

The 1970s

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MCH, 2015d Nation Dates FINAL

Mixed emotions at Montreal

Earlier in the year the All Blacks had toured South Africa in defiance of a United Nations call for a sporting embargo of the Republic. The fallout from this tour saw 26 African nations carry out their threat to boycott the games should New Zealand attend.

These political events overshadowed a successful showing by the New Zealand team. On the track John Walker won gold in the 1500 m, following in the footsteps of Jack Lovelock and Peter Snell. Walker was the current world-record holder for the mile and his rematch with Tanzania's Filbert Bayi following their amazing race at the 1974 Commonwealth Games had been eagerly anticipated. Tanzania joined the boycott, although as it turned out Bayi was ill and would not have competed in any case. Dick Quax won silver in the 5000 m while the rowing eight followed up their 1972 success with a bronze. The New Zealand men's hockey team also won gold when they defeated the more fancied Australians thanks to captain Tony Ineson's goal and Trevor Manning's heroic goalkeeping after he broke a kneecap late in the match.

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No-nukes protests expand

In 1976 the anti-nuclear debate in New Zealand broadened to include the issue of visits from American nuclear-powered and -armed vessels. These had previously been accepted by many New Zealanders as 'part of the deal' in having the United States as our principal ally. The 1976 visits of USS *Truxtun* and USS *Long Beach* attracted protest both on and off the water. Civil Defence established a public safety headquarters for the duration of the visits. Similar protests (and Civil Defence responses) greeted the submarines USS *Pintado* in 1978 and USS *Haddo* in 1979. These visits heightened awareness of the risks posed by this technology. The proportion of New Zealanders who wanted such visits banned reached a third by 1978 and more than 70% by the early 1980s.

Dawn raids intensify

With the economy in recession and unemployment rising, attention turned to the issue of 'overstayers' – immigrants whose temporary visas had expired. Singled out for overloading the welfare system, some were chased up and deported. Dawn raids on the homes of alleged overstayers by police had occurred in 1974 but intensified in October 1976. Homes were stormed at night or in the early hours of the morning, tactics that caused outrage and brought accusations of racism. Samoan and Tongan overstayers were singled out; some people of these ethnicities were stopped in the street and asked for proof of residency. It was pointed out that the greatest influx of temporary immigrants had come from the United Kingdom and Australia. The dawn raids cast a dark shadow over race relations in this country.

The NPC begins

Until 1976 the Ranfurly Shield was New Zealand rugby's premier symbol of provincial supremacy. That year the first National Provincial Championship was held, with the nation's 26 provincial unions divided into two divisions. The first division consisted of 11 teams – seven from the North Island and four from the South. Division Two was divided between the two islands. Bay of Plenty was crowned Division One champions, with Taranaki winning Division Two north and South Canterbury Division Two south. In 1985 a nationwide Division Two and Division Three were created. Further changes in 2006 reflected the increasingly professional nature of rugby. Two separate competitions were created: a top tier of 14 teams competed in a fully professional competition (since 2010 this has been called the ITM Cup) and the Heartland Championship was contested by 12 amateur or semi-professional unions.

Other 1976 events

- The Matrimonial Property Act introduced the principle of equal sharing of all assets of a marriage in the event of its dissolution after three years. It did not apply to property shared within a de facto relationship.
- The golden arches appeared for the first time in New Zealand at Cobham Court, Porirua. Kentucky Fried Chicken had begun the American fast food invasion of New Zealand five years earlier.
- The last sailing of the *Rangatira* brought to an end more than 80 years of regular passenger ferry services between Lyttelton and Wellington.
- The country's first centralised electronic database was established in Whanganui. While some questioned the state's right to gather information on its citizens, the Police Minister hailed it as a 'most significant crime-fighting weapon'.
- The 'Moyle affair' began when Prime Minister Robert Muldoon – speaking under Parliamentary privilege – accused senior Labour member Colin Moyle of having been 'picked up' by the police for homosexual activity, which was then illegal.

Can you remember 1976? Add your memories and comments in the form below.



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