

# NZ Suburbs and Localities

Principles, Requirements and Rules



Version 1.0

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## Versioning

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| 1.0            | Original document   | 19/06/2023 |
| 1.1            | Minor revisions to better reflect NZGB role and changes to LINZ squad structure | 19/08/2025 |
| 1.2            | Updated LDS link for NZ Coastlines layer  | 10/06/2026 |

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Purpose

This document details the principles, requirements and rules relating to updating and maintaining the names and spatial extents of suburbs and localities in NZ Suburbs and Localities, a dataset administered by Toitū Te Whenua Land Information New Zealand.

Users of this document will include those preparing a request for change, along with Toitū Te Whenua's Addressing Squad and the Change Request Review Panel considering a proposal.

## 1.2. Context

NZ Suburbs and Localities dataset is an administrative record that shows and maintains boundaries and names for urban areas (suburbs) and rural areas (localities) for location and addressing purposes. The suburb and locality boundaries cover New Zealand including North Island, South Island, Stewart Island/Rakiura, Chatham Islands, and nearby offshore islands.

## 1.3. Background

NZ Suburbs and Localities is based on the former NZ Localities dataset previously created and maintained by Fire and Emergency New Zealand. Fire and Emergency NZ developed it in 2005 to assist emergency first responders to quickly locate an emergency call, reducing confusion and delay.

Under the Local Government Act 1974, the Surveyor-General at Toitū Te Whenua has a responsibility to collate addresses allocated by Territorial Authorities for electoral, postal, and other purposes. Given the importance of a suburb or locality to ensure addresses are unique, NZ Localities was transferred to Toitū Te Whenua in June 2023. NZ Suburbs and Localities contains the same data but with a simplified data structure, uses official place names and offers a new change request process. The previous NZ Localities dataset is no longer maintained and was removed from the LINZ Data Service in November 2023.

## 2. Principles, Rules and Requirements

Principles, requirements and rules have been established to ensure NZ Suburbs and Localities continues to be a consistent, trusted, and reliable dataset. These principles, rules and requirements are based on the 2011 Australian/New Zealand Standard for Rural and Urban Addressing (AS/NZS 4819:2011).

Three principles define what a suburb or locality represent, based on people, place, and legislation.



### **Principle A - People**

Suburbs and localities reflect the shared identity people feel towards the place where they live, work, and play. Boundaries should not divide a community or shared identity.



### **Principle B - Place**

Suburbs and localities represent significant geographical features, given that physical geography influences the social, cultural, and historical nature of the land.



### **Principle C - Legislation**

Suburbs and localities follow relevant regulatory and legislative decisions and acknowledge local in-use names.

### **2.1. Change Request Requirements and Rules**

Each of the change request principles – people, place, and legislation – have associated requirements and rules. The requirements set out how the principles are to be applied and the rules define how and when to change the boundaries and names. Variations may be permitted case by case, but these must be approved and documented by the Change Request Review Panel.

## 2.2. Principle A - People



Suburbs and localities reflect the shared identity people feel towards the place where they live, work, and play. Boundaries should not divide a community or shared identity.

### Requirements

- A.1 A suburb or locality brings together a community. It does not divide a community or group of facilities used by a community.
- A.2 A suburb or locality is to encompass an entire community. Some suburbs and localities may encompass other names in common/well-established use for discrete and separate communities or interest. However, those other names become part of the administrative and wider suburb or locality defined in the dataset. They do not lose their individual identity and remain in the Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa New Zealand Geographic Board (the Board) online, searchable Gazetteer, <https://gazetteer.linz.govt.nz/>.
- A.3 A suburb or locality name and extent will take account of cultural identity, particularly connection to ancestral whenua. Consideration to be given to connection with traditional marae, wāhi tapu, Māori block name partitions, etc. Decisions are to be balanced with the practical alignment needs for administering address and access.
- A.4 A property (rating unit) is to be located within a single suburb or locality, unless following a significant geographic feature (principle 2) or having multiple access points.
- A.5 Travel within a suburb or locality should not require having to pass through a different suburb or locality.
- A.6 While there is no required population count for a suburb or locality, a particularly large or small community must be able to demonstrate a strong sense of identity.

### Rules

- A.7 A boundary is to be defined along the back of a property (rating unit) boundary and not along the road frontage or road centreline in urban

areas.

- A.8 A boundary along a property is to align with Toitū Te Whenua's NZ Properties: Unit of Property dataset:  
<https://data.linz.govt.nz/layer/113968-nz-properties-unit-of-property/>
- A.9 A boundary is to be defined where major roads divide a community, for example, motorways with no crossing points.
- A.10 Cul-de-sacs and no exit roads are to be located within the same boundary as the main access road.

## 2.3. Principle B - Place



Suburbs and localities take account of significant geographical features, given that physical geography influences the social, cultural, and historical nature of the land.

### Requirements

- B.1 A suburb or locality is to be land based, and to cover the whole land area of New Zealand, Chatham Islands and nearby offshore islands.
- B.2 A boundary is to be consistent in shape and not contain corridors.
- B.3 Significant geographic features that separate communities are to define a suburb or locality e.g. a ridgeline.
- B.4 Significant geographic features that link communities are to be located within a single suburb or locality e.g. a valley.
- B.5 Significant land use change is to define a suburb or locality e.g. Public Conservation Land or commercial forestry.

### Rules

- B.6 Adjacent boundaries to exactly align with no gaps or overlaps.
- B.7 A boundary is to be a single, contiguous area. Multi-part polygons are to be avoided, except for a group of islands or conservation land.
- B.8 A boundary is to follow natural features such as ridgelines and spurs.
- B.9 A boundary is not to run along valley sides or floors.
- B.10 A boundary is not to follow a river centreline unless a major river in a flood plain forms a natural barrier between communities.
- B.11 A large lake may form a boundary where more than two communities adjoin the lake.

- B.12 A large lake may form a boundary if a named bay has been identified by Fire and Emergency New Zealand as important for an emergency response.
- B.13 A coastal bay may form a boundary if a named coastal bay has been identified by Fire and Emergency New Zealand as important for an emergency response.
- B.14 A boundary along a lake is to align with Toitū Te Whenua's NZ Lake Polygons dataset:  
<https://data.linz.govt.nz/layer/50293-nz-lake-polygons-topo-150k>
- B.15 A boundary along the coast is to align with Toitū Te Whenua's NZ Coastline – Mean High Water Springs dataset:  
<https://data.linz.govt.nz/layer/124388-nz-coastline-mean-high-water-springs/>
- B.16 A boundary along Public Conservation Land is to align with Department of Conservation's Public Conservation Land dataset:  
[https://doc-deptconservation.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/72354ba9bf7a4706af3fdfe60f86eea1\\_0/about](https://doc-deptconservation.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/72354ba9bf7a4706af3fdfe60f86eea1_0/about)
- B.17 A boundary may follow the edge of a distinct land use change, for example the boundary between a forestry block and agricultural land.
- B.18 Boundaries established by the Board are to be used, noting that from 2024 the Board agreed to leave the final definitions for suburbs and localities to LINZ, allowing for ease of future changes where they are identified.

## 2.4. Principle C - Legislation



Suburbs and localities follow all regulatory and legislative decisions and acknowledge local in-use names.

### Requirements

- C.1 The legal interpretation of a suburb and a locality in Section 4 of the New Zealand Geographic Board (Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa) Act 2008 refers and aligns with the urban and rural characters used in the dataset.
- C.2 Official names from authoritative sources are to be adopted.
- C.3 Te reo Māori names to be encouraged, whether original or contemporary, especially where there is an identified connection by mana whenua.
- C.4 Names to be reasonable, short, respectful, and unlikely to cause offence.
- C.5 Names to be clear and avoid confusion when responding to an emergency.
- C.6 Suburbs and localities are intended to be enduring and are only to be changed where necessary.

### Rules

- C.7 Official names formally gazetted by the Board to be adopted. Consistency between the dataset and the Gazetteer is the goal, though there may be exceptions to this.
- C.8 Orthographic conventions set by Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori (Māori language Commission) are to be applied.
- C.9 Names not formally gazetted or recorded by the Board to be supported by the relevant Territorial Authority.
- C.10 All features in NZ Suburbs and Localities to be assigned a 'name' and a 'major name' in the data fields.

- C.11 New names to be unique unless a strong community identity with a duplicated name is evident.
- C.12 New names to be consulted with the Board for possible processing as formal proposals under the New Zealand Geographic Board (Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa) Act 2008.
- C.13 The combination of a street address and suburb or locality name is to be unique and not to occur anywhere else in New Zealand, Chatham Islands and nearby offshore islands.

### 3. Contact Us

Please contact the Toitū Te Whenua's Addressing Squad if you have any questions or feedback about NZ Suburbs and Localities [addresses@linz.govt.nz](mailto:addresses@linz.govt.nz) or call the Toitū Te Whenua Customer Support Team 0800 665 463.