



**Hon Annette King, MP**

Minister of Justice

Minister of Police

Minister of Transport

Minister Responsible for the Law Commission

MP for Rongotai including the Chatham Islands

28 JAN 2008

Teanau Tuiono

Spokesperson

Te Ata Tino Toa

**EMAIL: MAORIFLAG@GMAIL.COM**

Dear Teanau

Thank you for your email of 14 December 2007 about flying the Māori flag from the Auckland Harbour Bridge on Waitangi Day 2008. Your letter has been forwarded to me for reply as the issues you raise fall within my transport portfolio. I am also responding on behalf of my colleague Hon Luamanuvao Winnie Laban.

As you noted in your email the Transit New Zealand Board, (Transit Board) is responsible for the operation of the State highway network, including the Auckland Harbour Bridge flag flying policy. I understand that the Transit Board revised its policy last year and that since 1 June 2007 the New Zealand flag is the only flag flown from the Auckland Harbour Bridge.

At the time of this decision, the Transit Board informed me that they simplified the policy so that Transit staff could concentrate on their core business of building, operating and maintaining the State highway network. I endorse the Transit Board's position on this issue, as it is not possible to respond to the numerous requests to fly various flags on the Harbour Bridge.

I appreciate the importance that your organisation places on the flying of the Māori flag and that this is not the response you were hoping for. However, as Minister of Transport, I believe that a safe and efficient state highway network for New Zealanders is paramount.

Again, thank you for taking the time to write to me.

Yours sincerely

Hon Annette King

**Minister of Transport**