

Major assignment 1

Design Analysis

Section A

Design exploration of the Australian National Flag

Aldrich Quai Hoi

Aim

The aim of this project is to explore the design and relationship of a national identity its projection and represented nationally and globally through its representation of a national flag.

Method

Methodology of research - research based of articles as available from the internet based web sites, personal discussions sites and study forum.

Introduction

Australia as a nation has matured to a point where it may break the tether of its identity from the parent nation which settled it. From experience and interaction with the myriad of multicultural apparent in my travels, I believe this to be the general consensus amongst Australia's citizens and residents.

During our course of study we have identified the status and importance of a flag as a representation of a nation, the ideologies behind it and the communication which it provides on behalf of one's nation. We have uncovered that elements and symbols used on nations flags do not at all times communicate its intention of design and target meaning on a global scale.

There are many factors which influence this, a nation by default is a closed knit community, which co exists with other nations on a global community. A nation must provide a sense of patriotism to its occupants to further its understanding and meaning. It's a double edged sword, the country provides to the people, the people make the country prosper, thus a balance must be achieved in which occupants are satisfied with the operations of a nation in whole and visa versa.

Very seldom is the case, a nation cannot keep all of its people happy at all times. Unfortunately this is just human behaviour, try as one might, cannot be controlled or satisfied. Order and identity is thus a game of balance and shifting resources to shift balance to keep momentum in the right direction, in the running of a nation and its occupants satisfaction. There are always casualties of instances due to the fact of providing satisfaction in to the complex structure of human behaviour and emotions. If a nation can keep fifty one percent of its occupants satisfied then it would be on a good thing.

I view and have always viewed Australia as a nation from a third person perspective, an outsider who happened to grow up in this country. My point of view in most arguments or subjects is neutral even though I may harbour personal views, in a manner diplomacy one must know when and how to tackle any given problem. All areas of the problem must be analysed in a fair and logical manner, before an outcome may be achieved. Even though an outcome is eventually achieved we hit the wall of human emotion and behaviour once again and usually a decision has to be made which rests of giving a one percent vote to a balanced argument. Casualties are imminent and stakes are high, the world waits with bated breath.

The Australian Flag

The current Australian flag clearly shows from history, tether to Great Britain with its use of the Union Jack and royal blue motif. The differentiating elements being the southern cross constellation and the star of federation denoting the 6 states and territories of commonwealth of Australia. Throughout the study board we can see discussions of the Australian flag, the discussion was aimed at the dissection of the meaning of the flag and the understanding of its elements of design as well as its representation on a global level.

The Australian flag gains instant recognition buy its flag, not for the southern cross constellation or the 7 pointed star, but by the Union Jack in the canton. The union jack is as easily identifiable as the red cross symbol, and it is the symbol of the Bristish Empire, not of Australia as country , but rather Australia as colony.

One could say a sense of change is quietly blowing in the wind, there are whispers. But how does a country break away from the entity which founded its origins. If we trace history we can clearly see that, this usually comes about in a violent way, where balance and the system has been over ruled by its people and a period of chaos ensues where a nation is fragmented only to be reconstitution into a new entity by force.

We can see examples of this in the USA, Germany, France and a many other countries which have sought independence to seek and forge an identity on its own. The colours of independence as designed by the french have been adopted by many countries as a signal of independence. Australia already has the colour motif on its flag but there is not a reason or cannot be, for any form of civil friction to initiate independence.

Australia, as an island with few neighbouring countries is a haven, more so then a battle ground, its strategically in an inefficient place, yet it harbours good resources, physical and intellectual. So when the time does indeed come to make the decision how would we go about in designing a new flag for Australia as an independent country, free from the label of a colony ? It would seem to happen in a diplomatic instant.

If we reflect back to major changes in this country, perhaps the bicentenary celebrations, Australia as a whole communicated with all of its people in an instance, I would imagine it to be a similar affair to announce that Australia is now formally its own country, with its own government , with the people given full right to exercise democracy. Australia has formed many allies and praise from the many people that inhabit it. Its no longer a prison island, on the contrary it is an island for escape, the land of plenty of everything. The people appreciate it and are there to lend a hand, there should never be an issue od violence.

Time for a change.

The National Anthem

The first step, the people, the nation, the secondary element of a nation is its national anthem after the flag has been raised. The national anthem of a nation is a vital piece of reference when a new flag is being designed, as the lyrics of the anthem remind people what the country is founded on, what it stands for.

Australians all let us rejoice
For we are young and free
We've golden soil and wealth for toil,
Our home is girt by sea:
Our land abounds in nature's gifts
Of beauty rich and rare,
In history's page let every stage
Advance Australia fair,
In joyful strains then let us sing
Advance Australia fair.

Beneath our radiant Southern Cross,
We'll toil with hearts and hands,
To make this Commonwealth of ours
Renowned of all the lands,
For those who've come across the seas
We've boundless plains to share,
With courage let us all combine
To advance Australia fair.
In joyful strains then let us sing,
Advance Australia fair.

Advance Australia Fair, really encapsulates the need and desire to take a step and advance forward. Its showcases that the nation has wealth in production from natural resources as well as its people and labour. It is true to the point that progress has been made one step at a time to reach the stage where the nation is at, from humble origins to participating in global congress and decision making. It makes reference to the unique flora and fauna of this country, it speaks of sharing and ultimately it is a beacon that almost subliminally makes us aware and pushes us to advance forward. Even though society is complex, people will always bond for a common good, regardless of past differences, perhaps this may be an example to other nations on how to conduct ones selves on a ethical level and without violence. Lead by example.

The Design

After discussing this with friends and peers and set out to design some of the ideas mentioned. We had to define the significant advances which have shaped Australia in the past years. It was a case of something old, something new, something borrowed. The design has to reflect a new step while retaining the elements which sum of the country. In the advent of the step towards independence, the union jack is removed as a symbol. The Tri Colours of independence already apparent in the current flag design has been de-constructed to reflect the actual placement of true Tri colour bands.



The colours

Blue for the sky and the southern cross constellation has been retained on the top band and right quarter quadrant. The middle white band is representation of purity, light and a new direction, a blank piece of paper if you may. The utilisation of the coat of arms, the old, founding of the federation of states preserved and a representation of the uniqueness of Australia and its flora and fauna. The coat of arms also sports a new motto which is for advancement. The bottom initially would have been just red, yet due to the recent acknowledgement of the Aboriginal people as part of the nation of Australia, it was compulsory to include an element as such.

One design that was put forth by a close friend, was to have the Aboriginal flag with the southern cross constellation overlaid. After a quick mock up, it seemed too overpowering and very unbalanced in the communication of the flag and its meaning. So the new was 3 extra bands over the red which is the representation of land. The black being the night sky and dream time from the Aboriginals flag, the green and gold as a representation of the heritage as displayed by the national anthem and its connection to patriotism of the sporting nation, the green and lush environment, the wealth sustained.

Another point of view on a personal level, the flag is akin to the colours of rank on military officers pocket, it is a representation over all of advancement or going up the ranks to become independent.

Conclusion

From the execution of the design of this flag, I have taken into account what is important and what should be represented of a country through research in a simple level. The mating of tradition with revolution equal the evolution. The communication will not be apparent to the observer on a global as life and human behaviour limit it so. People will be far too occupied in daily life to discover for themselves the true identity of a flag, or they will not go out of their way unless required. Such is the nature of design and communication, people see and communicate out of free will, but for a national identity and especially one for a new emergence its a matter of advancement through exposure first, understanding second.

Notes