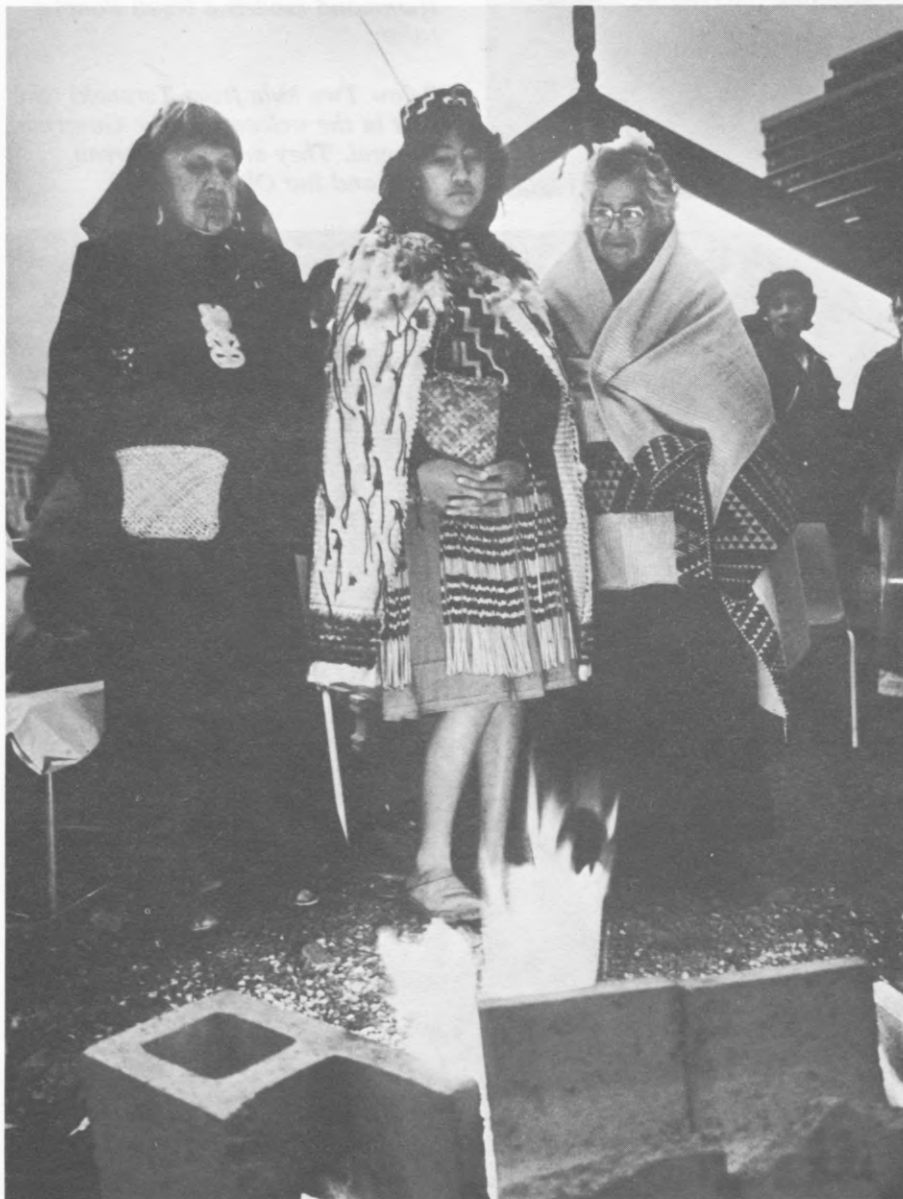


# PIPITEA

*Ngati Poneke's  
dream come true*

*Ken George*



Ngati Poneke has become an institution — not only for Wellington, not only for New Zealand, but also for the thousands of overseas visitors who have been welcomed and entertained here over the last forty-odd years.

But until 1944 the club had no true home of its own, meeting here and there until the then prime minister, Peter Fraser, officially handed over a building in Molesworth Street in recognition of the club's patriotic services. That building, standing in the shadow of Parliament, has served the club well. But the dream has always been for a real marae.

Then in 1969 Minister of Maori Affairs Duncan McIntyre made provision for a new site to be set aside as a marae for Ngati Poneke. The site may seem unprepossessing: it overlooks the Wellington Railway yards and is surrounded by factories, warehouses and the Government Printing Office. Yet it is a site of great historical significance, for it was where the old Pipitea Pa of Te Atiawa stood.

If only for this reason, 31 May was more than just another opening. Taranaki came down in force, and the first sight of the new dawn was the hundreds of white feathers in the hair of Taranaki people attending the whakanoa ceremony. It was as moving a spectacle as the rekindling of the ahikainga, now alight again for the first time in over a century.