as the indigenous people of New Zealand** is recognised in New Zealand law by the term tangata whenua.
- **Maori races are all subdivided into hapus, or tribal families**, bearing often a different appellation to that of the parent tribe.

