

NEW
ZEA
LAND
DAY



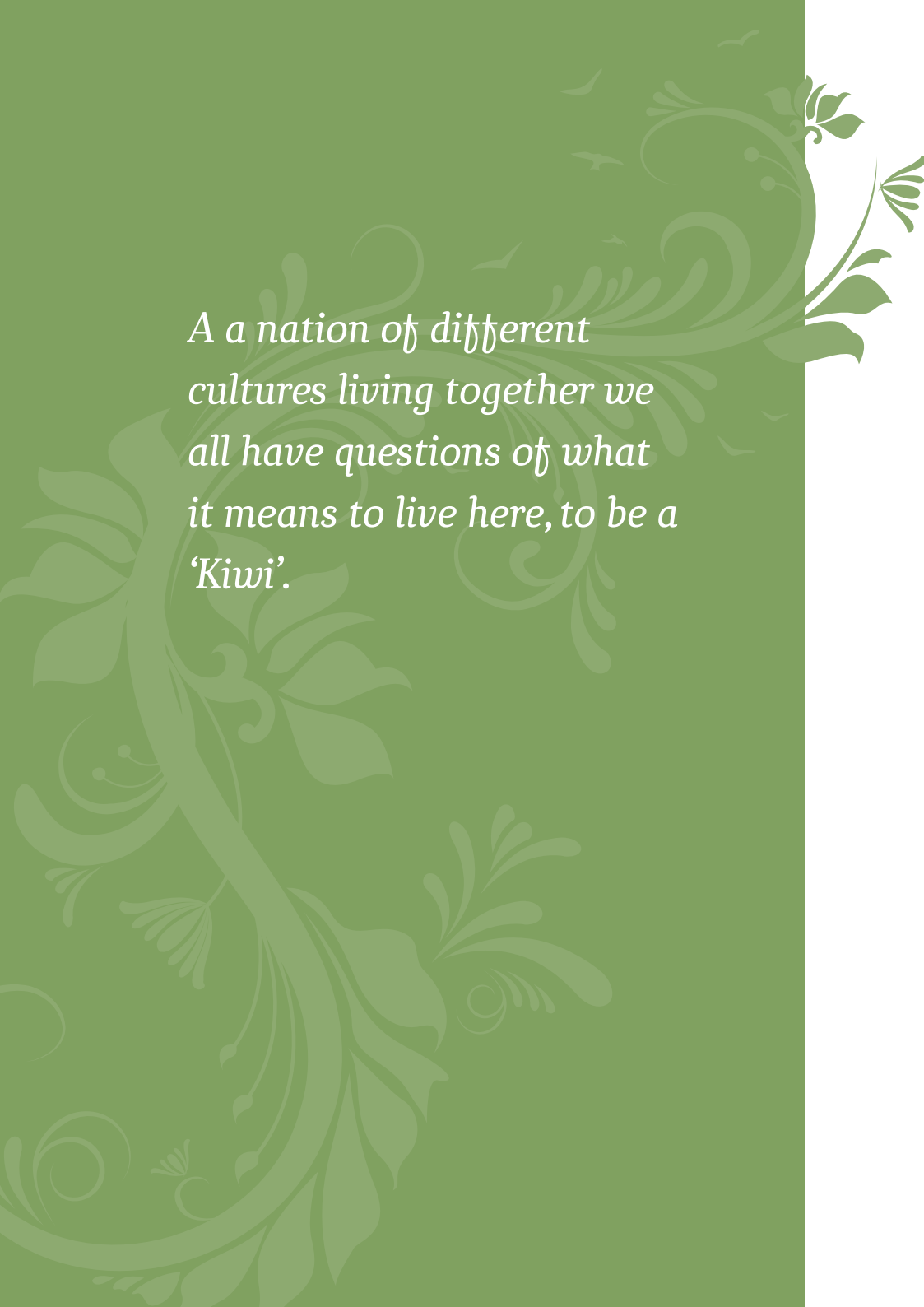
A manifesto



The idea

Ours is a land of profound natural beauty and treasures. This is a land home to unique fauna and flora, found nowhere else in the world; a land with an abundance of fertile soils and a welcoming, hospitable climate. The scenic landscape is second-to-none and, in the eyes of the world, we are seen as an enchanting clean, green oasis.

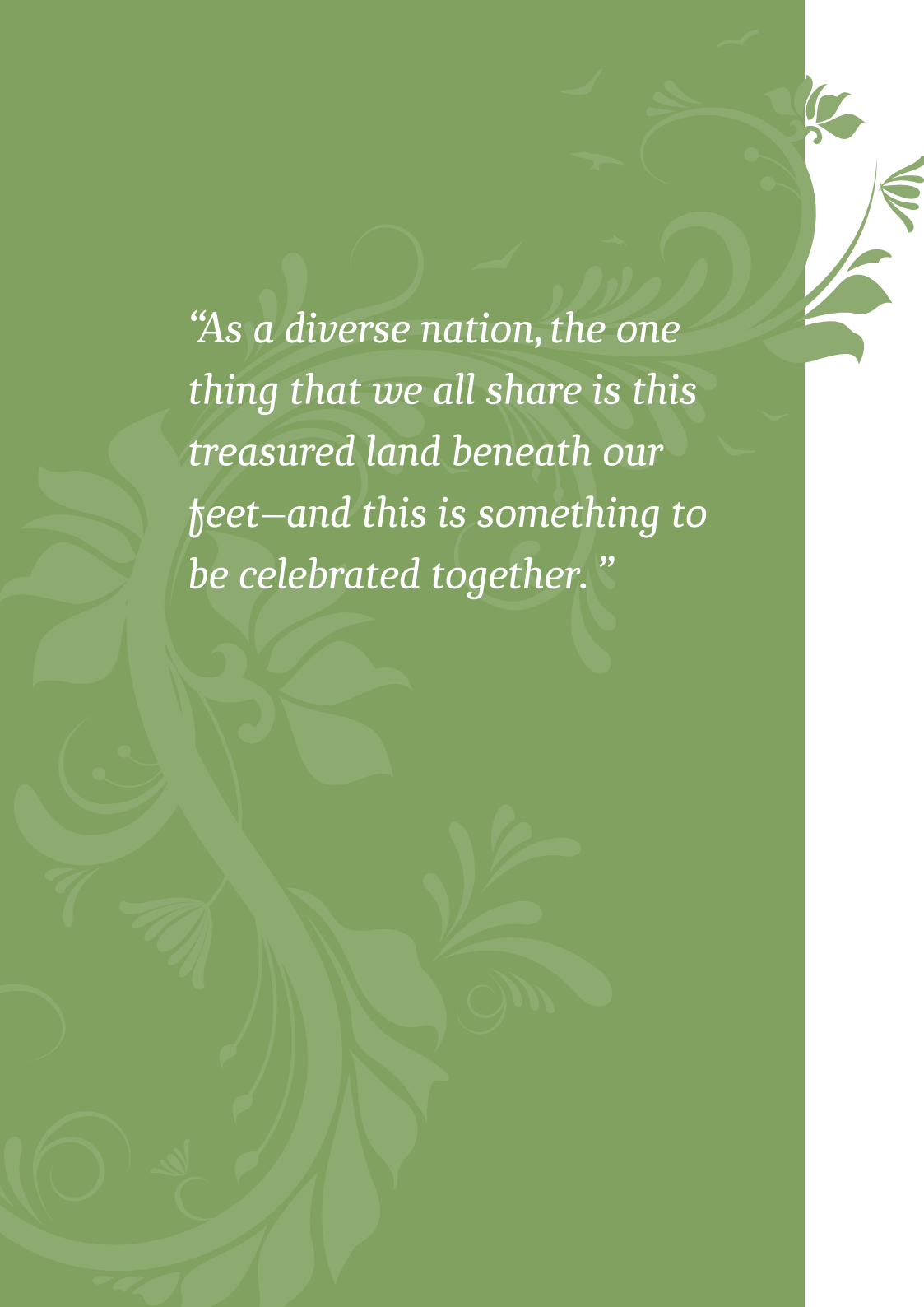
This land has been home to people for only a relatively short time. Maori originally made their home here, cultivating a deep, holistic and spiritual connection with the land. The more recent arrival of Europeans brought with it a different understanding of land, based on individual ownership, productive and economic value. Productive use of the land has remained, from this colonial past, as the country's primary export industry through agriculture.



A a nation of different cultures living together we all have questions of what it means to live here, to be a 'Kiwi'.

Fuelled by these histories, a 'kiwi' culture has developed with a unique sense of relationship to the land. Our love for the outdoors is demonstrated in such iconic pastimes as rugby, netball, sailing, surfing, mountaineering, tramping and adventure sports. Similarly, we are a nation that likes to take its celebrations outdoors, such as Christmas on the beach, New Year's outdoor parties, beach holidays, backyard BBQs and outdoor festivals.

New Zealand of today is a mix of people from many different places. From those having been here for generations to those having arrived recently, in making New Zealand home, they bring a rich diversity of cultural traditions to this nation. And, as a nation of different cultures living together we all have questions of what it means to live here, to be a 'Kiwi'.



“As a diverse nation, the one thing that we all share is this treasured land beneath our feet—and this is something to be celebrated together.”

A sense of a modern New Zealand identity has slowly been forming—from an acknowledgement of the importance of indigenous culture, an identification of ourselves as a pacific nation with a colonial past, and now as a nation of cultural diversity. The explosion of recent creative culture expresses this forming sense of cultural self—through music, art, fashion, movies, TV.


And, as a diverse nation, the one thing that we all share is this treasured land beneath our feet—and this is something to be celebrated together.

The proposal

We propose a day that celebrates the land nationally. A day where the land is celebrated in its true form as a gift; as a place where we can stand and find a home; as a provider—biological, physical and spiritual; as a place to find a sense of community, to play, to work and create, to live together.

By celebrating our land on a national holiday, we declare its significant and sacred importance in culture.

We propose that this day—‘New ZeaLAND Day’—can help build on the sense of connection and belonging for us as a nation with this place we have in common.



“As a Commonwealth country, we have inherited the tradition of having a national day that symbolically celebrates the Queen’s sovereignty over this country.”

We propose that New ZeaLAND Day be celebrated on the first Monday in June—the public holiday that we currently call Queen’s Birthday.

As a Commonwealth country, we have inherited the tradition of having a national day that symbolically celebrates the Queen’s sovereignty over this country (though not her actual birthday).

We acknowledge that this day, for New Zealand, has served us in marking an important aspect of our nation’s history but, that for the majority of New Zealanders today, Queen’s Birthday no longer holds strong cultural meaning, but is simply another ‘day off’.



“We are moving forward as a culture, marking an evolution of our own sense of nationhood and identity.”

A public holiday as a day that acknowledges place and culture needs to be relevant to people today.

The re-assigning of meaning to a celebration of the land builds on the sentiment of Queen’s Birthday, but moves it forward, as we are moving forward as a culture, marking an evolution of our own sense of nationhood and identity.



The invitation

We invite the people of New Zealand to celebrate and connect with the land in whatever way they see as relevant and meaningful. People cannot be told what or how they should value, and we make this proposal as an opportunity for New Zealanders to find their own personal ownership of how they celebrate the land.

This might be symbolised in practice by going to the beach, sharing a fresh garden harvest dinner, volunteer tree planting, taking grandchildren for a bushwalk, throwing a mid-winter beach party, feeding the ducks after a romantic picnic in the park, or watching some New Zealand documentaries, a sacred ceremony acknowledging the land or planting some last minute broccoli.



“Go to the beach. Share a fresh garden harvest dinner. Plant a tree. Take the grandchildren for a bushwalk. Throw a mid-winter beach party. Feed the ducks after a romantic picnic in the park. Watch some New Zealand nature documentaries.”

However people celebrate, what is important is that this cultivates a sense of connection with the land, and in turn each other.

In light of such uncertain times as a nation and globe in an unprecedented recession, the immense threat of global warming and a myriad of other challenges that we face, returning our thoughts to the nurturing and abundance that the land provides us helps us connect to it and to each other, giving us hope and opening up creative solutions for the future.



*Kia ora and
have a nice day*

To get in touch, please email us on
NZLANDDay@gmail.com—we'd love to know
what you're planning and spread the word.
Keep your eye on the website as it too grows!