

Submissions considered by the Board on 22 June 2023 for: Kororāreka (township)

[altered from Russell]



Summary

At its hui on 2 December 2022 the Board accepted a proposal from Kororāreka Marae Komiti to alter the recorded¹ (unofficial) name of the township, Russell, to its original Māori name, Kororāreka.

During the public notification period between 18 January 2023 and 18 April 2023 the Board received 1821 submissions, with 955 in support and 866 submissions objecting to the proposal. Of the objecting submissions, 116 supported including Kororāreka in some form, such as an alternative or dual name.

The main reasons in the supporting submissions are largely based on:

- restoring the original Māori place name,
- a desire to remove a colonial/culturally inappropriate name that commemorates a person who had no ancestral tie, spiritual connection or significant affiliation to the township or New Zealand,
- honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi partnership obligations, and
- the proposed name representing a move to become a more inclusive bicultural society.

The reasons given in the objecting submissions include:

¹ A recorded place name is one that has appeared on at least two authoritative publications, ie maps, charts or databases, which the Board has resolved to be: NZMS map, Toitū Te Whenua LINZ Archived Place Names Database, [Kā Huru Manu](#), and all hydrographic and bathymetric maps and charts published under a New Zealand hydrographic authority at the time of publication. A recorded name is not official.

- long term use of Russell and it being an established and recognised tourism brand,
- the change being confusing and costly,
- the historical significance of Russell and it being an attempt to erase early colonial history from the maps/land,
- Lord Russell being important/prominent in the (British) founders' culture of the time, and
- the proposal being divisive and a waste of time, money and resources, and panders to a minority.

On the basis of the submissions received, two options are provided to the Board, noting that whichever option is chosen the final decision will rest with the Minister for Land Information:

1. Confirm your decision to alter the unofficial township name Russell to the official name Kororāreka, or
2. Uphold the 45 objecting submissions that proposed Kororāreka and Russell² as alternative official place names meaning both names could be used either separately or together.

Seventy-one objecting submissions proposed an official dual name, Kororāreka / Russell, in multiple variations of format interpreted to be a dual name. However, this is not an option as both parts of the name must be used together which would lock in both names, and the Board has already considered and rejected dual naming at its December 2022 hui.

Both dual and alternative names are discouraged for addressable places in the Australia/New Zealand addressing standard. And while an option for alternative names is presented, they are also discouraged in the Board's *Standard for New Zealand place names*. Notwithstanding that the Board has previously accepted dual names for populated places, for example, Maniaiti / Benneydale and Pūkoro / Miranda.

The Board agreed that no extent/boundary would be notified for consultation, so it is again not being recommended that an extent be made official. However, the issues with the use of Russell for significantly greater areas than the township in the NZ Suburbs and Localities dataset may need to be discussed with Toitū Te Whenua LINZ³.

Board's decision

At its 22 June 2023 hui the Board made this decision on the proposal:

The Board **considered** all **1821** submissions and their reasons on the proposal to **alter** the recorded (unofficial) township name Russell to the official name **Kororāreka**,
and
Rejected the **866** objecting submissions (including those that proposed alternative names or dual names) based on the reasons provided not outweighing the reasons that the Board originally accepted for the proposal and additional reasons, being:

² Includes Russell and Kororareka (no macron) and Russell and Kororaareka (double [a]) proposed as alternative names.

³ Land Information New Zealand

- the Board's functions to investigate and determine the priority of the discovery of a geographic feature, and to collect and encourage the use of original Māori names on official charts and maps,
- evidence that Kororāreka is the original Māori name for the township and is already commonly used and widely known,
- dual and alternative names being discouraged for addresses in the Australia/New Zealand addressing standard,
- the risk of potential confusion for emergency responses and maritime safety/navigational aid being low,
- Te Rūnanga ā Iwi o Ngāpuhi supporting the proposal,
- the Far North District Council supporting the proposed change (noting their reservations about cost and wide consultation),
- a number of objecting submissions supporting Kororāreka in some form, and
- the costs of transitioning to the new name being minimized by adopting a soft approach to compliance over an extended period.

and

Confirmed the Board's earlier decision to alter the recorded (unofficial) township name Russell to the official township name **Kororāreka**,

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.

Background

Board minutes
22 December
2022
[abridged]

The Board noted Ngātiwai Trust Board's letter of support dated 24 November 2022 had been tabled. The Board noted the options of single, dual or alternative names. The Far North District Council supports the proposal, but it has concerns about the cost of transitioning; however, alternative names would offer a transition path. There appears to be community support for the outright change and there is no doubt that Kororāreka is the original Māori name. Kororāreka is well known in the Northland Region, so it might not be a long period of adjustment. There is a ground swell for change in New Zealand and having a complete name change would be a progressive and bold move and now could be the right time. Perhaps more so than any other example, Kororāreka was well known, accepted and could have currency and specificity as an (unofficial) alternative name. Lord Russell, who had been a British Prime Minister, was a progressive politician. It isn't usual for the Board to change outright the names of populated places, and this would be a test case. The name Russell would still be present in the landscape in Russell Forest and Russell Road.

Notification

Advice to
mana
whenua

On 5 December 2022 the Secretariat advised Te Rūnanga ā Iwi o Ngāpuhi, Ngātiwai Trust Board and the Far North District Council that the Board would be publicly notifying the proposal for submissions for three months on 18 January 2023.

Moko Tepania, Te Kahika o Te Hiku o te Ika (Mayor of the Far North District Council) responded 'this is excellent news'.

Advice to MPs	On 18 January 2023 the Secretariat advised the Members of Parliament for Te Tai Tokerau and Northland and all adjacent electorates that the proposal was open for submissions until 18 April 2023.
Public notification including social media	The Board advertised the proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in the New Zealand Gazette, <i>Sunday Star Times</i>, <i>Northern Advocate</i>, <i>Northern News</i> and <i>Northland Age</i>, and • on the Toitū Te Whenua LINZ⁴ Consultation and Facebook[™] pages, and the New Zealand Government's Consultation page.
Other notification	The proposers held public hui during the consultation period to discuss their proposal. Board member Chanel Clarke attended one of the hui and provided advice on the process for assigning official place names.

Media

The Board released a [media advisory](#) in English and te reo Māori on 18 and 19 January 2023 respectively, which was also posted on the Toitū Te Whenua LINZ website. A number of media articles were published during the public consultation period including:

- [Russell or Kororāreka? Historic Bay of Islands town could return to its original Māori name](#)
- [Restoring Russell to original name of Kororāreka: Former Prime Minister Dame Jenny Shipley backs proposal](#)
- [Town of Russell could soon go back to its original Māori name](#)
- [NZ Geographic Board wants feedback on proposal to change name of Russell to Kororāreka](#)
- [Russell or Kororāreka? People on the street offer mixed views](#)
- [Far North Council supports Russell-Kororāreka name change, but with conditions](#)
- [Proposal to change name of Russell township to original Māori name](#)
- [‘It’s Kororāreka – it always has been and always will be’](#)
- [Kororāreka and Russell talks](#)
- [Kororāreka or Russell? Locals debate name change in public meetings](#)
- [Kororāreka gains support to return to original name](#)
- [Give Kororāreka name a go, marae chair tells reluctant Russell residents](#)
- [Yeah, Nah: Should Russell township be renamed Kororāreka?](#)
- [Russell locals already calling the town Kororāreka, as name ‘restoration’ proposed](#)

Newstalk ZB pre-recorded an interview with the Secretary on 18 January 2023.

Submissions

Summary	During the notification period between 18 January 2023 and 18 April 2023 the Board received 1821 submissions, with 955 in support and 866 objecting to the proposal. Not counted in these figures are:
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⁴ Land Information New Zealand

- two objecting submissions not accepted under instruction from the Chairperson because they contain abusive content, and
- three objecting submissions that haven't provided reasons, so do not meet the requirements of [section 17 of the NZGB Act 2008](#).

Submission method	Supporting	Objecting	Total
Online form	921	783	1704
Email or letter	34	83	117
	955	866	1821

Two late objecting submissions and one late supporting submission which the Chairperson has accepted under delegation⁵ are included in the totals.

The supporting submissions are categorised below by theme. The Secretariat has commented on some of the objecting submissions. Full copies of all submissions are in the Supporting information.

Local engagement

This table has the location of all submitters based on volunteered information, which is collected to inform on the level of local community engagement. It does not indicate that they have a greater influence on the outcome of the proposal.

	Russell	Rest of NZ	International	Unknown	Total
Supporting	113	818	8	16	955
Objecting	83	717	2	64	866
Total	196	1535	10	80	1821

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.

Validity of the submissions

Based on the content of their submissions, two submitters who ticked 'I object' clearly support the proposal and one submitter who ticked 'I support' objects to it. In the summary spreadsheets these submissions have been moved to the correct category and identified for the Board's reference. Two objecting submitters subsequently requested that their submissions be withdrawn.

Several submitters noted that Russell was incorrectly spelled as 'Russel' in one place in the online submission form. This error had no material effect on the submissions.

The Board notified this proposal at the same time as the proposals for Te Awa o Mokotūāraro, Te Kamo and Ngāmoko Stream, receiving 11 objecting submissions that didn't specify which proposal they were objecting to. The Board considered these submissions at its 26 April 2023 hui with the Te Awa o Mokotūāraro proposal and rejected them. They are included in Supporting information for reference.

Comments on boundary extent

A supporting submitter has suggested that the township's boundaries could be based on the 1838 boundary of the 'Kororarika Association', which defined the limits of 'Kororarika district' as being 'from Matavy [Matawhi Bay] to Brind's Bay, in a straight line across the land of Oneroa, or the Long Sandy Beach, and all the land bounded by the coast from (sic) the Beach to the Bay'.

Another supporting submitter has commented that the name Russell has wider use and should be retained for the wider area/peninsula. However, a submitter objecting to Russell has suggested that the wider area be renamed Kororāreka.

⁵ Delegation #6, Delegations schedule version 8 – 2019-04-11 (Linzone ID: A3473630). The Board may delegate any of its powers, functions, and duties in terms of Schedule 1, clause 6 NZGB Act 2008.

The NZ Suburbs and Localities dataset, which was developed by emergency services and is used by Toitū Te Whenua LINZ for property addressing, names the wider peninsula area as Russell. Russell is also used as the 'major locality/city' name for an area that stretches as far as Cape Brett 21.5km to the northeast and Pararauni Point 26km to the southeast. If Russell was to be altered to Kororāreka (for the township), the Secretariat will recommend changes to the dataset.

Summary of the 955 supporting submissions

The main reasons provided in the supporting submissions are that the proposal would:

- restore the original Māori name, which is a meaningful, well-known and well-used name that has been in long term use and has history well before colonisation,
- right a wrong and restore the kōrero of the name, which has a meaning and connection specific to that place and evokes the eventful past,
- remove a colonial/culturally inappropriate name that commemorates a person who never visited New Zealand and who had no spiritual connection, ancestral tie or significant affiliation to the township or land,
- honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi partnership obligations that Māori maintain their language, culture and identity, and demonstrate that Māori culture is valued,
- remind the community of the land's whakapapa and as a sign of respect and affirmation for the tangata whenua,
- restore the mana of the whenua and town,
- be an opportunity for everyone including international visitors to engage with Māori culture and would solidify our national identity to tourists and internationally.

Other reasons in support are that:

- it is a distinctive, unique, authentic, beautiful, symbolic name that tells the story of a historic event of mana whenua and their relationship with the environment,
- Kororā (Little blue penguins) were important to Māori for survival at the time, they symbolise the place and remind us of our obligation to protect them as their numbers are in decline,
- no other places are named Kororāreka, and the name distinguishes it from the many other places in the world named Russell,
- we need to move away from the idea of New Zealand being a British colony and remember that our history didn't begin with the arrival of Europeans,
- it is the only town in the Northland Region that doesn't have its original Māori name,
- it isn't the original location of Russell, which was the name intended for the town proposed at Okiato.

One supporting submitter noted that as Secretary of State for War and the Colonies (1839-1841) Lord Russell, as Hobson's ultimate superior, was Great Britain's counterparty to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and made important British decisions about New Zealand at the time.

Many supporting submitters also support restoring all original Māori place names, and 28 of the supporting submitters indicated that they would also support alternative or dual names.

Summary of the 866 objecting submissions and the Secretariat's comments

Reasons summarised	Secretariat comments
<p>Russell is an established and recognised brand in the tourism industry and has a strong national and international identity.</p> <p>It will confuse tourists/overseas visitors and have a significant negative impact on tourism. Businesses have goodwill tied up in the name. It would be a commercial disaster and destroy decades of marketing and branding.</p> <p>Overseas tourists like exotic and foreign culture but they need to identify and be comfortable with it. Māori culture and te reo is completely strange to overseas tourists.</p>	<p>While it may take time for people to get used to a change, it will not impact on branded products and businesses, which can use whatever name they like. There are no compliance requirements for businesses to change their names should the name be altered.</p> <p>Many tourists come to New Zealand expecting to connect with Māori culture, and international visitors, particularly from Europe, are increasingly aware of issues around decolonisation.</p>
<p>Russell is an iconic name that is easy to recognise/remember/pronounce/spell, has been in long term use and is well known.</p>	<p>The Board carefully considers long term use of names and the potential disruption a change might cause, especially for populated places. However, it has a statutory function to encourage the use of original Māori names. Kororāreka is an original Māori name that has historical, ancestral, traditional and cultural significance to mana whenua.</p>
<p>Cost/huge expense of commercial rebranding (printing, signage, promotion material etc.).</p> <p>Waste of time and money. There is no specific funding to support changes to government and local body websites, road signage, international and domestic tourist publications, maps, references etc. Public money should be spent in more useful ways. It will divert energy, resources and funding that should be focused on the roading crisis in the Far North.</p> <p>Search engines and GPS devices will need to be updated. Algorithms won't recognise the new name for many years.</p>	<p>Most documents that are required to use official place names are maintained electronically so the cost to update them is minimal. While the Board expects updates to place names on physical products such as road signs are made in a timely manner, this can take place during regular maintenance updates and replacement cycles, thus minimising/absorbing costs.</p> <p>The government funds the Board to consider place names, and it has previously noted that the Far North District Council supports the proposal but had reservations about the cost of change.</p> <p>A search for 'Kororāreka accommodation' provides 140 options for hotels in the vicinity of Russell.</p>
<p>It is divisive. Favouring one heritage or tradition over another risks inequity and resentment.</p> <p>New Zealand has more significant social issues than 'troubling' historical place names.</p>	<p>The proposal exercises the Board's function to encourage the use of original Māori names.</p> <p>In terms of prioritisation, consideration of place name proposals is the Board's purpose. It must consider proposals that meet its requirements</p>

	and advance each step of the statutory process as soon as reasonably practicable.
Kororāreka glorifies/justifies killing and eating Little blue penguins, which are a protected species that are now endangered. We shouldn't remember the decimation of a native species this way.	The strength of the connection of a name to a place is a key consideration for the Board. Many of New Zealand's place names tell of a cultural tradition at a point in time. Kororāreka is based on a kōrero of when kororā were a traditional food source in the area. However, they are now in decline and a protected species under the Wildlife Act.
<p>People have a right to vote/public referendum on the change. The Board doesn't have a mandate to adopt a new name for the town. Residents should be the ones to decide.</p> <p>Altering Russell to Kororāreka has no bearing on the Treaty of Waitangi. The provision in the NZGB Act 2008 for the Board to collect and encourage using original Māori place names on official maps and charts does not mandate its power under section 10(1)(c) to start changing town names to Māori.</p>	<p>The Board is mandated as New Zealand's statutory authority for place names, and it is required to consider place names in terms of good naming practice, and to make the decisions.</p> <p>The number of submissions supporting the proposal outweigh those objecting.</p> <p>The NZGB Act 2008 states that 'in order to carry out its principal functions under section 10' it may 'collect and encourage the use of original Māori names'. The functions to collect and encourage are intended to give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi.</p>
<p>Lord Russell was important/prominent in the founders' culture of the time. He had a solid role in the creation of the nation and is equal in mana to any local chief who consumed Little blue penguins.</p> <p>Russell is appropriate because it was given by the co-signer of the Treaty.</p> <p>We shouldn't be trying to erase all of our early colonial history from the maps/land. It is part of our history that can't be reversed.</p>	<p>As the British Secretary of State for the Colonies and Hobson's superior at the time Te Tiriti o Waitangi was signed, Lord Russell played a key part in New Zealand becoming a colony of the British Empire. However, he had no ancestral tie or spiritual connection to the township or New Zealand.</p> <p>Determining the most appropriate name for a feature isn't rewriting history, noting that Kororāreka was the first name used and continues to be used locally, and the names affected by the Board's decisions remain discoverable in the <i>New Zealand Gazetteer</i>.</p>
<p>Kororāreka is too long, hard to remember, difficult to pronounce and spell, inappropriate, and cumbersome in comparison.</p> <p>People don't understand or want to use the Māori language or place names.</p> <p>It will create confusion and anxiety and hinder clear communication about location.</p>	<p>Kororāreka isn't a long name, and although people may struggle at first, it isn't overly difficult to pronounce.</p> <p>The Board promotes te reo Māori, which is an official language of New Zealand, through its Treaty obligations and legislation, which encourage the use of original Māori place names.</p>

	<p>New or changed names are initially resisted by some but are ultimately accepted and come into everyday use.</p> <p>An alteration is unlikely to cause identification issues when communicating with emergency services as they mostly rely on digital technology to locate an emergency. Russell will also be recorded as an alias in emergency services' databases.</p>
<p>Russell has historical significance including as NZ's first capital. Appropriate recognition should be given to the longstanding cultural values associated with the name Russell.</p> <p>Any moral right Māori may have claimed to naming rights went up in smoke when they burnt Kororāreka to ashes. Russell represented a new beginning. The British name should be remembered for the civilising influence they brought to a savage place.</p> <p>Kororāreka has bad connotations, which in the early days of European settlement was known for its lawlessness and violence.</p> <p>Kororāreka is meaningless, has no history, is based on a myth or legend.</p> <p>There are ample Māori names in the area, there should be some balance.</p>	<p>A key purpose of the Board is to provide a way for appropriate recognition to be given to the cultural and heritage values associated with geographic features, whether the names are Māori or non-Māori.</p> <p>One of the Board's functions is to investigate and determine the priority of the discovery of a geographic feature. There is clear evidence that Kororāreka is the original Māori name for the township, and it is currently commonly used and widely known.</p>
<p>New Zealanders don't want the changes being pushed by the government and elite.</p> <p>The name change is already a given – it wastes the public's time asking for submissions.</p> <p>Consultation is a sham.</p>	<p>The Board considers all reasons given in submissions and the most appropriate outcome, which doesn't preclude declining a proposal or assigning a different name.</p> <p>The process allows any objecting submitter to make an alternative proposal.</p>
<p>The history and meaning of Kororāreka is already well promoted at the museum, in heritage tours, etc. and represented in other features named in the area.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
<p>Ancestors wouldn't have agreed to the name change. Has long term family connections to the area.</p>	<p>'Place' has great significance in personal identity and strong personal associations are formed with place names, which often have nothing to do with the origin of the place name.</p>
<p>There are too many Māori names already. It is confusing for non-Māori speakers when only Māori names are used for places.</p> <p>Place names should reflect New Zealand's ethnic and cultural diversity.</p>	<p>Approximately 60% of the names for populated places are identified as Māori in the <i>New Zealand Gazetteer</i>.</p>

<p>Other names proposed:</p> <p>Russell and Kororāreka (37)</p> <p>Russell and Kororareka (7)</p> <p>Russell and Kororaareka (1)</p> <p>Kororāreka / Russell (4)</p> <p>Kororareka / Russell (7)</p> <p>Russell / Kororāreka (22)</p> <p>Russell / Kororareka (10)</p> <p>Russell (Kororāreka) (1)</p> <p>Russell (Kororareka) (1)</p> <p>Kororāreka Russell (1)</p> <p>Kororareka Russell (6)</p> <p>Russell Kororareka (5)</p> <p>Russell-Kororareka (6)</p> <p>Russell-Kororāreka (4)</p> <p>Kororāreka-Russell (1)</p> <p>Kororareka-Russell (2)</p> <p>Russel/ Kororaeka (1)</p> <p>Russle (1)</p> <p>Pokapū (1)</p> <p>Ataahua (1)</p> <p>wai whakapaipai (1)</p> <p>Whangahaumarū (1)</p> <p>Brussell Sprout (1)</p> <p>Jack Russell (1)</p> <p>Cook's Bay (1)</p> <p>Timatanga (1)</p>	<p>Some of these proposed names are ambiguous – it not always being clear if they are proposing a dual name or alternative names. However, of the objecting submitters who proposed other names, Russell and Kororāreka as alternative names (in various formats and differing orthography) was popular.</p> <p>Both dual and alternative names are discouraged for addressable places in the Australia/New Zealand addressing standard. A dual name may not be considered as both parts of the name must be used together, which would lock in both names. However, there are examples of dual names for populated places in Aotearoa New Zealand, for example, Maniāiti / Benneydale.</p> <p>The Board's <i>Standard for New Zealand place names</i> states that there should be one name for one place, and alternative names are only assigned in exceptional circumstances. However, the Board may consider an option of Kororāreka and Russell being assigned as alternative official place names. This would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - recognise the equal and special significance and history of both names, - overcome some of the problems that wholesale replacement could cause, such as loss of identity and confusion especially in an emergency, - address concerns about the costs of an outright alteration, and - indicate the Board's intention to transition to the original Māori name. <p>The community and tourists would become familiar with using Kororāreka and it could become accepted over time when it may become the only official name in use.</p> <p>No compelling reasons were provided for altering Russell to Russle, Pokapū, Ataahua, wai whakapaipai, Whangahaumarū, Brussell Sprout, Jack Russell, Cook's Bay or Timatanga.</p>
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Supporting information

1. Board report – Kororāreka – 2022-12-02
2. Supporting submissions received via the online platform
3. Supporting submissions received via email
4. Objecting submissions received via the online platform

5. Objecting submissions received via email
6. Late submissions
7. Eleven miscellaneous objections (no proposal specified)