

BRF 24-426 Decisions on altering the name National Park to Waimarino

Ki / To: Hon Chris Penk, Minister for Land Information

Rā / Date: 3 December 2024

Ngā mahi matua kia mahia/key actions required

Minita/Minister	Key actions required: Agree/note/forward	Deadline when this action should be completed by
Hon Chris Penk, Minister for Land Information	<p>Confirm the decisions of the New Zealand Geographic Board Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa to alter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Park (village) to Waimarino, and National Park Station to Waimarino Railway Station 	There is no deadline for your decision

Toitū Te Whenua Land Information New Zealand Whakapā/contacts

Ingoa/Name	Tūnga/Position	Nama waea/ Contact number	Whakapā tuatahi/first contact
Anselm Haanen	Board Chairperson	04 4600376 or 027 249 5901	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Wendy Shaw	Board Secretary	04 4600581 or 027 4807082	<input type="checkbox"/>

Ngā kōrero a te Minita/Minister’s comments

Pūtake/Purpose

To seek your final determinations on altering:

- National Park (village) to Waimarino, and
- National Park Station to Waimarino Railway Station.

Pānui whāinga/Key messages

- 1 The proposal came from mana whenua, Uenuku/Te Korowai o Wainuiārua¹. They seek restoration of the original Māori name, as given to railway station and the 'Town of Waimarino' subdivision in the early 1900s.
- 2 The names were changed to National Park from 1926 to develop and promote the location and to avoid postal issues. However, some maps continued to use Waimarino for the village until the 1970s.
- 3 s.9(2)(ba) [Redacted]
- 4 Waimarino refers to the 'calm waters' pooling on the plains as they come down from the maunga.
- 5 National Park, while not within Tongariro National Park, was named as a gateway to Tongariro National Park.
- 6 During public notification the Board received 2,582 submissions on the two proposals (from 2,122 individual submitters), with 1,793 supporting, 785 objecting and 4 neutral. This is the highest number of submissions received for any proposal since 2013. The high numbers are partly due to the sustained media coverage. Therefore, your final determinations are expected to attract public and media interest.
- 7 The proposals received wide institutional support including from Ruapehu District Council and other iwi organisations. However, the local community is divided with approximately 83% of the village's residents making submissions: 119 objecting and 31 supporting.
- 8 The Board's place naming decisions are not based on percentages and totals – majority votes should not persuade the outcomes. Rather, how the reasons measure against good place naming practice and legislative functions to support the most appropriate outcome.
- 9 Objecting submissions were mainly received in group petitions from 'Residents, friends, ratepayers of National Park Village'. They also made an alternative proposal: that National Park be changed to 'National Park Village' to match local use, business branding, and potentially help solve any potential ambiguity of the name National Park.

¹ Te Korowai o Wainuiārua is a Large Natural Group (LNG) who represent the descendants of three tūpuna - Uenuku, Tamakana and Tamahaki. Uenuku Charitable Trust ('Uenuku') is mandated to represent Te Korowai o Wainuiārua in Treaty settlement negotiations with the Crown.

- 10 The Board considered whether dual names might be appropriate. However, the Board decided against this as 'Waimarino / National Park' would be confusing and easily mistaken for the name of a national park. The Board also did not support alternative official names, where either could be used, as it considered that the intention of a gradual transition over time to be unlikely.
- 11 The Board rejected the objecting submissions on the basis that their reasons didn't outweigh its original reasons for accepting the proposals, essentially that the current name was ambiguous and confusing, and the original Māori name should be restored to recognise culture and heritage.
- 12 There is no statutory timeframe for you to make your final determinations. If you wish to consider options other than those provided here, please liaise with Toitū Te Whenua Land Information New Zealand's (LINZ).

Tohutohu/Recommendations

It is recommended that you:

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| 1 | whakamana/confirm the decisions of the Board to alter: | <i>Yes / No /
Different decision</i> |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Park to Waimarino, and • National Park Station to Waimarino Railway Station. | |
| 2 | manatu/note that if you reject the Board's decisions your determinations on the proposals are final. National Park (village) and National Park Station will remain as unofficial place names. | <i>Noted</i> |
| 3 | whakamana/confirm whether you or the Board will issue a media release on your final decisions. LINZ will work with your office on the content of the media release. | <i>Board/
Minister</i> |



Anselm Haanen
**Chairperson, New Zealand Geographic
 Board Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa**

Rā/Date: 14 June 2023

Hon Chris Penk

**Te Minita mō Toitū te Whenua/
 Minister for Land Information**

Rā/Date:

Tāpiritanga/Attachments

Provided at the end of this report:

Te tūwāhi mapere/Location map

Electronically available via Objective Connect:

- 1 Proposals for Waimarino and Waimarino Station received from Ueunku/Te Korowai o Wainuiārua on 8 August 2023 and 21 August 2023
- 2 *Proposals Report* considered by the Board at its 3 October 2023 hui
- 3 *Submissions Report* summarising the submissions that the Board considered at its 30 April 2024 hui
- 4 Spreadsheet summarising all submissions received online or by direct email for Waimarino and Waimarino Railway Station proposals
- 5 Spreadsheet of submissions received online for Waimarino (objecting or supporting)
- 6 Supporting submissions received by email for Waimarino
- 7 Objecting submissions received by email for Waimarino
- 8 Spreadsheet of submissions received online for Waimarino Railway Station (objecting or supporting)
- 9 Supporting submissions received by email for Waimarino Railway Station
- 10 Objecting submissions received by email for Waimarino Railway Station
- 11 Additional information received/subtractions to online submissions, received by email
- 12 Late submissions received by email
- 13 Neutral submissions received by email
- 14 The Board's [bilingual media advisory distributed on 7 November 2023](#)
- 15 Facebook post [7 November 2023](#)
- 16 Facebook post [5 February 2024](#)
- 17 Media articles

Te Horopaki/Background

- 1 In August 2023 the Board received proposals from Uenuku/Te Korowai o Wainuiārua to alter National Park (village) to Waimarino and National Park Station to Waimarino Station. See **Attachment 1** for the proposals.
- 2 The proposers provided evidence of support for the village proposal from Ōwhango-National Park Community Board, Ruapehu District Council, the Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand, Tongariro-Taupō Conservation Board and Visit Ruapehu. The village proposal also included some supporting and objecting views from local residents.
- 3 As an original Māori name, Waimarino relates to the plains (Waimarino Plains) northwest of Hauhungatahi (mountain) where National Park (village) is located, and to Waimarino Stream which drains the south side of the plains.
- 4 In 1902 Waimarino County was created. In 1908 Waimarino Station opened on the North Island Main Trunk railway line and in 1910 a 'Town of Waimarino' was surveyed adjacent to the railway station. However, in 1910 Kaitieke County was split out from the northern part of Waimarino County and included the new railway station and 'town'.
- 5 In 1926 the Minister of Railways agreed to alter Waimarino Station to National Park Station. Locals sought to promote and develop the location through its association with Tongariro National Park, and to prevent confusion as mail for Waimarino County (at Raetihi) and Waimarino electorate (at Taumarunui) was arriving at Waimarino Station.
- 6 The Honorary Geographic Board initially protested against changing the Māori name, but assented following correspondence with the Minister for Railways. Local use of National Park for the settlement followed the change to the railway station name, although there was no formal decision.
- 7 In the 1950s and 1960s the Board considered and declined three proposals to alter National Park to Waimarino from the National Parks Authority and Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand. Its decisions were based on local opposition, potential for confusion with other Waimarino names in the wider area, and the established use of National Park.
- 8 There remains a strong association with the name 'Waimarino' to the south around Raetihi, such as the current Waimarino-Waiouru Community Board under Ruapehu District Council, dozens of 'Waimarino' businesses and organisations and the annual Waimarino A&P show.

The Board's decision on the proposals

- 9 At its hui on 3 October 2023 the Board accepted the proposal to alter National Park to Waimarino (See **Attachment 2** for the *Proposals Report*) based on
 - The Board's function to encourage the use of original Māori names and recognising the traditional narratives and cultural values associated with the name Waimarino and the area as it originally applied to.
 - The existing name National Park not being suitable for a village and creating confusion, as there are many actual national parks.
 - Support from:

- Ōwhango-National Park Community Board
 - Ruapehu District Council (the relevant Local authority)
 - Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand
 - Tongariro-Taupō Conservation Board
 - KiwiRail
 - Visit Ruapehu
 - Some evidence of local support (ie those living in the area), noting also evidence of local opposition.
 - The Board’s primary responsibility to name geographic features and its purpose to achieve a coordinated and standardised approach to official naming, noting evidence of longstanding confusion about the name of the village, partly because no name was made official.
- 10 The Board also accepted a new proposal to alter the name of the railway station from National Park Station to Waimarino Railway Station (rather than the proposed Waimarino Station) based on
- The Board’s longstanding consideration that railway stations should typically be named for the populated places they service for consistency and to prevent confusion for travellers and tourists.
 - Ensuring standard and consistent generic terminology for official railway station names, ie ‘Railway Station’ not ‘Station’.
 - The rail operator, KiwiRail, agreeing to the proposal, which is a Board requirement for railway feature name proposals.
 - Support from Ōwhango-National Park Community Board and Ruapehu District Council, and likely support from the other institutions which specifically supported the proposed name of the village.

Mātanga kōrero/Consultation

- 11 The Board publicly notified the proposals between 7 November 2023 and 8 February 2024.
- 12 During the notification period the Board received 2,582 submissions from 2,122 individual submitters:

Proposed name	Supporting	Objecting	Neutral	Total
Waimarino	1,634	453	2	2,089
Waimarino Railway Station	159	332	2	493
Total	1,793	785	4	2,582

- 13 At its hui on 30 April 2024 the Board considered the submissions. See **Attachment 3** for the *Submissions Report* that the Board considered, **Attachment 4** for a spreadsheet organising and categorising all submissions and **Attachments 5-13** for the original submissions.

- 14 The supporting submissions for Waimarino (village) predominantly gave restoring an original Māori name as a reason for their support. Other common reasons from submitters included
- Considering the proposed Waimarino to be beautiful and meaningful, National Park conversely to be generic and meaningless as a place name.
 - Waimarino connecting to Māori heritage and the location and having relevance as the original name of the wider area. National Park conversely having no heritage values or deep connection.
 - Supporting te reo Māori in general, Māori place names in general.
 - Supporting the wishes of Uenuku/Te Korowai o Wainuiārua, supporting Māori self-determination, indigenous rights, etc.
- 15 For the railway station, the Board received fewer supporting submissions. They generally echoed the same reasons for the village name, some with reasons specific to the railway station, such as
- Consistency with the proposal for the village.
 - The Crown broke promises to Māori in relation to the railway, having agreed to it passing through the area and to establish a railway station, so the proposal can be a small form of cultural redress.
- 16 Most objecting submissions for each proposal were in the form of group petitions from 'Residents, friends, ratepayers' with ~280 signatories (counted as individual submissions in the table above). The petitioners considered that a group submission would show strength and unity, fearing their voices would be drowned out by an overwhelming number of outsiders with no real stake in the proposals.
- 17 The main reasons for objecting to the proposal for the village were that National Park is considered to be an iconic place name and an internationally recognised brand. The objecting submitters expressed their strong personal associations and pride in the name as part of their identity. They consider the name National Park to be intrinsically tied to the village and the livelihoods of everyone living there, particularly through national and international tourism. They emphasised that they were the ones who built up National Park and contribute to the life of the village.
- 18 The objecting submitters also considered that altering the name of the village would incur costs. Given that the 'National Park Village' brand is intertwined with the place name, they considered it would force them to attempt to rebrand at the worst possible time, citing the aftereffects of COVID, Ruapehu Alpine Lifts being in receivership, Chateau Tongariro being shuttered, etc. They considered that rebranding was unlikely to succeed in the long run as Waimarino would not achieve the same recognition.
- 19 The group petition and a number of individual submitters also proposed the alternative name 'National Park Village' rather than supporting the existing name. They considered this would make official what is already in local use, including on signage and in tourist information, and that the addition of 'Village' would resolve any real or perceived ambiguity around the existing name.

- 20 The most common objecting reasons for the railway station are similar
- The railway station is iconic, travellers strongly identify with the name, and it has global recognition as a destination and gateway to the national park.
 - The name of the railway station carries the important histories of the North Island Main Trunk railway line, stories of industry in the central North Island and the story of the village itself, since it was born of the railway station.
 - The name must continue to be consistent with the name of the populated place it serves.
- 21 Objecting submissions in the group petition supported either retaining the existing unofficial name, National Park Station, or alternatively National Park Railway Station, in full.

Ngā tatūnga o te poari/The Board's decision

- 22 At its 30 April 2024 hui the Board rejected the objecting submissions as it did not consider their reasons to outweigh its original reasons for accepting the proposals, plus these additional reasons subsequent to public notification
- Some additional evidence of local support, but recognising a large percentage of the supporting submissions came from outside the community, and notwithstanding that most of the resident population of the village objected to the proposal, and further objections were received from others in the surrounding area.
 - Evidence of additional iwi support from Ngāti Hāua, Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāti Rangī and Patutokotoko.
 - The alternative proposal to alter National Park to National Park Village would not resolve concerns around confusion and ambiguity of the existing name.
 - The Board will take a softer compliance approach to give people ample time to change (more than a decade), recognising that they have other priorities.
 - The Board had already considered the evidence regarding the history of Waimarino as an original Māori name, its relationship to the location of the original settlement further south, and its 20th century application to the name of the railway station and the 'Town of Waimarino' survey.
- 23 Because the Board didn't uphold the objections you must now make the final determinations as required by section 20(1) of the New Zealand Geographic Board Act 2008.

Hīraunga ahumoni/Financial Implications

- 24 Official documents and documents produced for travellers and tourists are required to use official names. There is no legal requirement for businesses to otherwise use official place names, although many will want to or feel they need to. They can choose to use them, and when.
- 25 National Park Village Business Association made a submission advising of its concern around the financial implications of any name change due to its 'National Park Village' brand.

26 To minimise costs, the Board will adopt a soft approach to compliance by allowing changes to be made over an extended period. For example, road signage can be updated during regular maintenance and replacement cycles.

Hunga pāpāho/Media

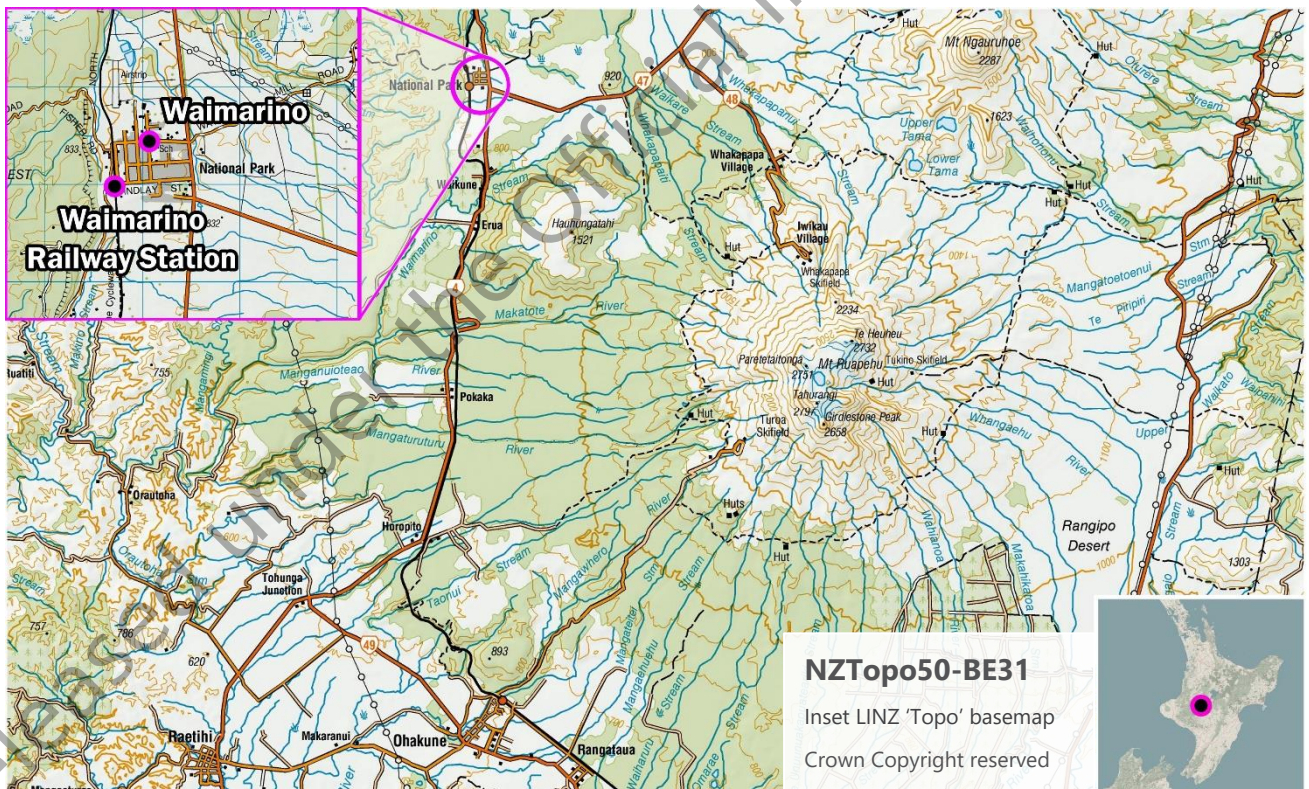
27 The Board’s bilingual media advisory and Facebook posts were released in November 2023. See **Attachments 14-16**.

28 There has been significant media interest in the proposals and media anticipate your final determinations². See **Attachment 17** for a table of media articles. You have the option to issue a media release on your final decisions or the Board can do this instead.

Ngā Tāwhaitanga/Next Steps

29 Once you make your final determinations on the proposals, they will be notified as required by the New Zealand Geographic Board Act 2008.

Te tūwāhi mapere/Location map



² eg 'Iwi bid for National Park name change referred to Land Information Minister' – 10 May 2024