

Warning

This information was published in 1966 in *An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand* and has not been corrected and will not be updated.

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ANTARCTICA

The Ross Dependency

The Ross Dependency of Antarctica comprises that sector of the Antarctic continent between 160° east and 150° west longitude, together with the islands lying between those degrees of longitude and south of latitude 60°. British exploration began with Captain Cook, and names closely linked with the Dependency include Sir James Clark Ross, Capt. R. F. Scott, and Sir Ernest Shackleton. New Zealand's political association with the Dependency dates from 30 July 1923 when an Order in Council of the British Government brought the territory within the jurisdiction of the New Zealand Government. By the Antarctic Treaty of 1959 no country claims actual ownership of any part of Antarctica, but New Zealand, like others, is held responsible for the administration of her sector. The responsibility is unusual in that there are no permanent settlers but, since the International Geophysical Year of 1957–58, there has been a continuous occupation of bases in the Ross Dependency sector by New Zealanders and Americans. The bases are irregularly disposed from the Pole (United States) to Cape Hallet (joint United States–New Zealand) at approximately 72°S. Scott Base (at approximately 78°S) is the main New Zealand Station and the administrative “centre” of the New Zealand Antarctic sector, notwithstanding the fact that the annual permanent establishment there is about a dozen persons. The United States main base, McMurdo, on western Ross Island 30 minutes' walk from Scott Base, “winters over” some nine times this number. The number of bases and the number of persons in the Ross Sea sector vary throughout the year, for the summer immigration increases the population by a factor as much as five or six. Other established bases are Little America and Byrd, both of the United States. Williams Air Facility, the “international” airstrip and local air base – is associated with McMurdo base and lies some four miles off shore of Ross Island on the sea ice. Permanency of settlement in Antarctica is unknown; no economic basis for occupation has as yet been found.

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Next Part: [Scientific Investigation](#)

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