

# The end of the 'six o'clock swill'

## 9 October 1967

# MCH, 2017t

## Nation Dates

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Fifty years of six o'clock closing in pubs ended after a referendum convinced the government to abolish the antiquated licencing law.

Introduced as a 'temporary' wartime efficiency measure in December 1917, 6 p.m. closing for pubs was made permanent the following year.

The 'six o'clock swill' became a part of the New Zealand way of life. In the short period between the end of the working day and closing time at the pub, men crowded together to drink as much beer as they could before bar service ended and the 'supping-up' time of 15 minutes was announced.

A mood for change began to emerge in the 1960s. The growing restaurant and tourism industries questioned laws that made it difficult to sell alcohol with meals, while members of sports clubs and the Returned Services' Association also sought a change.

When the government held a national referendum in late September 1967, nearly 64 per cent of voters supported a move to 10 o'clock closing.

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'The end of the 'six o'clock swill'', URL: <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/the-end-of-the-six-oclock-swill>, (Ministry for Culture and Heritage), updated 19-Jan-2017