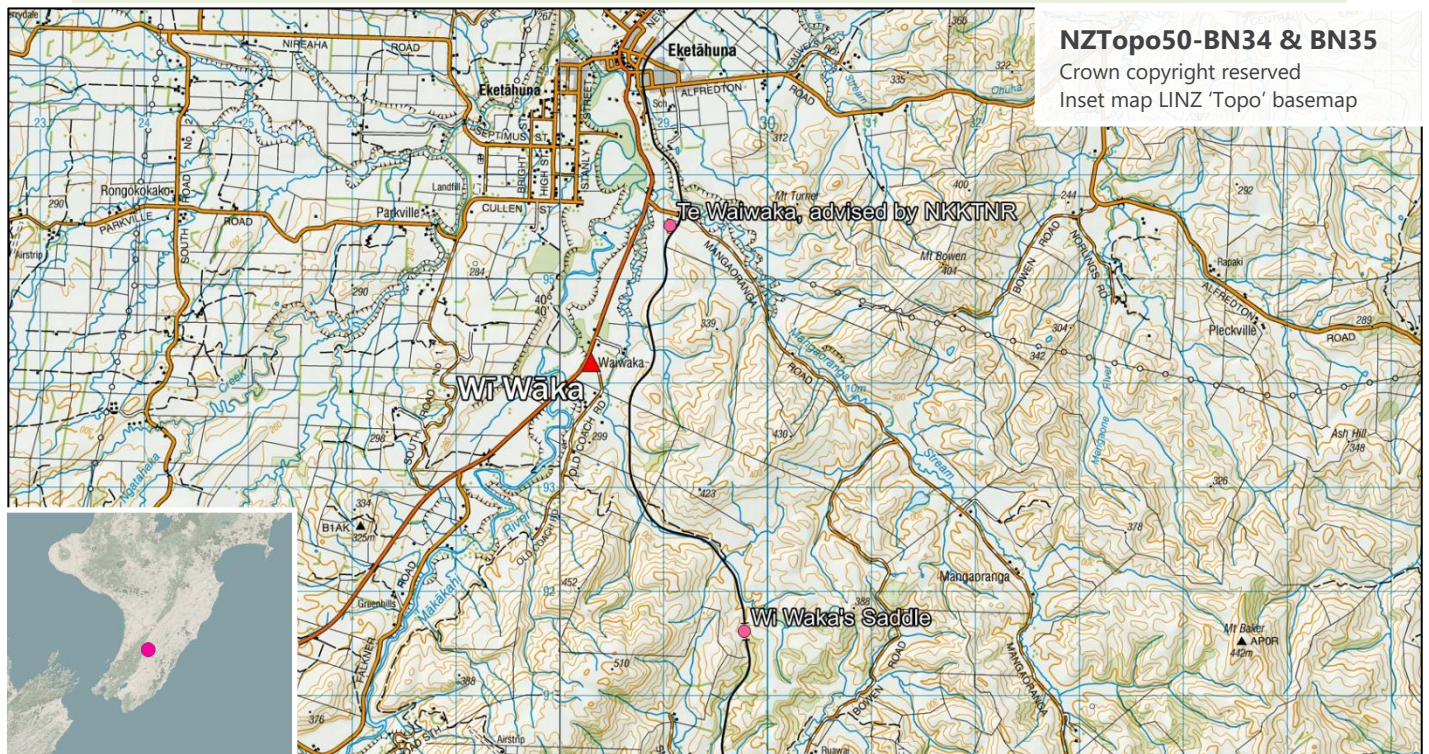


Submissions considered by the Board on 30 April 2026 for Wī Wāka (locality)

[altered from Waiwaka]



Introductory comment

Since the 1880s, three name variations for the locality have been used: Wi Waka, Wiwaka and Waiwaka. They have been used interchangeably indicating that some confusion exists, such as doubt about the correct spelling, whether they are contractions of one another, who/what they are named after, and what 'place' they apply to. In accepting the proposal, the Board considered kōrero from Rangitāne Tū mai Rā Trust that Waiwaka is not an original name. An objection from Ngāti Kahungunu ki Tāmaki-nui-a-Rua (NKKTNR) is that Te Waiwaka is an original name. There is no documentary evidence to support Te Waiwaka being the original Māori name for the locality (associated with Te Waiwaka Pā). Wi Waka and Wiwaka are not 'original' Māori names in the sense that they were applied during the European settler period.

Summary

At its 15 September 2025 hui, the Board declined a proposal from a member of the public to alter Waiwaka to Wi Waka, for a rural locality just south of Eketāhuna, north Wairarapa. Instead, the Board substituted its own proposal Wī Wāka to standardise the name with macrons.

The Board accepted the proposer's contention that the locality was named for the Ngāti Hāmua¹ rangatira 'Wi Waka' (1802[?]-1892). Research suggested this naming was indirect, having been named for the 'Wi Waka section' of the railway, which was itself named for 'Wi Waka's Saddle' on the original Māori trail used by Wī Wāka Kahukura.

¹ The paramount hapū of Rangitāne o Wairarapa : see Joseph Potangaroa (2012), *Ngāti Hāmua*, Rangitāne o Wairarapa history series Vol.3, Te Puni Kōiri: Masterton

During public notification the Board received seven supporting submissions and two objecting submissions.

The main objection, from NKKTNR, reasoned that the proposal is incorrect because the name is derived from Te Waiwaka, an original name for a pā at the south of Eketāhuna (northeast of Waiwaka as currently named on maps) which was named for a species of native tree growing there.

NKKTNR suggests Wī Wāka (the person) has been conflated with the correct original name, Te Waiwaka, possibly due to errors in the publication *A Goodly Heritage* (1973)². However, the Board's earlier conclusions were based on documentary sources from the 19th century that used Wi Waka and Wiwaka for the locality, in association with the railway. This included evidence of continued local use of 'Wiwaka' by Wiwaka Station (the farm at the locality) and was supported by kōrero from Rangitāne Tū Mai Rā Trust that Waiwaka is not an original Māori name.

Acknowledging that many original Māori names remain solely in oral tradition, no references to Te Waiwaka for the locality or the pā site located closer to Eketāhuna were identified. Instead, and after further research, a variety of additional references to Wiwaka and Waiwaka were noted for the locality from 1886 onwards. Some references show exactly where it was that people were calling Wiwaka or Waiwaka in the 1880s (an outstanding question from the earlier Proposal Report to the Board).

If Te Waiwaka is accepted as an original Māori name, it remains uncertain if the locality name relates to it. All evidence indicates that the locality was named in association with the saddle and the railway's Wi Waka Section. This naming may have occurred with no knowledge of 'Te Waiwaka' as an original Māori name, particularly if there was no knowledge of or evidence of occupation at the site NKKTNR has indicated.

If there had been knowledge of Te Waiwaka in the 1880s, this could have smoothed the way for either Wiwaka or Waiwaka to become established as a locality name. But there is no documentary reference to Waiwaka prior to 1886. There is no information at hand supporting Te Waiwaka beyond NKKTNR's kōrero. And there is contradictory kōrero from Rangitāne Tū Mai Rā is that Waiwaka is not an original Māori name.

If the Board upheld the objection which suggests Te Waiwaka, that name would need to be notified for submissions³. This is not recommended.

The Board could defer its decision and present both groups with the evidence at hand and request that they agree to a path forward before the Board decides. However, given their different kōrero for the names the likelihood of this being successful is considered low and this is not recommended.

² Irene Adcock (1973), *A Goodly Heritage*, Eketahuna, Eketahuna Borough and County Councils

³ This would be dependent on whether the Board re-notification is needed.

Board's decision

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

The Board **considered** the seven supporting and two objecting submissions and their reasons on the proposal to alter the existing unofficial recorded locality name Waiwaka to **Wī Wāka** as the official name,

and

Rejected the objecting submissions, including the alternative proposal from Ngāti Kahungunu ki Tāmaki-nui-a-Rua for Te Waiwaka,

and

Declined the proposal to alter Waiwaka to Wī Wāka, and **decided** that **Waiwaka** should remain an unofficial recorded name, based on:

- doubt as to whether Wī Wāka is the correct or most appropriate name based on the Ngāti Kahungunu ki Tāmaki-nui-a-Rua objection,
- insufficient evidence to uphold the Ngāti Kahungunu ki Tāmaki-nui-a-Rua alternative proposal for Te Waiwaka, and
- long term use of Waiwaka recorded on maps (69 years), notwithstanding the evidence of local use of Wī Waka and Wiwaka,

and will

Report the Board's decision to the Minister for Land Information **and request** the Minister to make the final determination on the proposal.

Notification

Advice to
mana whenua
of public
notification

On 17 September 2025 Rangitāne Tū Mai Rā Trust and Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa Tāmaki-nui-a-Rua Settlement Trust were advised that the proposal to alter Waiwaka to Wī Wāka would be publicly notified on 23 October 2025 for one month.

Advice to MPs

The Secretariat advised the MPs for Wairarapa, Ikaroa-Rāwhiti and all neighbouring electorates that submissions on the proposals were open until 27 November 2025.

Public
notification
including
social media

The Board advertised the proposals:

- in the [New Zealand Gazette](#),
- in the *Sunday Star Times*, *Wairarapa Times-Age*, and *Bush Telegraph*,
- on the Toitū Te Whenua LINZ [Consultation](#) page, its [Facebook page](#) and on the New Zealand Government's [Consultation](#) page.

Media

The Board circulated [a media advisory](#) on 24 October 2025. There was no media coverage.

Additional research

Summary

In reporting on the proposal for the Board's September 2025 hui, there were unresolved questions around where 'Wī Waka' or 'Waiwaka' was exactly located when

the name first came into use. In 2025, records from Archives New Zealand were unavailable due to the construction of its new Wellington facility. These prior sources have now been reviewed, and other items of interest have been investigated.

Additional references were found for the locality including exactly where it was that people were calling 'Wi Waka' or 'Waiwaka' from 1886. No references to the locality name prior to 1886 were found. The earliest references are further south of where Waiwaka is currently named on maps and mostly in direct connection with Wi Waka's Saddle.

No references to Te Waiwaka for a pā at the site of the Mangaoranga Eketāhuna Cemetery were found. Nor any references to a pā generally.

The evidence shows the current locality name relates to the railway's 'Wi Waka Section' and Wi Waka's Saddle. It was referred to as both Waiwaka and Wi Waka during the construction of the railroad and afterwards. While 'Waiwaka' was added to topographic maps in the 1950s there is still the evidence of continued local use of Waiwaka for the locality through the 20th and 21st centuries.

These early references to the locality name are limited. There may be other evidence such as family histories, diaries, letters, which could demonstrate use of the name, and perhaps knowledge of 'Te Waiwaka' as NKKTNR contend.

Documents in supporting information note other sources consulted, including those that were not useful, or only useful in the way they *didn't* show or name features in the area prior to 1886. A timeline of all Waiwaka / Wi Waka / Waiwaka references is also included – these suggest Waiwaka is a misspelling, eg. where newspaper advertisements for the 'Waiwaka Contract' (the intended name, and the name used on the contract documents) spell the name both ways depending on the publisher.

Notable
documents

Archives New Zealand

R17686875

This file concerns polling places for the 1887 election. On 11 August 1887 G. S. Cooper (Under Secretary) wrote to Samuel Johnson (returning officer at Waipawa) regarding a suggestion that 'Magills boarding house, **'Wi Wakas** saddle' would be convenient for over a hundred voters. Johnson replied 12 August that Magill's Boarding house 'at **Waiwaka** saddle' would satisfy electoral requirements. On the letter Cooper annotated **Wi Waka satisfies (?)**. The polling place was approved and notified in newspapers and the *NZ Gazette* (as both McGill's Boarding House, Waiwaka' and 'Waiwaka'). Ultimately 121 votes were cast at 'Magill's boarding house'.

In this context, Wi Waka and Waiwaka are clearly shorthand for Wi Waka Saddle, likely contributed to establishing the name for a wider locality. GS Cooper consistently wrote 'Wi Waka' and 'Wi Waka Saddle', whereas Samuel Johnson consistently replied with 'Waiwaka' and 'Waiwaka Saddle'.

Magill's Boarding house was on the railway line in the vicinity of the saddle. It was described as being 'about six miles from Eketahuna by road' and 'probably three miles [from Eketahuna] by the line of the railway works. The correspondence and newspapers specifically describe it as 'on the railway works'⁴ at the saddle. 'A place fully an hours walk, by a fearfully muddy bullock track from the main road'.⁵ A subsequent letter also described 'McGill's' as 'midway between Seymour's [south of

⁴ [Mr McCardle among the Electors](#). *Pahiatua Star and Eketahuna Advertiser*, Volume 2, Issue 115, 2 August 1887, Page 2

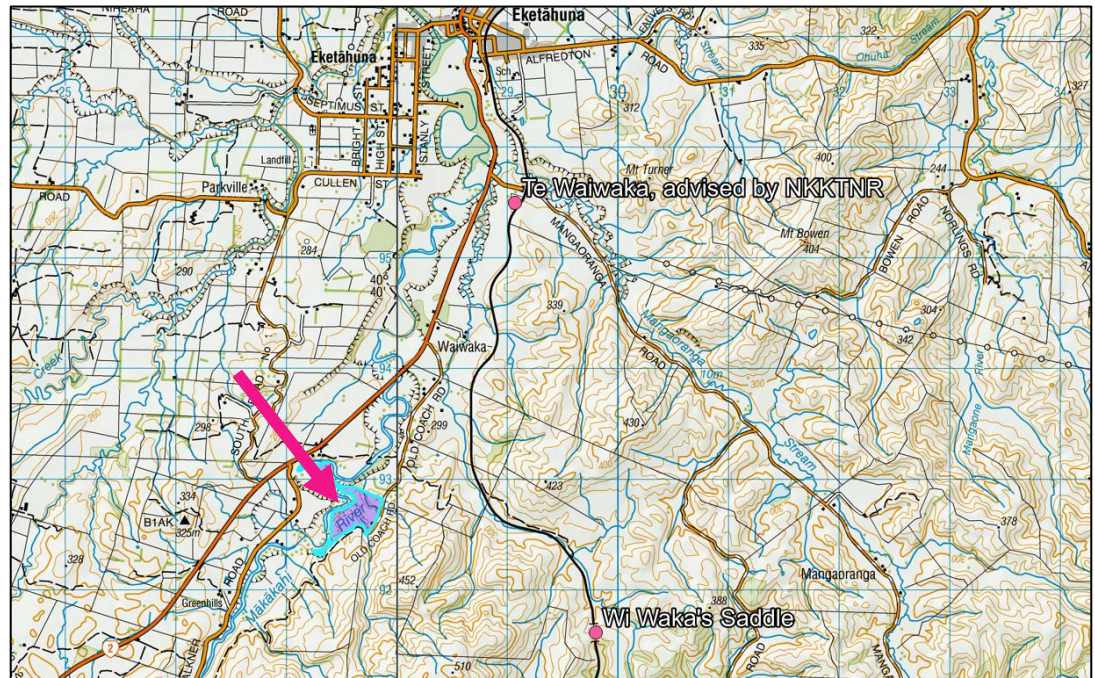
⁵ [MASTERTON](#). *New Zealand Times*, Volume XLX, Issue 8198, 5 October 1887, Page 6

Hastwell] and Eketahuna'. It is also described as having a 'dining room' big enough to hold more than 150 people.⁶

R24496257

This file concerns the balance due for Section 147 Block IX Mangone District. H Stewart forwarded the balance of £38.10.0 on 13 November 1887, followed by payment of £100 for the Crown Grant on 5 December 1887, giving their address as 'Wiwaka North Wairarapa' then 'Wiwaka, Eketahuna'.

Section 147 Block IX Mangaone District is this parcel, southwest of the position of Waiwaka as currently named:



R24496719

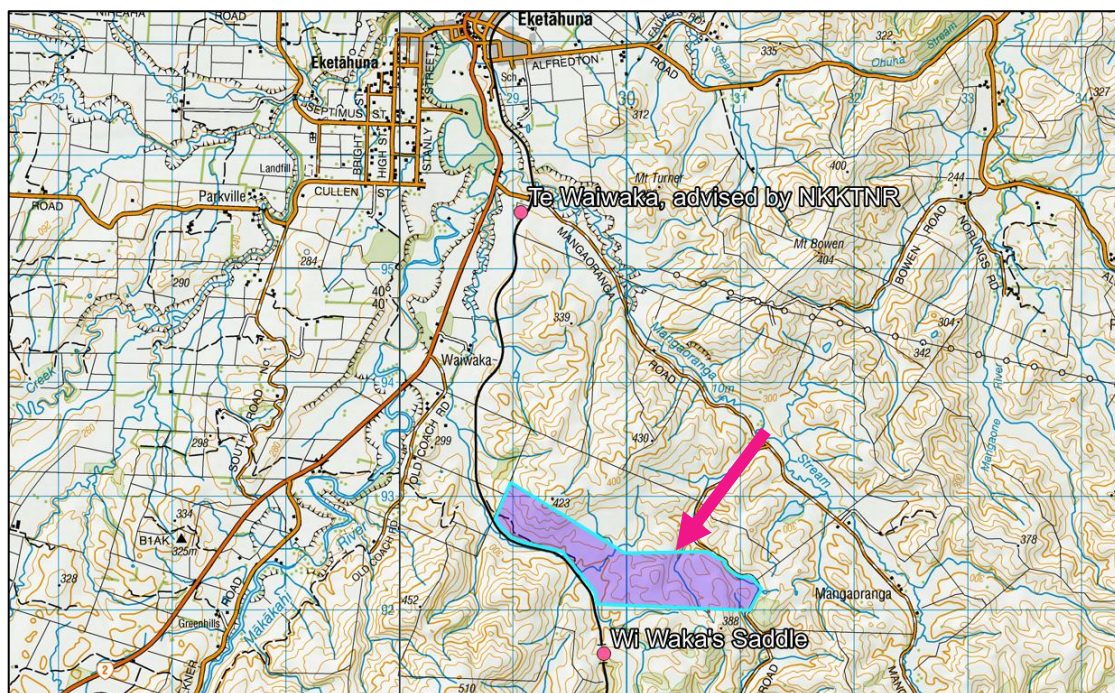
The index to Tenders Board contracts records that the Wiwaka Cottages Contract was awarded to contractors Edmund Wrigley and John Rose on 8/11/1886. The contract number is 86/13, PWD number 86/4970, but the actual contract and location the cottages were built still haven't been located.

Newspapers

A reference to Wi Waka as a locality name was noted in an 1890 newspaper, by resident 'D Sheehan, Wi Waka' providing a testimonial to Turnor & Co's Celebrated Champion Potatoes.⁷ Sheehan's section is the highlighted one here:

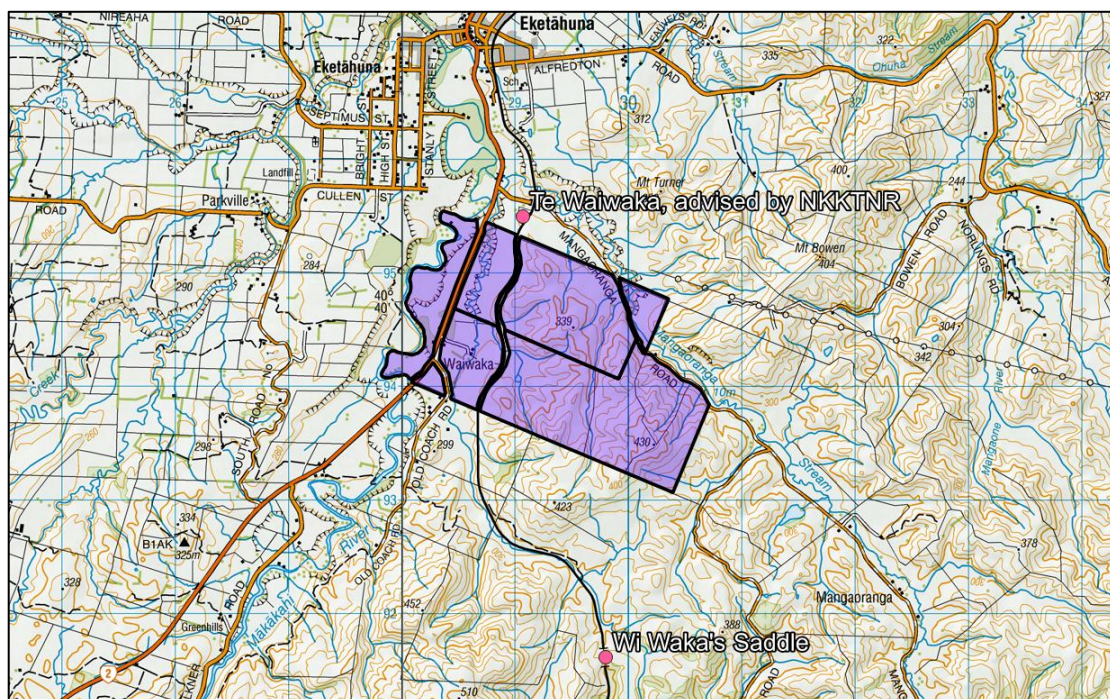
⁶ [Woodville Examiner. \(PUBLISHED BI-WEEKLY.\) TUESDAY, AUGUST 2, 1887](#) Woodville Examiner, Volume 3, Issue 373, 2 August 1887, Page 2

⁷ [Page 3 Advertisements Column 1](#), [Wairarapa Daily Times](#), Volume XI, Issue 3559, 11 July 1890, Page 3



Turnor was the owner of what he named Wiwaka Station (with the now heritage listed woolshed). Turnor gained title to the land in 1899, after the restrictions on the Eketahuna Native Reserve were lifted in 1895 and the land sold.

Wiwaka Station comprises the parcels below. The cartographic placement of the name 'Waiwaka' when added to maps in 1957 was clearly in relation to the buildings of Wiwaka Station, including the historic listed woolshed. As noted in the proposal report, the station branded its wool products with 'Wiwaka' and it continued to be referred to as Wi Waka, even in its most recent sale in 2016⁸.



⁸ <https://www.bayleys.co.nz/listings/rural/wairapa/tararua/84579-state-highway-2-eketahuna-3060076> - accessed 9 April 2026

Wi Waka store and Waiwaka Post Office

During the height of the railway works, a 'Waiwaka Post Office' operated from 1886 to 1888. David Braid was appointed postmaster. The location appears to have been at David Braid's store 'at Wi Waka'⁹. In reporting on the proposal, the Secretariat had not identified where the store and post office were exactly.

In the proceedings of a court case, it was noted that 'D Shehan' (Sheehan above) rented part of his land to D Braid¹⁰ for his store (which he closed in 1889) and a paddock for his horse. 'Wi Waka' store and 'Waiwaka Post Office' therefore appear to have also been up somewhere near Wi Waka Saddle along with the Boarding House.

Submissions

Summary	During public notification from 23 October 2025 to 27 November 2025 the Board received seven supporting submissions and two objecting submissions to the proposal.
Local engagement	All submissions were from residents of Eketāhuna or Dannevirke, indicating the proposal is of local interest.
Affiliation field	The online submission form has a voluntary option for affiliation for the Board's reference when considering submissions. The submission spreadsheets in supporting information have affiliation information where it has been provided.

Secretariat comment on the submissions

Supporting submissions (7)

The supporting submissions reasoned that correcting the spelling respects Wī Wāka (the person) and supports the Rangitāne kōrero.

One supporting submission refers to the work that Wī Wāka did for returned Māori servicemen. It is unclear what this might be referring to given that Wī Wāka died in 1892, prior to any notable New Zealand involvement in overseas wars.

Objecting submissions (2)

Submitter	Submission
Eketāhuna resident	<i>'Because there is too much change with the original Maori language. The more change there is the more division you will get.'</i> <u>Secretariat comment:</u> Many existing place names whether official or unofficial are incorrectly spelled or have incorrect orthography. The Board has statutory functions to correct spelling, encourage original Māori names, and uphold standardised orthography.
Ngāti Kahungunu ki Tāmaki-nui-a-Rua (NKKTNR), Dannevirke	NKKTNR state that the proposal is incorrect, as the individual Wī Wāka has been confused with the correct earlier original name, Te Waiwaka.

⁹ [Page 4 Advertisements Column 5](#), Press, Volume XLIV, Issue 6767, 3 June 1887, Page 4

¹⁰ [R.M. COURT](#), *Wairarapa Daily Times*, Volume XI, Issue 3431, 10 February 1890, Page 2

NKKTNR state Te Waiwaka, referring to a tree Swamp maire (Syzygium maire), was a pā at the south of modern Eketāhuna at the site of the cemetery. This was a nohoanga at the navigational limit of the river (Eketāhuna meaning 'to run aground on a gravel or sandbank') and on the overland trails.

They note the names of Wi Waka's Saddle, the Wi Waka section of the railway, and Wiwaka tunnel, but consider they belong to a later era unrelated to the correct name of the locality.

NKKTNR also object to the Board's consultation process, where the Secretariat wrote to Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa Tāmaki-nui-a-Rua Settlement Trust¹¹ (the PSGE) and not NKKTNR. NKKTNR advise they did not receive information on the proposal until the Board had already considered the proposal and notified it for public submissions.

NKKTNR consider that:

'the Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa Tāmaki-nui-a-Rua Settlement Trust (PSGE) [is] an entity for Crown settlement matters, not for cultural heritage or geographic naming under the Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa Act 2008.'

NKKTNR urge the Board to:

1. **Reject** any proposed renaming that removes or replaces Te Waiwaka.
2. **Acknowledge** that the consultation is through Taiwhenua.
3. **Uphold** obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa Act 2008.
4. **Recognise and protect** Te Waiwaka as a name for cultural, historical, and ecological values.
5. **Engage directly** with the Taiwhenua in all future naming and consultation processes for this rohe.'

Secretariat comments:

1. Consultation

The Secretary and Chairperson wrote to NKKTNR to apologise for not consulting directly with them on the proposal prior to public notification. A commitment was made to contact NKKTNR for all future Board activities in its rohe.

The Board's *Kaupapa for Māori place names* sets out how the Board will consult with mana whenua. The Kaupapa sets out standard practice to write to Māori groups regarding new proposals and the Board is obligated to continue doing so. In practice this has meant writing to PSGE's and iwi organisations. This does not mean that the Board cannot also consult directly with Taiwhenua/hapū organisations. In other areas the Board has been advised to only consult formally through PSGE's. For comparison, the Board also consulted with Rangitāne Tū Mai Rā Trust as a PSGE representing the interests of Rangitāne.

¹¹ <https://www.tkm.govt.nz/iwi/ngati-kahungunu-ki-wairarapa-tamaki-nui-a-rua/>

	The proposer wrote directly to NKKTNR in April 2025 (not the PSGE) and again on 2 June 2025. After receipt of the proposal the Secretariat wrote to the PSGE in July 2025 and again following the Board's decision at its 15 September 2025 hui, more than a month prior to public notification on 23 October 2025. 2. Te Waiwaka is the original Māori name for the locality In earlier research for the Proposal Report, one reference to Te Waiwaka was noted in the heritage listing for the Wiwaka Station Woolshed, which contains this seemingly contradictory passage: <i>'Wiwaka Station is around three kilometres south of Eketahuna. The locality is known as Waiwaka. The words Waiwaka and Wiwaka are a misspelling of Wi Waaka, who was a Ngati Hamua chief that had cultivations and kainga in the area. Te Waiwaka was the last papakainga before moving into Te Kauru, the upper Ruamahanga valley. There was also a Maori track through Eketahuna and Waiwaka which lead through the district.'</i>¹² The original documentation for the listing at Heritage New Zealand's Central Region office was viewed. The statement for 'Te Waiwaka' was quoted from a Rangitāne online publication which also said the name was correctly for 'Wi Waaka'.¹³ The Secretariat consulted with Rangitāne Tū Mai Rā Trust and asked about this reference and whether Te Waiwaka was a valid place name. Rangitāne Tū Mai Rā Trust's advice was that: <i>'The name Waiwaka has no traditional significance, and it is simply a happy accident that the misspelling includes reference to water and canoe. We will have a hunt around to see if there was a traditional name for this vicinity (noting that it would have been in the middle of the 70 Mile Bush, so difficult to access).'</i> The kōrero from Rangitāne Tū Mai Rā Trust that Waiwaka is not an original Māori name, but NKKTNR's kōrero is that it is. NKKTNR wrote that: <i>'by the late 1870's the Scandinavian settlers reverted to the original Māori names Te Waiwaka and Eketāhuna recognising them as the authentic identifiers of place.'</i> But they have not provided any evidence for use of Te Waiwaka in the 1870s (or anytime in the 19th century, or even in the 20th century). No references to Te Waiwaka were found during further research. No references to Waiwaka were found prior to 1886 and the construction of the railroad. While the site of the cemetery may be a former pā, it is not currently substantiated – it is not noted on maps or plans and there are no archaeological records in ArchSite¹⁴.
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¹² <https://www.heritage.org.nz/list-details/3970/Wiwaka%20Station%20Woolshed>

¹³ Still available through Archive.org:

https://web.archive.org/web/20100526140052/http://www.rangitane.iwi.nz/education/attachments/115_history_edusheets_sheet2.pdf

¹⁴ <https://nzaa-archsite.hub.arcgis.com/>

Mangaoranga Eketāhuna Cemetery was set apart as a Cemetery in 1894¹⁵ after the railway was completed, having been made a recreation reserve in 1888. Railway surveys in 1884 indicate the vicinity of the future cemetery was bush clad – there is no indication of a clearing, a pā, or a name. Likewise, earlier surveys from the 1850s and 1870s show no indication of a pā or the name Te Waiwaka.

3. The locality is named after the pā

Reviewing the evidence, there is no doubt that the geographic feature Wi Waka's Saddle was named for the Ngāti Hāmua Rangatira, Wi Wāka. This feature is just 3km from where the locality of Waiwaka is currently named, or 4km from Te Waiwaka as advised by NKKTNR. The evidence shows the area from the saddle to some point south of Eketāhuna was referred to as Wiwaka, Wi Waka and Waiwaka from 1886, during and after the construction of the 'Wi Waka' section of the Wellington-Woodville Railway, from Mangamahoe to Eketāhuna.

In accepting Te Waiwaka is an original Māori name it is possible that:

- a) the locality around the Wi Waka Saddle and Wi Waka Section of the railway was named Wiwaka or Waiwaka coincidentally, with no prior knowledge of an original Māori name Te Waiwaka for the pā, further to the north.
- b) there was local knowledge of Te Waiwaka for the original pā site near Eketāhuna, making for easy conflation of the coincidentally and separately named Wi Waka Section of the railway, leading to a mix of references to both Wi Waka and Waiwaka in various documents and the name Waiwaka becoming established for a broader area.

In either case, evidence still suggests that the locality name was applied in association with the railway, from 1886. Further research found additional references to Wi Waka, Wiwaka and Waiwaka, including more precisely the location that people meant when using the name. This includes residents in the area writing their address as 'Wi Waka'.

The question for the Board is whether the locality was named for the pā further north of the current Waiwaka locality, meaning Waiwaka, Wi Waka, Wiwaka are incorrect, or, whether the locality and pā are separate features with different names.

NKKTNR write in their submission:

'An area cannot be named after a person who did not exist at the time of the pā.'

But this assumes the naming had something to do with the pā. They also write:

'Te Waiwaka as a place therefore predates the person Wi Waka and the two names must not be confused.'

This argument could apply to treating the name of the pā and the name of locality as separate features and not confusing them.

The Board could potentially recognise Te Waiwaka as a historic site for the pā, while proceeding with altering Waiwaka to Wi Wāka. However, NKKTNR

¹⁵ <https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/local/1894/12/en/latest/#LMS1421648>

	likely consider the name of the pā should be applied to the wider area regardless.
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Supporting information

1. Board Proposal Report – Wi Waka – 2025-09-15
2. Submissions summary spreadsheet for Wī Wāka
3. Unedited copy of original online Qualtrics platform submissions output for Wī Wāka
4. Supporting information for NKKTNR objections.
5. Correspondence with NKKTNR – 6 November 2025
6. Documents from Archives New Zealand and table of early references