

(MCH, 2017y)  
[Governors and  
Governors-General]

# William Hobson

## Biography



**P** After a lengthy Royal Navy career in which he saw action in the Napoleonic Wars and was twice captured by pirates in the Caribbean, William Hobson (1792-1842) became **New Zealand's first Governor.**

Governor Bourke had already sent him to New Zealand in 1838, and his report so impressed Lord Glenelg that when he decided, in December 1838, to appoint a Consul to New Zealand, he offered the post to Hobson. Hobson, though, took two months before accepting, on 14 February 1839, as he had been hoping instead to receive further promotion as a senior naval officer.

Sent out by Lord Normanby in 1839 with detailed instructions, he travelled first to Governor Gipps in Sydney, whose lieutenant he was to be, for further instructions. Hobson arrived in the Bay of Islands on 29 January but landed on 30 January to read his proclamation of appointment and arranged for a meeting at British Resident James Busby's house on 5 February, while the Treaty was being drafted. On the following day, 6 February, as the chiefs came forward to sign he greeted each of them with the words 'He iwi tahi tatou' (We are all one people). At the end of 1840,

New Zealand ceased to be a protectorate of New South Wales and became a colony in its own right, with Hobson as Governor and Auckland as its capital city. The administration was short of cash and had frequent conflict with settlers, who were hungry for land and wanted control of the colony's government. After barely two years as Governor, he died from a stroke at the age of 49.

*Adapted from the DNZB biography by K. A. Simpson*

- Read the full entry in the Dictionary of New Zealand Biography



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