

Proposal report considered by the Board on 30 April 2026 with the Board's decision for Breakwater Bay

[new name]



Summary

The proposer is a resident of Napier and seeks to formally name a small bay adjacent to and west of the Port of Napier (alternatively named Breakwater Harbour), which is frequently used by locals and visitors as one of the few safe swimming spots around Napier.

The proposer considers:

- it would be valuable to be able to clearly communicate the location and ensure the name appears on official maps and Google Maps,
- that lives would be saved if people use this bay for swimming rather than the main Napier beach, which has a strong undertow, with many have been drowned there, and
- currently, explaining the location of the bay is difficult without a name.

The proposer advises of two locally used names for the beach¹ at the bay, but there is no known name for the bay itself. The proposer has suggested they would be happy to have 'a secondary' Māori name, such as Kokoru a Tupa.² Orthographic advice for this suggestion has not been sought at this stage of the process.

The bay itself is relatively small. If the proposed name is made official, it might still not be shown on NZTopo50-BJ39 due to scale.

¹ Port Sandy Beach and Sandy Beach – both extending further west past the westernmost small breakwater which marks the western boundary of the proposed Breakwater Bay.

² the meanings could be scallop shaped bay or bay of scallops.

The adjacent Breakwater Harbour (an unofficial recorded³ name) is a much larger feature immediately to the east. It also has another unofficial recorded name, Port of Napier, ie an alternative name.

The Board has already consulted on these two alternative names during the Hawke's Bay s.24 process. In 2021 views were requested from the Councils and mana whenua, but no responses were received. The Board then changed its process and only processed the Māori place names in 2025.

It may be appropriate for the Board to address these two alternative names by discontinuing Breakwater Harbour to avoid ambiguity/confusion with the proposal for Breakwater Bay. It is not recommended that the beach be officially named as there are over 50 'Sandy' place names throughout New Zealand and in Antarctica. It would be sufficient to name the bay and not the beach for location identification purposes.

Breakwater Road runs adjacent to both the proposed Breakwater Bay and the existing Breakwater Harbour/Port of Napier. Each of the Breakwater names are presumably descriptive of the man-made 'breakwater' which is now part of the Port of Napier, and which acts as natural protection for the proposed Breakwater Bay.

Board's decision to accept the proposal and seek public submissions

At its 30 April 2026 hui the Board made this decision on the proposal:

The Board **accepts** the proposal to **assign Breakwater Bay** to the small unnamed bay north of Napier, based on:

- the need to clearly identify/find the bay because of its popular use by locals and visitors for safe swimming,
- having one name for the swimming area,
- being worthy of naming for its potential to save lives, despite it being a relatively minor feature,
- being appropriately descriptively named after the manmade breakwater protecting the Port of Napier,
- no concern for confusion with Breakwater Harbour to the east (alternatively named Port of Napier), and
- meeting the Board's NZ standard for acceptable names 1.1(e) 'Descriptive names that characterise shape, colour, composition or other distinguishing features',

and

Notify as a proposal to assign for two months.

³ A recorded place name is one that has appeared on at least two authoritative maps, charts or databases, which the Board has resolved to be: NZMS map, LINZ Archived Place Names Database, [Kā Huru Manu](#), and all hydrographic and bathymetric maps and charts published under a New Zealand hydrographic authority at the time of publication. It is not official.

Secretariat assessment

The proposal	<p>The proposer has provided some evidence of the popular use of this bay for swimming by locals and visitors. The organisation Land Air Water Aotearoa has designated 'Port Sandy Beach' as a 'suitable for swimming'.⁴ It has also been referred to as Napier Port Beach or just Port Beach.</p> <p>The local names for the beach are inclusive of either side of the small westernmost breakwater. This man-made feature is responsible for the sand accumulating within the proposed bay area.</p> <p>The proposer advises that the main (eastward) facing waterfront beach at Napier itself is dangerous with undertows, and many drownings have occurred.</p> <p>The proposer has suggested that a secondary Māori name would be acceptable and suggests a translation of Breakwater Bay, Kokoru a Tupa. However, the Board's good practice is just to assign one name, so either an English descriptive name applies, or an original Māori name applies, or a contemporary Māori name applies.</p>
Names shown on plans and maps	<p>No maps or plans name the bay feature. See Secretariat research below regarding the adjacent Breakwater Harbour.</p>
Location of the feature, generic term, geographic feature type	<p>The feature is a very small bay on the north shores of Napier, adjacent to the Port of Napier. The Board's New Zealand Standard 1.4(a) refers with regard to using the appropriate generic term.</p> <p>The beach (even though not the subject of this proposal) within the bay is shallow and sheltered beside the port.</p> <p>The extent of the bay and/or the beach may need to be confirmed by the Napier City Council.</p>
New Zealand Gazetteer , associated names, and duplication	<p>Breakwater Harbour (and its alternative name Port of Napier) is next to and east of the proposal and may cause confusion as both are for 'bay' features. Their different generic terms (Bay and Harbour) may not be sufficient to differentiate them.</p> <p>To avoid confusion, it would be better for Breakwater Harbour to be discontinued as it is alternatively named Port of Napier. The council would be able to advise which name is more commonly used and known.</p>
Research, history and references – for Breakwater Bay	<p>The bay was formed by the enlargement of port facilities in the 1970s and construction of the large flat western loading docks and storage area, based on aerial photos. The additional westernmost and small breakwater that has accumulated sand (making it an attractive recreational beach), was built sometime between 1974-1979 (based on aerial photos).</p> <p>The area of the proposed Breakwater Bay is owned by Port Napier, which has allowed public use, and has installed some public facilities.⁵</p>

⁴ <https://www.lawa.org.nz/explore-data/hawkes-bay-region/swimming/port-sandy-beach/swimsite>

⁵ <https://www.napierport.co.nz/community/stay-safe-around-the-port/#1517357434210-c3bec5aa-d9d6>

'Port Sandy Beach' is promoted by Hawke's Bay Tourism.⁶

For Breakwater
Harbour and
Port of Napier

The formation of the original breakwater barrier for the outer and inner harbours began in 1880s^{7,8,9}. The name clearly started off just as a description: 'the breakwater harbour',¹⁰ quickly transitioning to a place name 'Breakwater Harbour'.¹¹ This was then published on official hydrographic charts and referred to in the *New Zealand Pilot*.

Admiralty Chart NZ 2513 (1916 ed.) recorded 'Napier Harbour (Breakwater Harbour)', which became just Breakwater Harbour on Chart NZ 2513-A (1929).

Port of Napier was possibly first recorded on the street map NZMS 17 Napier (1962). The first edition in 1953 showed 'Napier Harbour'. While not shown on the topographic NZMS 1 series (1942-1977), Port of Napier was later published on the subsequent NZMS 260 on V21 in 1981.

Port of Napier Limited is the legal name of the company that otherwise brands itself 'Port Napier'. Port Napier do not appear to use the existing recorded name 'Breakwater Harbour', except when they republish Toitū Te Whenua LINZ hydrographic charts (and other third-party publications). They also do not appear to refer to 'Port of Napier', for the harbour itself, but it would be difficult to separate results for the bay from the name of the business. In its documents, management plans, resource consents, etc. they just refer to 'the breakwater', 'the harbour', 'the inner harbour', etc.

Consultation
with iwi

The proposer wrote to Mana Ahuriri Trust but had not received any response. On 10 March 2026 the Secretariat emailed three mana whenua¹² groups seeking whether the bay has an original Māori name or whether they wish to suggest a contemporary Māori name.

As at mid-April 2026, the Secretariat had not received any responses.

Consultation
with others

The proposer has not consulted with others who might have an interest in the proposal, such as the port authority, the Napier City Council, NZ Rail, a local historical society, etc.

On 10 March 2026 the Secretariat emailed the Napier City Council seeking any feedback on the proposal.

As at mid-April 2026, the Secretariat had not received any response.

Orthographic
advice

If an original or other Māori name is supported by the Board, then orthographic advice will be sought.

[Standard for
New Zealand
place names](#)
criteria

1.1 Acceptable names

(e) Descriptive names that characterise shape, colour, composition or other distinguishing features, provided that they are not too general and do not need to be explained.

⁶ <https://www.hawkesbaynz.com/visit/us/port-sandy-beach>

⁷ <https://teara.govt.nz/en/photograph/5993/napier-breakwater>

⁸ <https://www.knowledgebank.org.nz/text/magazine-article-the-napier-breakwater/>

⁹ <https://www.napierport.co.nz/our-business/our-history/>

¹⁰ [THE NAPIER HARBOUR LOAN](#). *Auckland Star*, Issue 243, 11 October 1892, Page 5

¹¹ [Page 3 Advertisements Column 5](#), *Daily Telegraph (Napier)*, Issue 7511, 4 November 1895, Page 3

¹² Te Taiwhenua o Te Whanganui-a-Orotū Inc, Mana Ahuriri Trust, Heretaunga Tamatea - Tamatea Pōkai Whenua

1.3 Undesirable names and other considerations

- (b) New names should be distinctive and preferably unique. Qualifying words, such as Upper, West and Right Branch, or generic terms, may be used to distinguish between associated features with the same specific name.
- (d) A name that already exists in a neighbouring area or is already in use throughout New Zealand should be avoided except where the story/kōrero explains the unique heritage and meaning(s) of the name. This avoids confusion and makes it easier to identify the correct place in an emergency. However, associated names with different generic terms are allowed.
- (h) Minor features or places of low importance or physical significance should not be named.

The proposed name duplicates the specific part 'Breakwater' and is a similar feature to the adjacent Breakwater Harbour, a name in long term use. The different generic term 'bay' may not be enough to avoid confusion.

1.4 Generic terms

- (a) A generic term should accurately describe the type of feature being named.

Concerns or issues for emergency services

The proposer suggests that officially naming the bay may save lives, as people and emergency services could more easily find the safe swimming bay. Drownings are apparently regular at Napier, with the council warning particularly against swimming at Marine Parade.¹³

Media

There may be some media attention given the popularity of the bay for safe swimming.

Cost implications

If Breakwater Bay (or another proposed name) becomes official, Toitū Te Whenua LINZ may show it on maps and/or charts for this area (depending on scale), in the normal course of updating versions. So, any costs would be absorbed as part of everyday maintenance.

Signs may be erected by the Napier City Council, but they would be at their discretion to erect. Any mapping by the Napier City Council could also include the official name for the bay, so there would be some costs involved, but again absorbed through everyday maintenance.

Supporting information

1. Proposal for Breakwater Bay – 10 January 2026
2. Email to three mana whenua groups – 10 March 2026
3. Email to Napier City Council – 10 March 2026

¹³ <https://www.napier.govt.nz/napier/community-development/community-safety/keeping-people-safe-in-napier/water-safety/>