

PLACE NAMING IN NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND GEOGRAPHIC BOARD
NGĀ POU TAUNAHĀ O AOTEAROA



Mount Taranaki or Mount Egmont



Lake Tekapo at sunset

THE NEW ZEALAND GEOGRAPHIC BOARD NGĀ POU TAUNAHA O AOTEAROA IS NEW ZEALAND'S NATIONAL PLACE NAMING AUTHORITY.

We create new names, change or discontinue current ones, and approve recorded names.

Anyone can propose a name for a geographic feature or place. We use a number of criteria to make a decision on any proposal. We encourage anyone making a proposal for a place name within New Zealand to consult with local communities and iwi to help us make informed decisions.

Place names identify where we are as we go about our everyday business, they are a component of our infrastructure, and most importantly they matter in emergency responses.

Beyond this, place names are important landmarks of the history and culture of our nation and communities. They honour the people who live in New Zealand.

THE MEANING OF NGĀ POU TAUNAHA O AOTEAROA

The Māori name for the Board, Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa, was given to us by the late Sir James Henare. It means 'memorial markers of the landscape'.



JURISDICTION

The Board is responsible for official place naming in New Zealand, its territorial waters and offshore islands, the undersea features of its continental shelf, and the Ross Sea region of Antarctica. We also review and concur with the naming for Crown protected areas, which are administered by the Department of Conservation.

We are a statutory body appointed by government and governed by the New Zealand Geographic Board (Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa) Act 2008. Government agency Land Information New Zealand is responsible for administering the Act.

BOARD MEMBERS

The Board has ten members and is chaired by the Surveyor-General (ex-officio).

Other members are nominated by the New Zealand Geographical Society, Federated Mountain Clubs, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, and Local Government New Zealand (one member for each of these organisations).

The Minister of Māori Affairs and Minister for Land Information both recommend two members each.

One member from Land Information New Zealand is appointed ex-officio, with responsibility for setting the hydrographic information standards.

OUR AIMS

Place names are widely used by the community, businesses, travellers, local authorities and central government, and are particularly important for emergency services and maritime safety. In our official place naming role, the Board aims to ensure:

- significant features and places are identifiable by name so people can effectively communicate information about location, and
- New Zealand's place names preserve our heritage and culture.



Possession Island, Ross Sea, Antarctica



OUR FUNCTIONS AND DUTIES

- assign, approve, alter or discontinue official or recorded names
- investigate and determine the position and extent of features with official names
- adopt policies, rules and standards for official names
- examine doubtful spelling
- investigate and determine the priority of discovery of a feature
- collect original Māori names and encourage their use on maps and charts
- seek advice from Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori (Māori Language Commission) on correct orthography of Māori names
- undertake research into proposals to name or alter the name of features
- undertake other functions necessary to give effect to the 2008 Act or any other enactment
- administer the New Zealand Gazetteer of Official Geographic names, and
- make enquiries and recommendations on matters referred to us by the Minister for Land Information.

WHAT DO WE NAME?

- natural features such as mountains, peaks, valleys, glens, forests, lagoons, swamps, creeks, streams, rivers, fords, lakes, glaciers or ice features, bays, islands or harbours (including man-made features of the same type)
- railways or railway stations, but not railway features such as marshalling yards, transfer sites, or track point locations
- places, i.e. cities, towns, villages, sites, areas, or similar places, including suburbs and localities
- undersea features.

The Board occasionally alters names but does not assign new ones for local authority districts or regions. We also review and concur with names for Crown protected areas administered by DOC.

WHAT OUR ROLE DOESN'T COVER

- streets and roads, which are named by local authorities
- any reserves vested in and administered by local authorities
- changing the name of New Zealand itself.



South Island high country

MAKE A PLACE NAME PROPOSAL

Anyone can propose a new place name or propose to alter an existing one. (Please note that proposals for Crown protected area names are processed through the Department of Conservation. Alterations to district and region names are processed through local authorities.)

For more information on making a proposal, visit the 'place names' section at www.linz.govt.nz.

From there, you can:

- download forms for making a place name proposal
- find information on researching place names
- read about the Board's consultation and decision-making, and
- find out more about the Board's recent place name decisions.



View of the Kapiti Coast
from Paekakariki Hill Road

OUR NAMING CRITERIA

When considering a proposal, the Board usually gives preference to place names in local use. Names can be subject to spelling corrections or alterations if there are previously known original names (either Māori or European).

Proposed names that have historic, geographic or particular local significance are generally acceptable, as are commemorative names of early explorers and discoverers, early settlers, surveyors and geologists, and early notable people or events with some connection to the proposed area. Descriptive names can also be used.

New Zealand's place naming rules do not allow for naming features after people during a person's lifetime, except in Antarctica and sometimes for undersea features. If the name of a deceased person is used, generally the surname is chosen.

The Board avoids name duplication, use of the possessive form (exceptions are Hawke's Bay and Arthur's Pass) and names in poor taste.

OUR PROCESS FOR MAKING DECISIONS

The Board usually meets twice a year to consider proposals for assigning new place names or altering existing ones. (Crown protected area names and local authority district and region names go through a slightly different process.)

If we support a proposal in New Zealand, its territorial waters and offshore islands, we then publicly notify the proposal in a national newspaper and other publications to seek submissions from the public. (Antarctic names and undersea feature names are not publicly consulted on.)

From there:

- if no submissions are received, we make the final determination/approval on the proposed name, or
- if we receive objecting submissions on a name proposal, we consider the reasons for the objection and decide whether to uphold the objection or reject it:
 - if rejected, we then report to the Minister for Land Information for a final determination; the Minister confirms, modifies or reverses the Board's decision.
 - if upheld, we then make the final determination/approval on the proposed name.

The Board publishes all final determinations on place name proposals in the New Zealand Gazette as conclusive evidence of the official place name.

Dual naming

Dual names such as Aoraki/Mount Cook recognise the equal and special significance of both an original Māori and non-Māori name to a community. Dual naming can overcome issues such as loss of identity and confusion, especially in emergency situations. It also allows for either name to be used in everyday speech.

Find out more about naming rules on the 'place names' section of the LINZ website, www.linz.govt.nz.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CONSULTATION

The views of local communities, the wider public, local iwi, and other parties, are important to us when we consider place name proposals. For Māori names, oral evidence and history are also important.

To make sound determinations, the Board takes account of all views and weighs these against our naming rules, standards and guidelines. For example, long-term use can sometimes outweigh the need to correct the spelling of a place name. Or historical significance can be a deciding factor.

We encourage anyone making a proposal to consult first with interested parties. We will also undertake consultation when necessary.

GAZETTEER OF OFFICIAL GEOGRAPHIC NAMES

The Board maintains a publicly available record of all official ‘geographic names’ (or place names). The gazetteer lists the type of geographic feature for each name, its relevant gazette or statutory reference and a position reference.

The gazetteer may also include background information – such as the history, origin or meaning of the name – and its spatial extent.

The gazetteer is an important reference for spelling, format, meaning, etc., and is used by map and chart producers, government agencies, the public and emergency services.

View the gazetteer online through the ‘place names’ section at www.linz.govt.nz.

WHO MUST USE OFFICIAL GEOGRAPHIC NAMES?

Under the New Zealand Geographic Board (Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa) Act 2008, Crown agencies will be required to use official place names in their official documents, unless the document states that a particular name is not the official place name.

What is an official document?

According to the Act, “an official document—

- (a) means a published document created by a public office or by a local authority in the course of business; and
- (b) includes, in relation to documents published in New Zealand or prepared in New Zealand for publication outside New Zealand (whether or not created by a public office or by a local authority in the course of business),—
 - (i) geographic and scientific publications and manuscripts; and
 - (ii) publications intended for travellers or tourists.”



ENQUIRIES AND MORE INFORMATION

The Secretary
New Zealand Geographic Board Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa
c/- Land Information New Zealand
160 Lambton Quay
Private Box 5501
Wellington 6145
NEW ZEALAND

web visit the 'place names' section at www.linz.govt.nz
email info@linz.govt.nz
phone +64 4 460 0110 or 0800 665 463 (New Zealand callfree only)
fax +64 4 460 0112

