

Building a safe, prosperous and respected nation

Services > Citizenship > Celebrating 60 Years of New Zealand Citizenship



The year 2009 is the 60th anniversary of New Zealand citizenship (for more information see the media release on beehive.govt.nz).

The Department of Internal Affairs has developed a special [Citizenship Education](#) website designed for use in New Zealand for schools.

Events for the 60th anniversary

- + [A celebration of 60 years of New Zealand citizenship at Parliament](#)
- + [New Zealand Citizenship Secondary School Essay Competition](#)
- + [Public Awareness of New Zealand Citizenship Survey](#)

Further information about New Zealand citizenship

Prior to 1949 there were no New Zealand citizens. People born or naturalised in New Zealand were British subjects, a status common to the peoples of the United Kingdom and the British Empire.

The issue of separate nationalities for dominions arose following the 1931 Statute of Westminster, which allowed dominions such as New Zealand to become fully independent countries. Canada created its own citizenship in 1947, with New Zealand and Australia (which will also be celebrating 60 years of citizenship in 2009) following closely behind.

On 1 January 1949 the British Nationality and New Zealand Citizenship Act 1948 came into force and most people living in New Zealand became New Zealand citizens on that day. It also meant that children born in New Zealand from 1 January 1949 were automatically New Zealand citizens. The Citizenship Act 1977

replaced the 1948 Act and provides the legislative framework for our citizenship today.

Most people born in New Zealand or to New Zealand citizen parents are New Zealand citizens. Most people born in the Cook Islands, Niue or Tokelau are also New Zealand citizens, and since 1949 we have welcomed into the New Zealand "family" a large number of migrants who have chosen to apply for a grant of citizenship.

The Department of Internal Affairs plans to hold some special commemorative events to mark this milestone year. There was a Parliamentary function in February hosted by the Minister of Internal Affairs, Hon Dr Richard Worth, and the launch of an educational website. Other planned events include a school essay competition, and a number of special citizenship ceremonies throughout the country.

The aim of these initiatives is to raise awareness of the meaning, importance and benefits of citizenship.

More information about New Zealand citizenship and the events planned for the 60th anniversary will be placed on this website over upcoming months so keep an eye out here for the latest news!

+ [Return to Citizenship home page](#)

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[newzealand.govt.nz](#)



Today in History

◀ 6 September ▶



1948 New Zealand citizenship established

On 6 September 1948, the British Nationality and New Zealand Citizenship Act was passed. Before the 1948 Act came into force, people born in New Zealand were British subjects. After the Act, they became New Zealand citizens.

From 1 January 1949, New Zealand citizenship could be acquired by birth in New Zealand, descent, registration or naturalisation. Registration was the process which citizens of the United Kingdom or Ireland underwent in order to take out citizenship. Naturalisation was a similar process for immigrants from other countries, or 'aliens'. The prerequisites for naturalisation differed from those for registration, particularly in terms of length of residence. This dual system remained intact until the Citizenship Act 1977.

The situation of those classed as 'enemy aliens' during and after the war was particularly difficult. Herbert (Bert) Roth fell into this category, even though he had arrived in New Zealand as a refugee from Nazi-occupied Austria. Restrictions on his ability to hold office in public organisations in New Zealand led him to apply for naturalisation in 1944.

Image: Certificate of Naturalisation (Te Ara)

Internal links

[Political and constitutional timeline](#)

External links

[Towards New Zealand citizenship \(Te Ara\)](#)
and naturalisation (1966 encyclopaedia)

[Nationhood and Identity \(Te Ara\)](#)

This Week in History



1 August 1987
Maori becomes
official language



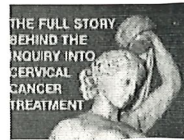
2 August 1983
Protest as USS
Texas visits
Auckland



3 August 1941
Finnish barque
Pamir seized as
war prize



4 August 1965
Cook Islands
achieve self-
government



5 August 1988
Cartwright
Report
condemns
cervical cancer
treatment



6 August 1936
Lovelock wins
1500-m gold at
Berlin



7 August 1909
First
long
run

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	HOLIDAYS AND EVENTS	PROTEST AND REFORM	
	CRIME AND PUNISHMENT	TREATY OF WAITANGI	The Cl
	DISASTERS	MAORI LEADERSHIP	NCE/
	ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT	THE GOVERNORS	NCE/
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	THE GREAT OUTDOORS	FIRST WORLD WAR	
	MEMORIALS	SECOND WORLD WAR	

Other MCH websites



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28th MAORI BATTALION

ANZAC

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