



**Ngā Pou  
Taunaha o  
Aotearoa**

New Zealand  
Geographic Board

## Standard for altering Region and District names

NZGBS60004

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## Introduction

E mao ana ki ua, e ua ana ki mao.

It is fine until it rains, it rains until it is fine. Good alternates with troubled times just as sunshine does with rain. Things will come right.

Local authority region and district names are important for the effective management and administration of local government activities. They also offer a sense of identity and belonging for the people living within them. Under the New Zealand Geographic Board (Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa) Act 2008 (NZGBA) the New Zealand Geographic Board Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa (NZGB) is responsible for altering region and district names. This ensures that impartiality and objectivity in the public consultation process is applied when considering the views of local communities.

This standard provides local authorities with a concise reference to guide them in meeting the minimum requirements for making a proposal to alter a region or district name and helps the NZGB to achieve quality and consistency in its decision making. The criteria closely align to international best practice for standardised, consistent and accurate place naming.

This standard specifies the:

- (a) criteria that the NZGB takes into account when considering proposals from local authorities to alter their official region or district names,
- (b) principles the NZGB will apply when altering region and district names,
- (c) notification requirements to ensure that the operational name of a local authority is changed by the Governor-General before the region or district name that it has jurisdiction over is altered, and
- (d) process the NZGB will follow for a proposal to alter a region or district name.

## Terms and definitions

For the purpose of this standard these terms and definitions apply:

<b>Term/Abbreviation</b>	<b>Definition</b>
altered name	The name of a feature, place, region or district that has been changed and made official.
alternative name	One of two or more official names for the same feature or place. Alternative names may be used separately or together.
associated name	A feature, place, region or district with the same specific term as another feature or place, based their physical connection or proximity.
district	As defined in <a href="#">section 5 of the Local Government Act 2002</a>
dual name	Two names for a feature, place, region or district from different languages, usually Māori and English, used together as one name.
generic term	The part of the name that describes the type of geographic feature, place, region or district.
geographic feature	As defined in <a href="#">section 4 of the NZGBA</a> .
macron	A horizontal line over vowels in Māori words, for meaning and pronunciation.
NZGB	New Zealand Geographic Board Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa <sup>1</sup> .
NZGBA	New Zealand Geographic Board (Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa) Act 2008.
official geographic name	As defined in <a href="#">section 4 of the NZGBA</a> .
original Māori name	A Māori place name that existed prior to European settlement whether or not it has been spelled correctly.
orthography	The conventions and rules of how to write a language.
place	As defined in <a href="#">section 4 of the NZGBA</a> .
qualifying word	Such as west, east, upper, lower, etc
recorded name	As defined in <a href="#">section 4 of the NZGBA</a> .
region	As defined in <a href="#">section 5 of the Local Government Act 2002</a>
specific term	The part of the name that doesn't usually describe the type of geographic feature, unless it is part of a composite name.
territorial authority	As defined in <a href="#">section 5 of the Local Government Act 2002</a>

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<sup>1</sup> Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa means the memorial markers of the landscape

## Further information

See the following for further information on altering region and district names:

- New Zealand Geographic Board (Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa) Act 2008:  
<https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2008/0030/latest/DLM1065412.html>
- Frameworks of the New Zealand Geographic Board Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa:  
<https://www.linz.govt.nz/resources/guide/frameworks-new-zealand-geographic-board-nga-pou-taunaha-o-aotearoa>
- NZGB Generic Terms policy:  
<https://www.linz.govt.nz/resources/guide/nzgb-generic-terms-policy>

# 1. Criteria for altering region and district names

## 1.1 What can be altered?

A proposal to alter a Region or District name will only be considered when the relevant local authority has resolved to consent to it or request it.

The official name of a region or district must have a specific name and a generic term. Only the specific name can be altered, not the generic term. In exceptional circumstances the NZGB may agree with a proposal that does not conform to the required criteria.

The alteration of a Region or District name does not alter the name of a constituency, ward, community, local board area or subdivision. These may only be altered under the Local Electoral Act 2001.

## 1.2 When can a region or district name be altered?

A name may be altered when:

- it is culturally inappropriate,
- there are compelling reasons,
- it corrects a significant error,
- it is confusing or ambiguous,
- to standardise the orthography of Māori names.

Any alteration should balance the cultural and historical significance of the region or district name against long term use or any other relevant considerations.

## 1.3 Acceptable alterations to region and district names

The names of regions and districts are typically given during local government reorganisation and generally use the most common or predominant place or feature name within the region or district. Sometimes two names are selected, which are joined by hyphens (these are not dual names). Alterations to official region and district names should generally use the most common or predominant place or feature name within the region or district, which are, or align with:

- (a) identity, culture, society, exploration, priority of discovery, science, theme, flora and fauna, events, tradition, heritage or the language of the country of origin, where there is a significant link.
- (b) surnames or traditional ancestral Māori names.
- (c) descriptions that characterise shape, colour, composition or other distinguishing features, provided they are not too general and need to be explained.
- (d) geographic feature types or qualifying words may be used to distinguish between associated features and regions and districts with the same name.

## 1.4 Unacceptable alterations to region and district names

- (a) Names that are derogatory, discriminatory, frivolous, offensive or in poor taste.
- (b) Names of institutions, organisations, commercial entities, commercial products, contributors of funds, equipment, and supplies or similar.
- (c) The names of living people and names that honour a person more than once.
- (d) A name that already exists in a neighbouring region or district or that is already in use throughout New Zealand.
- (e) Names related to friends or relations of an individual from the Council proposing the name alteration, (this does not apply to ancestral names proposed by descendants).
- (f) The name of a person in high office who has not contributed directly and significantly to, or who is not associated with, the region or district.
- (g) Names combining the first name and surname or ancestral name, or a first name only.
- (h) Names of people without a connection to the region or district.
- (i) The name of a person who has donated to or sponsored the creation of the region or district.

## 1.5 Undesirable names and other considerations

- (a) Long names are undesirable but may be acceptable when they impact emergency services, or the name is culturally, traditionally or historically important.
- (b) New names should be distinctive, preferably unique and unambiguous. Qualifying words, such as Upper, West and Right, or generic terms may be used to distinguish between associated features with the same specific name.

## 1.6 Generic terms

For local authority region and district names, these generic terms apply (noting that Chatham Islands Territory is the area of Chatham Islands Council and Auckland is the area of Auckland Council):

- (a) Region
- (b) District
- (c) City, as directed by the Local Government Commission

Generic terms must not be abbreviated.

## 1.7 Orthographic standards

- (a) Names should generally conform to the conventions and rules of standard NZ English or te reo Māori. The NZGB may take into account historical spelling or long term local use.
- (b) The correct use of macrons on Māori place names is dependent on expert advice from a licensed translator. The orthographic conventions of Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori (the Māori Language Commission) should be followed. However, advice from relevant hapū or iwi associated with the name will be taken into account.
- (c) The addition of a macron does not usually alter the meaning of a Māori place name but standardises its written form.
- (d) The English possessive form should not be used. However, existing names with the possessive [s] that do not have the possessive apostrophe, have been in long term use and have low public value will not be altered.
- (e) Foreign names must be Romanised and should be in the form of the country of origin.
- (f) Numbers, roman numerals, abbreviations, acronyms, or similar should not be used. The exception is the honorific 'Saint' which is abbreviated to 'St'.

## 1.8 Dual region and district names

Dual names for Region and District should generally not be used but may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Two names connected by a hyphen may be used to represent geographical coverage but collectively they constitute a single name, for example, Manawatū-Whanganui Region.

## 1.9 Alternative region and district names

There should generally be one name for one region or district. Regions and districts should not have alternative names.

## 1.10 Consultation and notification

- (a) Public consultation requirements for altered region and district names will follow the standard NZGB process, which seeks submissions, and may result in the Minister for Land Information making the final decision.
- (b) Notification of the final decision on an altered region or district name can only happen after the Governor-General makes an Order in Council to amend Schedule 2 of the Local Government Act 2002, which lists the names of all local authorities.



## 2. The process for altering region and district names

To find out how to make a proposal and the process for altering region and district names, see:

<https://www.linz.govt.nz/regulatory/place-names/propose-place-name/proposing-alter-district-or-region-name>

A flowchart of the process is attached in **Appendix B**.

## Appendix A: Legislation

These sections of the NZGBA refer:

### 3 Purpose

The purposes of this Act are to—

- (f) enable certain administrative needs of government (including local government) to be met; and

### 11 Other functions of Board

- (2) Without limiting [section 260](#) of the Local Government Act 2002, the Board may alter the name of a district or region if, by resolution, a meeting of the relevant local authority—
  - (a) consents to the alteration; or
  - (b) requests the alteration.
- (3) If the Board carries out the function provided for by subsection (2), the provisions of [sections 16](#) to [20](#) apply as if the district or region affected were a geographic feature.

### 22 Alteration of name of local authority

- (1) This section applies if the Board carries out the function to alter the name of a district or region provided for under [section 11\(2\)](#).
- (2) Before the Board may give public notice of a determination to alter the name of a district or region, it must request the Minister to recommend to the Governor-General to make an Order in Council under [section 260](#) of the Local Government Act 2002 to amend the name of the relevant local authority in [Schedule 2](#) of that Act to give effect to the alteration.
- (3) An Order in Council must specify the date when the amendment takes effect, which must allow the Board sufficient time to give public notice as required by [section 23\(2\)\(a\)](#).

### 23 Notification of alteration of name of district or region

- (1) As soon as is reasonably practicable after the Governor-General has made an Order in Council in accordance with [section 22\(2\)](#), the Board must give public notice of the determination to alter the name of the relevant district or region.
- (2) The notice required by subsection (1) must—
  - (a) be given in accordance with [section 21\(2\)](#); and
  - (b) state the date on which the determination takes effect, which must be the date stated in the Order in Council made under [section 22\(2\)](#).

### 34 Rights of local authorities not affected

If the Board exercises any of its functions in relation to the naming of a geographic feature under this Act,—

- (a) the rights and obligations of a local authority in respect of the geographic feature are not affected; and
- (b) legal proceedings—
  - (i) are not invalidated solely because of the exercise of the function; and
  - (ii) may be continued or commenced under the official geographic name approved, assigned, or altered under this Act.

## Appendix B: The process for altering region and district names

