

# New Zealand Geographic Board Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa

The memorial markers of the landscape

The New Zealand Geographic Board is New Zealand's national place naming authority, responsible for official place names.

We run a public process to decide what places should be called — recognising the relationship we have with the land and its connection with our identity.

### The New Zealand Geographic Board:

- has a responsibility to safeguard the geographic naming traditions, culture and heritage brought to New Zealand by its various communities;
- ensures its geographic naming work contributes to a geographic information system that provides economic, cultural, and social value to all New Zealanders;
- is steward (kaitiaki) and custodian of New Zealand's official geographic names;
- is principal adviser to the New Zealand government on geographic names (official and unofficial) especially to Toitū Te Whenua Land Information New Zealand, Te Tari Whakatau the Office of Treaty Settlements and Takutai Moana and the Department of Conservation;
- · consults with New Zealanders to take account of their views in its decision making;
- ensures its decision making and advisory capabilities are deployed where they can most benefit the longer term interests of New Zealand;
- ensures its decision making is independent and based on robust processes



# Why are geographic names important to New Zealanders?

- There are long term benefits to the nation - practical, administrative, social, cultural and historical - including national or cultural identity
- A geographic name is a fundamental part of address, along with road name and property number. Therefore, unique and usable geographic names form a key purpose to locate people and property, contributing to efficient government administration and linking data for a wide range of public and private purposes

### Why have official place names?

- To provide practical, unambiguous, fundamental and unique location identification and navigation for the physical landscape we live in
- To recognise heritage and culture to give a sense of place
- To provide a reliable and authoritative source for standardised, consistent and accurate names
- To demonstrate New Zealand's jurisdictional interests
- To provide a fundamental data theme for geospatial data layers
- To ensure consistency in the use of place names
- To identify where we are as we go about our everyday business - they are a component of our infrastructure, and most importantly they matter in emergency responses
- To ensure that important names are preserved and restored

### What is the standard proposal process?

# Proposal received

When a new place name proposal is received, the Board Secretariat assesses it for completeness, before it will be processed. This includes ensuring that consultation with affected people, including the local community and iwi, has occurred. Without these minimum requirements, the Board will not have the necessary information to make a decision on the proposal.

### Research and report by Secretariat

The Board Secretariat undertakes further research and communicates directly with groups such as local councils and local iwi (guided by Te Puni Kökiri). A proposal report is prepared for the Board's consideration.

# The Board considers proposal

The Board will consider the proposal at its next meeting and decide whether or not to support the proposal. If it does not support the proposal, the process ends.

# Proposal publicly 4. notified seeking submissions

If the Board supports the proposal it notifies it on the Toitū Te Whenua website, in newspapers and other publications, asking for supporting or objecting submissions from the public. Media releases, editorials and social media such as Facebook are other important ways of engaging with as many people as possible. For the Board to make an informed, robust and enduring decision on the proposal, it is critical that it understands the views of the local community, including iwi.

## The Board considers submissions

Once the notification period

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# The Board or 6. Minister make final decision

If there are no submissions or only supporting submissions then the Board makes the final decision to make the proposed place name official. If the Board upholds submissions objecting to the name it can make the final decision. However, if it doesn't agree with objecting submissions, then the Minister for Land Information makes the final decision.

### 7. Official place name gazetted

The Board publishes the final decision in the *New Zealand Gazette* as conclusive evidence of the official place name.

### Gazetteer updated

The decision is also added to the Board's Gazetteer (gazetteer.linz.govt.nz) — an online repository for all place names that includes additional contextual information, including position, extent and history/origin/meaning.

Updated November 2025

www.linz.govt.nz

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

# **New Zealand Geographic Board** Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa

### What does the Board name?

- Places where people live, such as suburbs, town, localities and cities
- Physical geographic features of the landscape, whether natural or manmade
- Historic places where events occurred
- Undersea features on New Zealand's continental shelf
- · Antarctic features in the Ross Dependency
- Crown protected areas (Department of Conservation reserves). If the Board does not concur then the Minister of Conservation makes the final decision
- Territorial Authority districts and regions



# need to do?

- Make final decisions on place name proposals when they're
- Receive the Board's Annual Report for tabling in the House
- Be the media spokesperson for controversial place name decisions
- Get advice from the Board on matters to do with official place names
- For local authority District and Region name alterations, recommend to the Governor General to amend the name of the relevant local authority to give effect to the alteration
- Appoint eight of the ten Board members:
  - four nominated by Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, New Zealand Geographical Society Inc, Federated Mountain Clubs of NZ Inc and Local Government New Zealand
  - two recommended by the Minister for Māori Development

# Other Ministers who decide official

- Minister of Conservation for Crown protected area names
- Minister for Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations for Treaty names

# What does the Minister for Land Information

referred by the Board

- - two others of the Minister for Land Information's choice

# place names:

### What is the Treaty Names process?

### 1. Proposal received

www.linz.govt.nz

Te Tari Whakatau - the Office of Treaty Settlements and Takutai Moana gathers the required information from the claimant group and submits the Treaty name proposal to the Board. The story associated with the name is essential to determine correct orthography.

#### 2. Review

Te Tari Whakatau the Office of Treaty Settlements and Takutai Moana is advised of any immediate concerns.

#### 3. Research

The Board Secretariat researches the history of any existing place names.

#### **The Board** consideration

The Board's recommendations are made to Te Tari Whakatau - the Office of Treaty Settlements and Takutai Moana.

### 5. Final decision

The Minister for Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations makes the final decisions on name changes and restored names included in a list in the Deed Settlement. Settlement legislation is enacted making them official.

#### 6. Post settlement

Official Treaty names are published in the New Zealand Gazette and newspapers. They are also added to the Board's Gazetteer. Treaty names are protected from future changes.



### The Board

#### **Anselm Haanen**

Chairperson, Surveyor-General, ex-officio

#### **Adam Greenland**

National Hydrographer, Land Information New Zealand, ex-officio

#### **Paulette Tamati-Elliffe**

Nominated by Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu

#### **Robin Kearns**

Nominated by New Zealand Geographical Society Inc

Nominated by Local Government New Zealand

#### **Cadence Kaumoana**

Nominated by the Minister for Māori Development

#### Mahana Toka

Nominated by the Minister for Māori Development

#### Merata Kawharu

Appointed by the Minister for Land Information

#### Jenni Vernon

Appointed by the Minister for Land Information

Appointed by the Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand

### The Secretariat

#### **Wendy Shaw**

Secretary, Toitū Te Whenua Land Information New Zealand

### Joanna Barnes-Wylie

Senior Advisor – Treaty Names, Toitū Te Whenua Land Information New Zealand

#### **Christopher Stephens**

Advisor, Toitū Te Whenua Land Information New Zealand

(the Secretariat researches, liaises, consults, engages and advises)

### **Committees/Komiti**

**Undersea Feature Names Committee Antarctic Names Committee** Komiti Taunahatanga Māori

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