



NZGB Report: New Zealand Geographic Board Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa proposal to alter 'Wanganui' to 'Whanganui': summary of submissions and the Board's decision

Date:	12 October 2009	Priority: High
Security Level:	IN-CONFIDENCE	

Purpose:	To report to the Minister for Land Information on the 'Wanganui' to 'Whanganui' name change proposal, with a summary of submissions and the Board's decision on the proposal together with reasons, and to seek the Minister's final determination.
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Action Sought

Deadline

Action Sought		Deadline
Minister for Land Information	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Note the submitted proposal, the supporting evidence, the Board's consideration of this proposal and the submissions, the processes followed, the options considered by the Board, and the Board's decision, with reasons. 2 Make any inquiry as you think fit. 3 Confirm, Modify, or Reject the Board's decision. 4 Note your determination on this proposal is final. 	None

Dr Don Grant (Chairperson) on behalf of the New Zealand Geographic Board Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa

Date: / /

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Appendices:

- A. Options considered by the Board with associated effects
- B. Examples of previous Board and Minister's decisions

Attachments:

1. Process flowchart
2. Original proposal from Te Rūnanga o Tupoho, submitted by law firm, McCaw Lewis Chapman
3. Summary reports by the Secretary for Board meetings of 27 March 2009 and 16 September 2009
4. Correspondence from the Wanganui District Council
5. Minutes of the Board's meeting of 27 March 2009 (Minutes for the Board's meeting of 16 September not yet available)
6. New Zealand *Gazette* 2009 page 1498 – proposal to alter 'Wanganui' to 'Whanganui'
7. Submissions received – opposing, supporting, neutral
8. Additional correspondence received outside the submission period
9. Summaries of the submissions
10. Research, early records, references
11. Correspondence from Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori (the Māori Language Commission)
12. New Zealand Geographic Board (Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa) Act 2008 (the Act)
13. Whanganui River – report to Minister, dated 12 March 1991

Executive summary

- At its meeting on 16 September 2009, the New Zealand Geographic Board Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa (the Board) confirmed its decision to alter the city name of 'Wanganui' to 'Whanganui'.
- You are now required to make a final determination on the name change proposal (section 20 of the New Zealand Geographic Board (Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa) Act 2008 (the Act)). This is because the Board received submissions objecting to the proposal and did not uphold those objections.
- The Board now provides you with a summary of all submissions (objecting, supporting, neutral), together with its decision on this proposal, and reasons. The Board also advises you of the processes to be followed under the Act, and the options available for you to consider, noting that these do not limit your powers to consider any other possible options and outcomes and make your own determination.
- You may make further inquiries as you think fit.
- You may choose to confirm, modify, or reject the Board's decision and your determination is final.
- Public notification of your final determination will be published by the Board in the *New Zealand Gazette*, in nationally and locally circulated news publications, and on the LINZ website.

Board's decision

- Under section 18 of the Act, the Board, at its meeting of 16 September 2009, considered all of the submissions (objecting, supporting, neutral) as well as other correspondence received outside the submission period and additional research material that is relevant to the proposal to change the recorded name¹ of 'Wanganui' to an official name² of 'Whanganui'.
- The matters raised by objectors were acknowledged but not upheld by the Board. The Board decided to accept the proposal to alter the name of 'Wanganui' to 'Whanganui' principally on the grounds of correct spelling and orthographic representation of Te Reo Māori.
- The Board's decision is to alter the name of 'Wanganui' to 'Whanganui', with a transitional period recommended of not less than 12 months during which time both 'Wanganui' and 'Whanganui' can be used.

Principal reason for the Board's decision

- The principal reason for the Board's decision is on the grounds of correct spelling and orthographic representation of Te Reo Māori. The 12 month minimum transition period is an 'as soon as practicable period' and will ensure that costs are kept down for those affected.

¹ Recorded name is defined in section 4 of the Act.

² Official name is defined in section 4 of the Act.

Other reasons for the Board's decision

The reasons for the Board's support for the change were that:

- the Board could not overlook the fact that 'Wanganui' is incorrectly spelt and it is a Māori name that is of significant cultural importance,
- historical evidence has shown that early settlers clearly intended the name of the city to be derived from the Māori name for the river, and consistent modern usage of the language showed the spelling should be 'Whanganui', not 'Wanganui',
- the advice of Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori (the Māori Language Commission) was that the spelling of 'Wanganui' is incorrect,
- the word 'Whanganui' has meaning, but 'Wanganui' does not,
- the fact that the issue of correct spelling dates back to the 1840s and has been raised repeatedly since then,
- evidence of the use of the 'h' in early historical records and continuing use to this day,
- the time has now come to correct the name,
- the anomaly between the name of the river (the change to the river's name was confirmed by the Minister in 1991) and the name of the city is an issue which keeps arising and change is inevitable at some time,
- many organisations and businesses are already using 'Whanganui',
- iwi from the region strongly support the change,
- the pronunciation of the name need not change and is, in any event, not the issue being considered by the Board, and
- the effect on emergency services and postal delivery will not be adverse, as these agencies are already dealing with usage of both names in spelling and pronunciation.

Purpose

- 1 The purpose of this report is to meet the requirements of section 20 of the New Zealand Geographic Board (Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa) Act 2008 (the Act) to assist you in your determination on the Board's proposal to change the city name of 'Wanganui' to 'Whanganui'.

Why you are required to make this decision

- 2 Under section 4 of the Act, the Board has naming jurisdiction over city names. Section 4 defines 'geographic feature' as including 'a place' and defines 'place' as including a city. The Board has jurisdiction to carry out its functions in relation to geographic features within New Zealand. Those functions include assigning an official geographic name for a geographic feature and altering an official geographic name or recorded name by substituting another name or correcting the spelling of a name.
- 3 850 formal submissions were received as a result of the public notification of this proposal. Under the Act, if there is one or more objection to a proposal, and the Board does not uphold any of those objections, the final decision is made by the Minister for Land Information.
- 4 The Board considered the objecting submissions under section 18 of the Act, and did not uphold any of those objections. Therefore, the Board was not empowered to make a final determination under section 19(1) of the Act.
- 5 When unable to make a final determination under section 19 of the Act, the Board must, under section 20 of the Act, report in writing to you, setting out a summary of all of the submissions received for the proposal, and advise you of its decision on the proposal, together with the reasons for that decision.
- 6 Under sections 20(2) and 20(3) of the Act, you may make any inquiry that you think fit, then you may confirm, modify, or reject the Board's decision, and your determination will be final.
- 7 Details of the process for assigning, altering, discontinuing, and approving official geographic names, are outlined in the flow chart in Attachment 1.

Process to date

- 8 The process for assigning, altering, discontinuing, or approving a geographic name, as set out in the Act, generally begins with a proposal being made to the Board. The Board, which usually meets twice a year, may decide to:
- defer the proposal for further information, research, or consultation; or
 - decline to make the change proposed; or
 - accept the proposal for notification.
- 9 Once a proposal is accepted, the decision is publicly notified. This provides the public with an opportunity to make submissions within a specified notification period of not less than one month. Submissions must be in writing and must state, with reasons, whether the person supports or objects to the proposal. An objecting submission may also provide an alternative name, or support an existing name, if any.

Proposal submitted by iwi

- 10 The submitter for this proposal is Te Rūnanga o Tupoho, who sought to correct the spelling for the name of the city of 'Wanganui' to 'Whanganui' and make 'Whanganui' the official geographic name. Note that the proposal is not related to the name of the territorial authority district. Tupoho are the tangata whenua and have support from neighbouring iwi. The law firm McCaw Lewis Chapman submitted the proposal on behalf of Te Rūnanga o Tupoho. The proposal is included in Attachment 2 and covers:
- i. the view that the logical next step, after correcting the river name in 1991, is to correct the name for the city, which takes its name from the river,
 - ii. early evidence of the intended spelling as 'Whanganui',
 - iii. Waitangi Tribunal briefs of evidence by three separate claimant groups, and
 - iv. evidence of local and growing usage of 'Whanganui' as the spelling used by organisations and businesses in the city.

The submitter also provided:

- i. a written submission by Te Kenehi Mair on behalf of Te Rūnanga o Tupoho and Te Iwi o Whanganui,
- ii. a consultation/communication report,
- iii. a cultural report prepared by Che Wilson,
- iv. an historical report prepared by Bruce Stirling,
- v. a Statement of Evidence by Rangi Wills (a current Wanganui Councillor) that was filed as part of the Wai 999/Te Poho o Matapihi hearings before the Waitangi Tribunal, and
- vi. two historical maps referring to the town as Whanganui.

Board meeting 27 March 2009

- 11 The Board first considered the proposal on 27 March 2009. After considerable discussion, the Board acknowledged there was merit in the case that the correct spelling be 'Whanganui' and agreed to notify the proposal to alter the city name of 'Wanganui' to 'Whanganui' under section 16 of the Act.
- 12 A summary report, set out in Attachment 3, brought together the Board's key discussion points. The Board thoroughly considered matters such as:
- orthography³ and pronunciation,
 - standardised te reo Māori spelling,
 - the views of the Wanganui District Council following an 8 to 5 vote by Council (see Attachment 4),
 - general community views expressed through the results of the Council's 2006 referendum,
 - advice from Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori (the Māori Language Commission) (see Attachment 11),
 - historical and long term usage,
 - the Treaty of Waitangi claim currently being heard by the Waitangi Tribunal,
 - the early name for the town given after the river and the fact that the river name was corrected to Whanganui in 1991 when the Minister confirmed the recommendation of the Board,
 - options for alternative or dual naming,
 - options for deferral,
 - timing,
 - the unofficial status of the existing name of 'Wanganui',
 - the Board's statutory obligations, and
 - the Board's policies and guidelines developed over many years.

Minutes of the Board's discussion are under Attachment 5.

³ The linguistic term for a writing system that represents the sounds or words of a particular language, using correct or standardised spelling according to established usage.

13 The following is a resolution from the minutes of the Board's meeting of 27 March 2009:

The Board:

1. **accepts** the proposal to change the spelling of 'Wanganui' to 'Whanganui', based chiefly on the Board's statutory functions:
 - to examine the spelling of place names;
 - to collect original Māori place names;
 - to encourage the use of original Māori place names; and
 - to seek advice from Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori (the Māori Language Commission) on Māori place name orthography.
2. **notes** the decision is also based on the fact that tangata whenua and many iwi from the region strongly support the change; that many other people support the change (though they are a minority); and many other organisations now use 'Whanganui' in their business names.
3. **proceeds** to publish in the *New Zealand Gazette* and publicly notify as a Board proposal, for a period of not less than 3 months. The Board will determine which newspapers or publications to notify in.
4. **recognises** that submissions objecting to such a proposal that are not upheld by the Board would result in the final determination being made by the Minister for Land Information.

Resolution

The Board, in noting that it has a function to investigate/consider the correct spelling of original Māori names, and that there is a valid case made to change the spelling of the name of the city, and that the public should be given an opportunity to make their views known directly to the Board, resolves to proceed to publicly notify for a period of 3 months, the proposal to correct the spelling from 'Wanganui' to 'Whanganui'.

Public consultation

- 14 On 14 May 2009, the Board notified the proposal to alter 'Wanganui' to 'Whanganui' in accordance with section 16 of the Act. Consultation seeking the views of New Zealanders began on 14 May 2009 and concluded on 17 August 2009, with written submissions being sought in support of or objecting to the proposal. Refer to the New Zealand *Gazette* 2009, page 1498, set out in Attachment 6.
- 15 A summary of the submissions is provided from paragraph 22 below.

Board meeting 16 September 2009

- 16 At this meeting, the Board considered the matters raised by all submitters, correspondents, and additional research obtained by or made available to the Board.
- 17 The summary report (Attachment 3) prepared for the Board brought together the key discussion points. All relevant matters were thoroughly considered.
- 18 The Board acknowledged the opposition and the depth of feeling and debate that has surfaced. However, in weighing up all of the evidence, submissions, research, and its own policies and guidelines, the Board unanimously agreed to accept the proposal that the spelling should be corrected by assigning the name 'Whanganui'. This would meet the Board's statutory functions to:
- examine the spelling of place names,
 - seek advice from Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori (the Māori Language Commission) on Māori place name orthography,
 - collect original Māori place names, and
 - encourage the use of original Māori place names.

Decision on the proposal

Resolutions

19 The following is the Board's resulting resolution, made at the meeting on 16 September 2009:

Resolution 1:

Noting

1. the high level of public interest expressed in all of the submissions, and
2. the history and long term usage of the current spelling, while also

taking account

of its statutory functions and policies,

the Board resolved to

1. reject all objecting submissions in terms of section 18(1)(b) of the New Zealand Geographic Board (Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa) Act 2008,
2. confirm its decision to change the spelling of the city name from 'Wanganui' to 'Whanganui', and
3. report its decision to the Minister of Land Information in terms of section 20(1) of the New Zealand Geographic Board (Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa) Act 2008, in order to seek a final determination from the Minister in terms of sections 20(2) and 20(3) of the New Zealand Geographic Board (Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa) Act 2008,

based

principally on the grounds of correct spelling and orthographic representation of Te Reo Māori.

Resolution 2:

The Board further resolves

1. that there should be a transitional period of not less than 12 months, and
2. that the *Gazette* notice shall provide for either name, 'Wanganui' or 'Whanganui', to be used during the transition period.

Alternative options considered

- 20 The Board considered several options when making its decision to change the spelling of the city name from 'Wanganui' to 'Whanganui' (see Appendix A). The Board did not support any of the following options:
- status quo
 - status quo with a review period after a set period of time
 - decline 'Whanganui' and make 'Wanganui' the official name
 - accept 'Whanganui' without a transition period
 - accept a dual name, 'Whanganui' / 'Wanganui'
 - accept alternative names – both as official names, 'Whanganui' or 'Wanganui'
 - accept 'Whanganui' as an official name but with 'Wanganui' as a permitted alternative spelling
 - accept a completely different name, for example some objectors suggested Petre, The River City, Lawsland.
- 21 While assigning two official names with slightly different spellings was considered as a compromise, the Board rejected this as an option. The Board's view was that adopting the correct spelling of the official geographic name with a transition period to minimise compliance costs would best meet its statutory functions.

Summary of submissions and other correspondence

Submissions received on the proposal

22 850 submissions were received for this proposal during the three month public notification period, under section 17 of the Act.

23 The following statistics indicate the breakdown of submissions:

During the 3-month public notification period of 14 May to 17 August 2009:

Number of objecting submissions	417
Number of supporting submissions	429
Number of neutral submissions	4
Total number of submissions	850

24 Copies of all submissions are provided Attachment 7. Summaries of the submissions are provided in Attachment 9.

25 In addition, a number of items of correspondence were received by the Board before and after the 3 month submission period. These were made available to Board members but are not formally considered to be submissions and are not included in the totals in paragraph 23 above or the summary of submissions. Copies of the additional correspondence received before and after the submission period are under Attachment 8.

26 The following is a summary of the reasons given in the objecting submissions:

Long time residency
Cost factor - public documents/personal/business/taxpayers
Excessive political correctness
No written language for te reo Māori pre-colonisation
Anti-Māori sentiment
Common/Historical long term use (locally/nationally/internationally)
Confusion with Whangarei
Support of referendum (democracy)/referenda ignored
Not a te reo Māori word
Pronunciation/Dialectical - would be pronounced incorrectly
Wanganui is correct transcription of dialect
Bureaucracy - Board has no mandate
Wanganui/born there/local issue
Sets a precedent for other renaming
Against change
Causes division in the community
Concentrate on more important social issues
Original Māori name preserved in river - no need to change city name
Intimidation of European New Zealanders
Not wanting to assimilate into standard te reo Māori
City is not a significant geographical feature
No proof in records

Well-established in branding & marketing
Need to change computer software
Sounds were transcribed as they were heard
Against majority wishes
The Treaty makes all people British
Change is racist
Documentation - birth/marriage/death certificates
No historical basis/valid reason
Wanganui built by Pākeha for Pākeha - so Pākeha should decide
Anti-Board sentiment
Duplication - Taupo/Waikato regions
Pandering to cultural/vocal minority
Language change
Correct spelling/spelling reflects dialect/historically correct
Too many Māori names
Anglicised version
Endonym ⁴ transliteration/exonym ⁵
Loss of heritage/identity threatened/honoured/proud to be European
Causes confusion
Supports view of mayor
Not convenient
Does not need to mean anything
Chosen by colonial forefathers
Politically motivated
River should be changed back
Unique name
No proof of land ownership by Māori settlers
Name already widely known
Alternative name
Historical oddity
Oppose change by radicals/activists
Wanganui has meaning

27 The following is a summary of the reasons given in the supporting submissions:

Honouring Treaty obligations
Respect for tangata whenua mana/support for local iwi
It is the correct spelling - corrects spelling mistake/historically correct
Oral history from tūpuna/honours legacy and culture
Supporting documentation/early evidence [h]
Long term use of [h]
Anti-Pākeha sentiment
River/National Park and city name should be consistent
Right of Māori to determine correct spelling
Dialectical - W(h)anganui Māori don't pronounce [h] distinct mita
Whanganui has meaning
Supports/preserves historical and cultural heritage

⁴ An endonym is a geographical feature name in an official or well-established language occurring in that area where the feature is situated, eg Roma.

⁵ An exonym is name used in a specific language for a geographical feature, situated outside the area where that language is widely spoken, and differing in its form from the respective endonym(s) in the area where the geographical feature is situated, eg Rome.

Original Māori name
Double standard - English place names are corrected but not Māori place names
Cost should not be imperative
Preserve uniqueness of te reo Māori
Encourages racial harmony
Te reo Māori is an official language (Māori Language Act 1989)/taonga
Referendum is an abuse of democracy/biased/divisive
Colonisers changed place names without consultation with Māori
NZGB Act 2008 s 11(e) & s 11(f) - encourage use of Māori place names
NZGB Act 2008 s 3(e) - recognition of values associated with geographic features
English is not ultimate authority of language
Area named before European settlement
Name intended to be known by native name not English appellation
Documented through whakapapa, moteatea and academic research
Misspelled the way it was heard
Current name has no meaning/is incorrect
Mayor is insensitive and/or lacks insight
It's a matter of spelling not pronunciation
Rights historical wrongs
Te Rūnanga o Tupoho possess rangatiratanga over their reo
Majority threatened by/stifles minority
Spelling/pronunciation correlation
Incorrect long term usage of Wanganui
Sufficient evidence produced for proof of original name
Opposing correction lacks respect for or insults Māori/culturally insensitive
Correct way to say/spell word
Websites need multiple domain names
Two spellings cause confusion
Gives Māori identity
Historical research is biased

28 The following is a summary of the reasons given in the neutral submissions:

Both spellings be optional as in Taranaki/Egmont
Leave open and optional
Favours compromise
Make both versions right

29 A small number of objecting submissions sought alternatives, eg Petrie (sic), Petre, Whanganui, The River City, Wanganui/W'anganui, Wanganui/Whanganui, Lawsland, Fonganui, Waenganui, and W'anganui. Some of the objecting submissions recorded their formal support for the existing name of Wanganui.

Analysis

Board's analysis of objection and support

- 30 The arguments and opinions from the objectors have been grouped under the following common headings:

Objectors' reasons	Comment from the Board
Long-term usage of Wanganui & long time residency	This is a very relevant factor which was carefully considered by the Board. Changes to long-established usage are not made lightly. However, such changes are made in some circumstances. The most notable example being the change from Mount Egmont to the alternative names of Mount Taranaki or Mount Egmont. This was strongly opposed by many at the time but the name Mount Taranaki is now widely accepted. The usage of 'Whanganui' is also part of the historic record although less common than 'Wanganui'. The spelling with an 'h' is slowly increasing following the change to the name of the river which was confirmed by the Minister in 1991.
Pronunciation/spelling/meaning: - Māori is oral language - local dialect	Pronunciation is relevant only in that it explains how the current spelling came about in the 19th century. The Board has a function [s 11(1)(b)] to examine cases of doubtful spelling. The Board also has a function [s 11(1)(f)] to seek advice from Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori (the Māori Language Commission) on the orthography of Māori names.
Wanganui has become a distinct part of Pākeha/European heritage	This is a very relevant factor which was carefully considered by the Board. The early settlers petitioned for a change from the English name of 'Petre' to the Māori name of the river in 1844. At that time there were two forms of spelling in use – 'Wanganui' and 'Whanganui'.
City different to river and region	The river and the city are different 'places' and their names do have different histories. However, an important factor in the Board's decision is the clear intention of the early settlers, in their 1844 petition, to reject an English name for their town and replace it with the original Māori name of the river.

Objectors' reasons	Comment from the Board
<p>Cost:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - signage and branding - computer software 	<p>No submissions provided any estimates or details of such costs. Nevertheless, this is a very relevant factor which was carefully considered by the Board. The Board has addressed this through its recommendation of a minimum period of transition.</p>
<p>Impact on legal records, eg birth certificates</p>	<p>The official name applies to new or revised publications. There is no requirement for retrospective amendments and so these records remain valid without change.</p>
<p>Postal issues</p>	<p>New Zealand Post is currently delivering mail where the address states 'Whanganui' or 'Wanganui'. This will continue if the name of the city is changed. Misdirected mail amongst the towns and cities with names starting 'Whanga...' may occur from time to time. The increasing use of postcodes should reduce this likelihood in the future.</p>
<p>Duplication/confusion with other names</p>	<p>There are other 'Wanganui' related names but none are significant towns or cities. There are other towns with names starting 'Whanga...' but confusion amongst these does not seem to be a significant problem. Confusion also arises from the subtle difference in spelling between the river and the city and the fact that several organisations including government agencies have adopted the spelling of the river.</p>
<p>Board has no mandate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provincial Council Act - locals should decide 	<p>The mandate of the Board is clear under the Act. The naming of the city by Act of the Provincial Council no longer has legal standing but is relevant in terms of history. The name 'Wanganui' is not an official name under the New Zealand Geographic Board Act 2008.</p>
<p>Referendum</p>	<p>Many submissions referred to the results of the 2006 and 2009 referenda – notably that of the Wanganui District Council. The referendum is relevant as an indication of public usage of, and support for, the current name. The votes for and against do not count as submissions to the Board. The Act requires submissions to be accompanied by reasons. This does not happen with votes in a referendum. An unknown number of the votes may have been cast for reasons that are not relevant to the Board's decision.</p>

Objectors' reasons	Comment from the Board
Democracy	The Board decision is made in accordance with its statutory functions, policies, and standards. Where the Board's decision to change a name is opposed, the final decision is made by the Minister of the democratically elected government.
Precedent for other names	This is a relevant factor which was carefully considered by the Board. The Board considered previous decisions to change the names of settled places (suburbs and localities rather than cities). The Board also considered whether this would set a precedent for future decisions that the Board would not be comfortable with. The extent to which a decision may act as a precedent in future decisions depends on whether the circumstances relating to that decision are the same or similar. The Board is not aware of any other significant towns or cities in the same situation as Wanganui – named after a feature such as a river, but spelt differently to that feature.
Questioning the proof and records that use the 'h'	The Board has extensive documentary proof of both forms of spelling – from the original proposal and additional material provided in correspondence with the Board or uncovered through Board research.
Division in community	Not relevant to the Board's consideration. These divisions are of long standing and would not be resolved by retaining the status quo either.
General opposition to change: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - political correctness - unnecessary - more important issues to address 	Not relevant to the Board's consideration. The Board is expected to consider the merits of any proposals put before it in terms of its statutory functions, policies, and standards.
General opposition to Māori: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - oppose activists - oppose Māori names 	Not relevant to the Board's consideration. The Board is expected to consider the merits of any proposals put before it in terms of its statutory functions, policies, and standards. The Board has functions relating to Māori names.
Personal support for the Mayor of Wanganui (Michael Laws)	The Board seeks the views of the Territorial Authority and gives careful consideration to those views. However, support or opposition by others for the Mayor is not of itself a consideration for the Board.

Objectors' reasons	Comment from the Board
Personal opposition to the spokesperson for the proposer (Ken Mair)	Not relevant to the Board's consideration. The Board is expected to consider the merits of any proposals put before it in terms of its statutory functions, policies, and standards – regardless of who makes the proposal or speaks for it.

- 31 The arguments and opinions from the supporters have been grouped under the following common headings:

Supporter's reasons	Comment from the Board
Spelling/pronunciation/standardised language	The Board also has a function (s 11(1)(f)) to seek advice from Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori (the Māori Language Commission) on the orthography of Māori names. Their advice that 'Whanganui' is the correct spelling was a reason for the Board's decision
Board functions	The main functions of the Board that are relevant in this case are those of examining cases of doubtful spelling and seeking advice from Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori (the Māori Language Commission). The Board also has functions to collect and encourage the use of original Māori names. The latter functions apply only indirectly due to the name of the city being adopted following a petition from the early settlers. The original Māori name in this case is the name of the river which has already been corrected in 1991.
Early documentary evidence	While early usage of 'Wanganui' was more common than 'Whanganui', the evidence of both spellings from an early date, combined with the more recently corrected name for the river, was a contributing reason for the Board's decision.
Reflects intent of early settlers/part of Pakeha history too	It was the clear intent of the early settlers in the 1844 petition to replace the English name of Petre with the original Māori name of the river.
Align with river name and other names for consistency	The early intent of the settlers to name the town after the river was a factor in the Board's decision. Although the city and the river can be named separately, in practice the intent of the early settlers was for the name of the town to be consistent with the name of the river.

Supporter's reasons	Comment from the Board
Treaty obligations, including protection of Māori language, culture and heritage	In relation to the Treaty of Waitangi, the Board has functions to collect and encourage the use of original Māori names. Those functions have been exercised for the name of the river in 1991. They apply indirectly to the name of the city due to it having been adopted by petition of the early settlers to be the same as the river.
Māori history of name	This aspect relates more to the name of the river than of the city. However the two are related due to the early intent to name the town after the river.
Name has meaning with the 'h'	This aspect relates more to the name of the river than of the city. However the two are related due to the early intent to name the town after the river.
Cost should not be imperative	Cost is relevant to the Board's decision and was the main reason for recommending a transition period of at least 12 months.
Not an issue that majority should decide	The Board weighs up arguments in terms of its statutory functions, policies, and standards. While a majority view is not an overriding criteria, public usage of the name is relevant and a majority view may be indicative of public usage.
Correct historical wrongs	The Board's responsibilities are confined to place names — in this case the spelling of a city name derived from the name of the river. At the time the name was requested by early settlers by petition, the question of right and wrong spelling was much less clear than it is now.
Will eventually encourage racial harmony	This is not a responsibility of the Board.
Respect for tangata whenua	The Board must respect all aspects of New Zealand's culture and heritage – not only those of tangata whenua.
Opposition to the Mayor or Pakeha in general	Not relevant to the Board's consideration

Other considerations

Other information

- 32 In addition to the submissions, the Board took account of the research completed by Bruce Stirling (submitted with proposal), Diana Beaglehole (historian commissioned by the Wanganui District Council) and Dr Phil Parkinson (Librarian, Alexander Turnbull Library), and other historical records and references. Refer to Attachment 10.
- 33 The Board considered every submission and item of correspondence received since its meeting on 27 March 2009 including, as further information, correspondence received by the Minister which was forwarded to the Board.
- 34 The Board noted in particular the submissions from the Wanganui District Council (see Attachment 4) and the Human Rights Commission (see Attachment 7), as well as the outcome of the Council's 2009 referendum.
- 35 The Wanganui District Council confirmed that it does not want the spelling of Wanganui changed to 'Whanganui', preferring to preserve the status quo option. The reasons provided in their submission are summarised as:
- upholding democracy
 - common usage
 - the community's choice
 - pronunciation
- 36 The Human Rights Commission stated its preference is that the spelling of 'Whanganui' be adopted as the official name, but identified a range of options for resolving the naming debate:
- preserve the status quo
 - preserve the status quo but review within a specified time frame, for example five years
 - approve a dual name as Wanganui/Whanganui
 - approve an alternative name, so people can use either 'Wanganui' or 'Whanganui'
 - change the name as part of a future Treaty settlement in the area
 - change the name now.
- 37 The 2009 referendum outcome attracted votes from 61% of the registered population (over 19,000 voters) and the results were as follows:
- 77% preferred that the city and district be spelt as 'Wanganui'
 - 22% preferred the name change to 'Whanganui'
 - 1% informal/blank

History of this naming debate

38 The following is a time line summary of this naming debate:

• Pre-1840	three oral histories for Whanganui: Kupe, Haunui, and the modern interpretation of the large river mouth
• 1837	first European settlement, named Wanganui
• 1840s	Rev. Richard Taylor: promulgation of Wanganui
• 1842	Governor proclaimed a change to Petre
• 1844	petition to name the town after the river, Wanganui
• 1854	Wanganui Act changed Petre back to Wanganui
• Up to 1900	Wanganui mostly commonly used, but use of Whanganui also recorded
• 1902	Mayor lobbied for Whanganui, but defeated by the majority of Councillors
• 1912	Rev. Herbert Williams Dictionary: Whanganui
• 1925	Rev. Henry Fletcher Index: Whanganui
• 1938	petition to Council to change to Whanganui (rejected)
• 1954	Bruce Biggs ⁶ commented on dialectical difference

Claims before the Waitangi Tribunal

39 The following points have been considered by the Board in reference to the claims currently being heard by the Waitangi Tribunal:

- The submitters also currently have a claim before the Waitangi Tribunal relating to the spelling of 'Whanganui'.
- The Waitangi Tribunal will be hearing through to next year, and the report will not be available for two years.
- One of the Board's members is sitting on the Tribunal hearing these claims. This was noted by the Board but not considered by the Chairperson to be a conflict of interest for the Board that this member would be hearing some of the same material as a member of two bodies – and furthermore that if there was any perceived conflict it was sufficiently managed by being declared.

⁶ Emeritus professor and leader in linguistics, with notable publications: Structure of New Zealand Māori (1961), English-Māori Dictionary (1966), and Let's Learn Māori (1969).

Culture and heritage

- 40 Under the purpose section 3(e) of the Act, the Act must provide the means for appropriate recognition to be accorded to cultural and heritage values associated with geographic features.
- 41 The correct meaning for the name 'Whanganui' is: the long wait, one meaning of 'whanga' being 'to wait'. This conceptual naming is associated with the Kupe history, when he explored the interior and left a contingent at the estuary.
- 42 There is also an oral history account that relates to the Ngāti Apa ancestor, Haunui, again referring to the long wait for the tide to change so that he could cross the river in pursuit of his wife.
- 43 A third common but non-'Whanganui' version, which has gained more recent prominence, is the meaning 'big harbour or bay' – referring to the river's large mouth, subject to tidal change and influence.
- 44 The word 'Wanganui' has no meaning to the tangata whenua of this place. And the application of the word 'Whanganui' to the area of the river mouth is location-specific, ie it is a name that was first given at the river mouth (whether by Kupe or Haunui) and so was subsequently applied to the whole length of the river.
- 45 The Board was mindful of the arguments that the word 'Wanganui', though originally named after the river, had nevertheless taken on its own culture and heritage. It is this heritage relating to the name of the city, as distinct from the name of the river, that many objectors seek to preserve.
- 46 After weighing up these cultural and heritage views, the Board noted the fact that the early settlers clearly intended their town to take the Māori name of the river. The historical accounts – by Stirling, Parkinson and Beaglehole – show that at that time, there was considerable debate and doubt about the correct way to spell Māori words. Of the two main options available to them in 1844 – these early settlers in their petition chose the version which most closely reflected the local dialect. This was not a 'mistake' at that time as there was no authority on spelling Māori names. However, it now differs from the spelling of the river as a result of the Minister's determination in 1991 to confirm the decision of the Board to rename the river as 'Whanganui'.

Orthography and pronunciation

- 47 Questions of pronunciation of Te Reo Māori, and particularly the pronunciation of the local dialect, is a common cause of discussion. It is not correct to say that the 'h' is silent. The Whanganui River tribes tend to use the soft /f/ variant of [wh] (as in 'fish'), whereas their neighbours of Southern Taranaki tend to the 'pre-aspirated' [h]. The latter is similar to the subtle distinction that some English speakers make between the words 'where' and 'wear'.
- 48 The Board's mandate does not run to pronunciation. Its functions are directed to questions of spelling and orthography and the correct application and recording of place names. In following that mandate the Board must rely on a range of authoritative sources and scholarship. In particular, the Board's functions include seeking advice from Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori (the Māori Language Commission).
- 49 The letter from Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori (the Māori Language Commission) of 3 March 2009 was noted, in particular: "The word 'Whanganui' is a compound word made of the words 'whanga' and 'nui'. There is no such word as 'wanga' in the Māori lexicon. The convention is that however a word is said, its standard form is written to convey meaning and it is widely accepted that 'whanga' is written with an 'h'. How people choose to represent it orally is a separate issue."
- 50 Pronunciation is a separate issue and not what the Board rules on. Different individuals will pronounce the name differently and many are likely to continue the current pronunciation regardless of the recommended change in spelling.

Compliance

- 51 Section 32(1) of the Act (which comes into force on 1 November 2009) specifies that official names must be used on official documents. This does not apply to documents already published or reprinted, like maps and brochures, but it will apply to any new or revised editions, or new publications.
- 52 However, there is a proviso under section 32(2) of the Act, which permits a non-official name to be used in an official document, provided it is stated that the particular name is not official. This means that 'Wanganui' could continue to be used indefinitely, if that need satisfies a business requirement or principle.
- 53 The following are expected to change if the Board's decision is confirmed (noting the proviso in section 32(2) and also the recommended transition period):
- the name of the city on new publications of maps – most notably those produced by LINZ,
 - addresses of businesses and residences in the city,
 - road signs on highways leading to the city,
 - transport services where the city is a destination, and
 - tourist brochures referring to the city as a destination or as a place where activities and services are located.

54 The following are not required to change:

- the name of the Wanganui District council - however, new Council documents that refer to the city as a place will be expected to use the correct name,
- official documents that are already published – including reprints of these documents,
- the names of businesses, including those servicing travellers or tourists – however, their addresses will change and re-publications of brochures may need to change,
- documents produced by businesses not involved with travellers or tourists, and
- verbal references to the city.

Costs and impacts

- 55 Actual total costs are not known. Many submissions made general reference to the potential cost. Most references to cost did not appear to be made by business owners and no submissions provided any detail on what those costs might be.
- 56 Addresses within the city will change. Although New Zealand Post will continue delivering mail addressed to 'Wanganui', businesses and government agencies are likely to feel the need to update their stationery and signage. It is intended that the transition period will allow old stocks to be used up.
- 57 Highway signs referring to 'Wanganui' as a destination will need to be changed. The transition period is intended to allow this to be done gradually as part of normal maintenance.
- 58 Businesses or community groups supporting the tourist industry would be expected to use the official name in re-published tourist brochures – but only when referring to the city itself and only from the end of any transition period. It is intended that the transition period will allow the change to be made during general update and republishing of brochures – thus allowing old stocks to be used and avoiding additional cost.
- 59 Businesses could choose whether to adopt the official name in their business name and their publications, or whether to retain the current spelling 'Wanganui'. Even within the tourist industry, there would be no requirement to change the names of any business or company – such as motels and guest houses.
- 60 Some businesses are naturally reluctant to change their trading names after many years and also for fear of lost custom if they endorse the 'h'. This decision will be entirely up to them. There is no compliance requirement on them to change. The Board acknowledges that there are a number of towns in the South Island where local businesses have chosen to use historical names, eg Pembroke, the former name of Wanaka, and Molyneux, the former name of Alexandra.
- 61 The Wanganui District Council would not be forced to change its territorial authority name – unless the Council itself wants to change its name. Under sections 22 to 23 of the Act, the Council can apply to the Board to change its name, but the Board has no authority to change the name of the Council without the Council's agreement. However, if the name of the city is changed, that will naturally raise questions about the name of the District Council. Examples exist of councils with jurisdiction over places with different names, for example the Hutt City Council has jurisdiction over the city of Lower Hutt. New official Council documents such as maps, websites and other publications including signs will need to adopt the new spelling when referring to the city.

Policies and precedent

- 62 The Board strives to accommodate the interests of all New Zealanders, and government requirements, with an understanding of New Zealand history and geography, when assigning, altering, discontinuing and approving geographic names. Decisions must be balanced against the Act and the policies, rules, guidelines, and procedures that define the parameters within which the Board operates. The effect of place naming is felt not only by individuals, local communities, local iwi, visitors and tourists, but often has a wider impact on central and local government organisations (eg signage, addressing, publications, emergency services). The Board collectively has a strong desire to give practical effect to the purpose, functions, and duties of the Act.
- 63 The Board's policies for the names of communities do have a tendency to lean towards community views, support from the Territorial Authority, and where there is no strong community support for change, a preference for the status quo. The Board is also aware of other suburb, town and city names that are arguably incorrect – Hataitai, Eponi, Petone, Kaiapoi, Timaru, and many other suburbs and towns.
- 64 The question of whether this decision would set a precedent was considered carefully by the Board. However, each case must be treated on its merits. The Board is not aware of any other equivalent to Wanganui – in that it was named after the river but is now spelt differently to the river. The correction to the name of the river was confirmed by the Minister in 1991. Precedents are only created where the circumstances are the same or similar. It cannot be assumed that this decision will necessarily result in changes to other names. Note that in 2000 the Board declined to change the name of the suburb of Hataitai to its correct spelling of Whataitai.
- 65 Examples of decisions made by previous Ministers are included under Appendix B.

Inquiry by the Minister

- 66 Under section 20(2) of the Act, you may make any inquiry as you wish. Such inquiry is at your discretion.

Transition period

- 67 If you confirm the Board's decision, then under section 21(3)(b) your determination will come into force, either on the date of the *Gazette* notice or on 'a date specified in the *Gazette* notice which must be as soon as practicable after the date of the *Gazette* notice'.
- 68 The Board recommends that it is reasonable to consider that a period of 12 months be specified between the publication of the *Gazette* notice and the date that it takes effect. This would allow for the practicability of updating signs and other official documents to reflect the change. You may wish to take further advice on considerations or events which could affect the practicability of the implementation of this determination.
- 69 During the transition period recommended by the Board for practicability, the status quo would prevail which would mean that both the current recorded name of 'Wanganui', and the proposed name of 'Whanganui', could be used.
- 70 This would also mean that after the date specified in the *Gazette* notice, only the new spelling of 'Whanganui' would be official and the name of 'Wanganui', if used in an official document (as defined in the Act), would contravene section 32(1) of the Act, unless section 32(2) of the Act were to be applied (a proviso which allows unofficial names to be used if it is stated that they are not official). Compliance can be insisted via section 33 of the Act, which provides for court injunction.

Determination of the Minister to be Gazetted and publicly notified

- 71 Section 21 of the Act applies, once the Minister's final determination has been made. This includes the Board publishing the determination in the *New Zealand Gazette*, in national and local news publications, and on the LINZ website.
- 72 The date when the final determination takes effect can be the date of the *Gazette* notice, or a date specified in the *Gazette* notice, which must be as soon as practicable after the date of the *Gazette* notice as noted above.
- 73 The Board will include the official geographic name that the Minister determines as final, in the *New Zealand Gazetteer of Official Geographic Names*.
-

Options considered by the Board with associated effects:

Options	Permitted/Required Names in Official documents	Likely Depiction on LINZ Maps & Databases	Names not Permitted in Official Documents	Impact on Agencies, Businesses & Community
1	Status Quo. The proposal rejected and the current name left with the status of recorded name.	"Wanganui" OR "Whanganui" OR (any other name)		No compliance costs. LINZ maps and databases would probably continue using Wanganui as the status quo. Some agencies or businesses may change over time as a result of being informed by the debate.
1a	A variation to option 1 - the proposal rejected but the Board decides to review at some future date (e.g. 5 – 10 years ahead or 2015 after Treaty Settlements completed).	"Wanganui" OR "Whanganui" OR (any other name)		No compliance costs. LINZ maps and databases would probably continue using Wanganui as the status quo. Some agencies or businesses may change over time as a result of being informed by the debate.
2	The proposal rejected and the current name made official.	"Wanganui"	"Whanganui" AND (any other name)	No compliance costs. This will make the use of "Whanganui" in official documents (including those for tourists) contrary to the Act (unless referring to the river and region). No change to the name on LINZ maps and in databases.
3	The proposal accepted.	"Whanganui"	"Wanganui" AND (any other name)	Significant compliance costs. WDC and government agencies would be expected to comply in all new publications. LINZ databases would change immediately and maps would change on re-publication. Businesses are not required to change their names but those in the tourist sector would need to update their publications and brochures before the next publication.
3a	The proposal accepted but the gazette expressly allows a specified period of (say) several years of transition so as to reduce compliance costs.	"Whanganui" OR "Wanganui" (for x years)	(any other name)	Minimal (deferred) compliance costs covered by on-going maintenance and re-printing. WDC and government agencies required to change to the new spelling over time. LINZ databases would probably change immediately and maps would change on re-publication. Businesses are not required to change their names but those in the tourist sector would need to update their publications and brochures when re-printing within the timeframe.
4	Dual names.	"Wanganui/Whanganui" (or reverse order?)	"Wanganui" AND "Whanganui" AND (any other name)	Significant compliance costs. WDC and government agencies required to change to the new longer dual name. LINZ databases would change immediately and maps would change on re-publication. Businesses are not required to change their names but those in the tourist sector would need to update their publications and brochures.
5	Alternative names. Both the existing and new names can be retained and made official with the gazette expressly providing for either name to be used individually or together in official documents.	"Wanganui" OR "Whanganui" OR "Wanganui/Whanganui"	(any other name)	Minimal compliance costs except LINZ databases would probably change to the dual form immediately and maps would probably change on re-publication. Some agencies or businesses may change over time as a result of being informed by the debate.
5a	The gazette would permit the name to be written in alternative forms such as specified permitted abbreviations or spelling.	"Wanganui" OR "Whanganui"	(any other name)	No compliance costs. LINZ maps and databases would continue to show the current name as the status quo. Some agencies or businesses may change over time as a result of being informed by the debate.
6	Other names have been suggested during public consultation and the Board is required to make a decision on them.	"Petrie" (sic) OR "Petre" OR "Wanganui/Whanganui" OR "Lawsland" OR "Fonganui" OR "The River City" OR "Waenganui"	"Wanganui" AND "Whanganui" AND (any other name)	The suggestion of "Wanganui/Whanganui" is considered above under options 4 and 5. For the other suggestions there would be considerable compliance costs, confusion and disruption

Examples of previous Board and Minister's decisions:

St Arnaud to Lake Rotoiti <i>locality in the Nelson Lakes area</i>	The community was split, with a significant number of the community opposing the change, and with a neutral stance from the Territorial Authority, the Board was not convinced to change the name.
Gowanbridge to Gowenbridge <i>locality in the Nelson Lakes area</i>	Most of the community (45 objections) opposed the change. The Board agreed not to proceed.
Orotu vs Parklands <i>suburb in Napier</i>	Six objecting submissions received, one of which included a petition with 550 names. Withdrawn upon request of the Mayor of Napier to the Minister for Land Information.
Flat Bush vs Ormiston <i>locality/town, Manukau city</i>	Four submissions objecting received to Flat Bush, one of which included 30 signatories. The Minister agreed to Flat Bush, which was an original name of long standing.
Pegasus <i>locality north of Christchurch</i>	New name. Three objections to Pegasus Bay, so the Board/Minister agreed to just Pegasus.
Tophouse Settlement <i>locality in the Nelson Lakes area</i>	One objection. Board/Minister agreed to Tophouse Settlement.
Eyrewell <i>locality north of Christchurch</i>	One objection. Board/Minister agreed to Eyrewell.
Mount Taranaki or Mount Egmont	Many objections. Board recommended just Taranaki. Minister agreed to alternative names.
Matui/Somes Island <i>Wellington Harbour (Port Nicholson)</i>	Many objections from the German and Italian community whose ancestors were interned there during WWII. Board/Minister agreed to a dual name.
Murdering Beach to Whareakeake <i>Otago Peninsula</i>	In the late 1980s, local Ngāi Tahu iwi sought to change this name to Whareakeake – its original Māori name. There was considerable objection. The Board supported the change, but the then Minister did not, and so Murdering Beach remained. However, the settlement of Ngāi Tahu's Treaty claim in 1998 led to this name being changed through statute and it being the only one of 89 Treaty settlement names that was not dual-named.