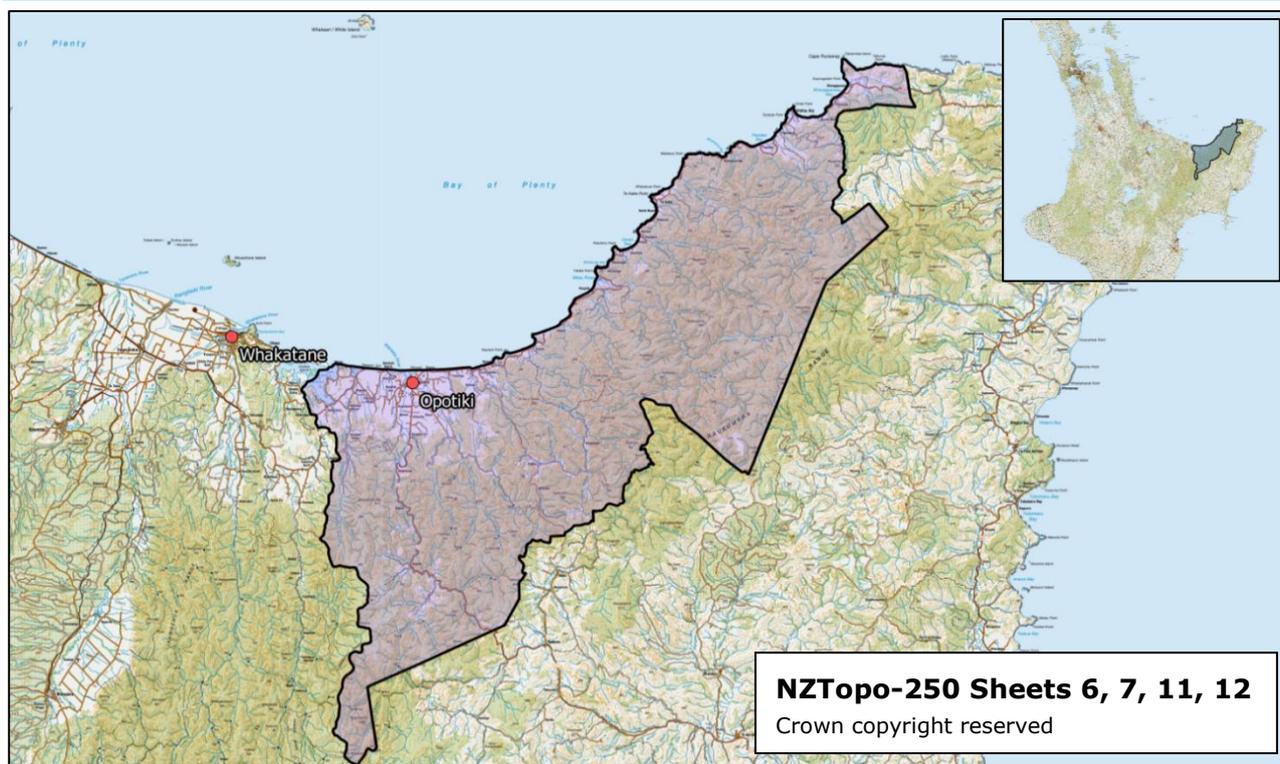


Proposal considered by the NZGB on 20 June 2019 for: Ōpōtiki District [altered from Opotiki District]



Summary

On 5 June 2018 Otago District Council (ODC) resolved to alter the name of its local authority district from the official name Otago District to **Ōpōtiki District**.

The alteration will formalise ODC's existing practices using 'Ōpōtiki' on its promotional material. ODC also advises other organisations in the district are already using 'Ōpōtiki'. ODC advises that officially correcting the spelling will recognise the importance of its partnerships with mana whenua and promote te reo Māori and tikanga.

ODC provided a tradition for the origin of the name: Ōpōtiki is a contraction of 'Ōpōtiki-Mai-Tawhiti'. After arriving in Aotearoa the tipuna Tarawa released his pet tanahanaha (fish) into a spring. The spring became known as 'Ōpōtiki-Mai-Tawhiti' meaning 'the pets from afar'. Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori (the Māori Language Commission) (TTWh) confirmed that Ōpōtiki is the correct orthography based on this meaning.

ODC has provided a letter of support from Whakatōhea Māori Trust Board, but no evidence of consultation with other Māori groups in the wider district. ODC has also provided evidence of support from Kawerau District Council, but not the adjacent territorial authorities, Whakatane District and Gisborne District, nor from Bay of Plenty Regional Council.

The Secretariat had not processed the proposal for the NZGB's consideration at its 11 April 2019 meeting as the minimum consultation requirements were not met. However, at the meeting the Chairperson waived the remaining minimum requirements, in part based on consistency with decisions made to standardise names other Otago names, including Otago (town) in the district, with macrons [ie 'Ōpōtiki']. The Secretariat wrote separately to mana whenua and the local authorities. To date, Whakatane District Council have responded and support the proposal.

An ODC media release in 2018 stated its intention to make this proposal, but ODC does not appear to have publicly consulted on the proposal.

Secretariat recommendation

At its meeting on 20 June 2019 the NZGB noted a letter of support for the proposal from Bay of Plenty Regional Council, and resolved the recommendation.

Accept the proposal to **alter** the official local authority name Opotiki District to **Ōpōtiki District** for the district as defined in Section 5 and listed in Schedule 2 Part 2 Local Government Act 2002, based on:

- the resolution of Opotiki District Council to alter its district's name,
- the NZGB meeting its statutory duty and function to enable certain administrative needs of government to be met,
- Ōpōtiki being the correct standardised orthography as advised by TTWh,
- consistency with decisions on other 'Ōpōtiki' names soon to become official,
- evidence of support from one mana whenua group in the district,
- evidence of support from two neighbouring territorial authorities,

and

Notify as a proposal to alter for one month,

and

Suggest if Ōpōtiki District becomes the official district name that ODC changes its ward name from Opotiki Ward to **Ōpōtiki Ward**.

Secretariat assessment and advice

The proposal

On 5 June 2018 ODC formally resolved 'to commence the process of seeking the inclusion of macrons in the name of Ōpōtiki on the LINZ database system and road signage'. The NZGB received a proposal for the district and the resolution is sufficient in terms of s.11(2) NZGB Act 2008.

ODC state the name is a contraction of Ōpōtiki-Mai-Tawhiti: After arriving in Aotearoa at Paerata, the tipuna Tarawa travelled overland and reached a spring, where he released his pet tanahanaha (fish). The spring became known as 'Ōpōtiki-Mai-Tawhiti' meaning 'the pets from afar'.

ODC has provided brief population demographics, stating the district has a strong connection with Māori history, and cites some examples. ODC advises that standardising the spelling will:

- recognise its commitment to local iwi,
- recognise the importance of te reo Māori and tikanga,
- formalise the spelling that it and other organisations such as schools, community groups, scholars and a noted kapahaka group already use,
- help achieve consistent use of the spelling.

ODC has supplied a letter of support for the proposal from Whakatōhea Māori Trust Board, and evidence of support from Kawerau District Council.

Names shown on plans and a chart

Opotiki District was established in 1989 as part of the local body reorganisation, replacing an identically named Opotiki District and the Ohiwa Harbour Board.

Plan	Date	Name
SO 8391	1989	Opotiki District

SO 334312	2004	Opotiki District
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These maps show some early recorded use of Opotiki as a name:

Maps	Date	Name
Chart of New Zealand	1839	Opotiki [settlement]
Map of the colony of New Zealand	1842	Opotiki [settlement]
MISC(A)68 – Province of Auckland	1857	Opotiki R[iver]
MISCA(D)46 – track from Wairoa to Opotiki and the probable Line of Telegraph	1867	Opotiki [river] Township Opotiki
MISC(D)47 – Country and Town lots Opotiki	1868	Opotiki [town]

Generic term and geographic feature type

The feature is a local authority district as defined in [Section 5 of the Local Government Act 2002](#). The name of Opotiki District Council, who administer the district, will change if the name of the district is altered.

Location and extent of the feature

The district is entirely within the Bay of Plenty Region, bounded by the Bay of Plenty (bay) to the north, Whakatane District to the west and Gisborne District to the southeast.

Current digital boundaries are available online from Statistics NZ¹.

New Zealand Gazetteer, associated names and duplication

Opotiki District is an official local authority district name, established by The Local Government (Bay of Plenty Region) Reorganisation Order 1989.²

The district is divided into three wards, including 'Opotiki Ward'. The NZGB has no jurisdiction over ward names.

Opotiki (town, unofficial recorded) is the largest urban centre in the district.

There are three other iterations of 'Opotiki' in New Zealand: Opotiki (hill) and Opotiki Stream (both unofficial), north of Taumarunui, and Ōpōtiki Bay (official) on the southwest coast of Rangitoto-ki-te-Tonga/D'Urville Island.

At its 11 April 2019 meeting, the NZGB approved Ōpōtiki (town), Ōpōtiki (hill), and Ōpōtiki Stream as official names, standardised with macrons, but the three names are not yet gazetted.

Research, history and references to the feature

Many prior administrative areas of local government have used 'Opotiki' in their names.

The earliest references to the name Opotiki found by the Secretariat (for a Māori settlement) are in Polack (1838)³ and in the records of the Church Missionary Society (starting 1839)⁴.

Reed⁵ records the story/meaning ODC has provided (for Tarawa's tanahaha), and an alternative that the spring 'O-Potiki-mai-tawhiti' was

¹ <https://datafinder.stats.govt.nz/layer/98755-territorial-authority-2019-generalised/>. Accessed 3 May 2019

² *NZ Gazette* 1989 (99) p.2275

³ Polack, J. S. 1838, *New Zealand*, London: Richard Bentley, New Burlington Street

⁴ Communications from Rev. W. Williams, March 25, 1839 ; Aug 28, 1839 - Church Missionary Society (New Zealand Sections only), available from [Early New Zealand Books](#)

⁵ Reed, AW & Dowling, P (ed.), (2010). *Place names of New Zealand*, North Shore: Penguin Group

named for a tipuna 'Potiki'. Reed also states 'the name [Opotiki] is said to date from European time, and the locality was previously 'Pakowha''.

This information may have come from Eldson Best⁶, who also records that the spring 'O-potiki-mai-tawhiti' was on a hill above Waitahe Beach. Some historical maps show Pakowha[i] [locality] rather than Opotiki, eg MISCA(D)5 (1865). Other material specifies 'the principal pā a mile inland from the mouth of Opotiki River was named 'kowhai' [ie pakowha[i]]'⁷.

ODC's current use of 'Ōpōtiki' for its branding is relatively recent, having been considered and adopted at its 22 August 2017 meeting⁸. There is some use of 'Ōpōtiki' on ODC's [website](#) prior to this.

Consultation with iwi

ODC has provided a letter of support from Whakatōhea Māori Trust Board, but no evidence of consultation with any other Māori group.

The Secretariat has requested assistance from Te Puni Kōkiri for consultation with:

- Te Whānau a Apanui
- Ngātai
- Tūhoe
- Te Aitanga ā Māhaki
- Ngāti Porou
- Ngāti Awa
- Te Ūpokorehe

and any other relevant Māori groups in Opotiki District. To date no responses have been received.

Consultation with local authorities

ODC has provided evidence of support for its proposal from Kawerau District Council (which does not adjoin Opotiki District), but no other local authorities.

The Secretariat has separately requested comment on the proposal from:

- Gisborne District Council
- Whakatane District Council
- Bay of Plenty Regional Council

Whakatane District Council has responded, supporting the proposal.

Consultation with others

While ODC announced publicly it would make the proposal, it has not provided any evidence of formal public consultation or with organisations in the district.

Advice on orthography⁹

TTWh advised ODC that Ōpōtiki is the correct standardised orthography.

Relevant sections from the [NZGB Act 2008](#)

[Section 3\(f\) of the NZGB Act 2008](#): enables certain administrative needs of government (including local government) to be met.

[Section 11\(1\)\(f\) of the NZGB Act 2008](#): seek advice from Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori (the Māori Language Commission) on the correct orthography of any Māori name.

⁶ Eldson Best, [Tuhoe, the children of the mist, Origin of Nga-Potiki](#), *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, Volume 23, 1914, pp.38-54. Accessed 7 May 2019

⁷ Letter from Captain Drury of HMS Pandora, Sailing Directons, Wellington Provincial Gazette 1854 (11) p.58

⁸ [Proposed update to logo](#), report for Ordinary Council Meeting 22 August 2017 (p.86-). Accessed 6 May 2019

⁹ The conventions and rules of how to write a language

[Section 11\(2\) of the NZGB Act 2008](#): Without limiting section 260 of the Local Government Act 2002, the Board may alter the name of a district or region if, by resolution, a meeting of the relevant local authority—

- (a) consents to the alteration; or
- (b) requests the alteration.

[Section 22 of the NZGB Act 2008: Alteration of name of local authority](#)

- (1) This section applies if the Board carries out the function to alter the name of a district or region provided for under section 11
- (2) Before the Board may give public notice of a determination to alter the name of a district or region, it must request the Minister to recommend to the Governor-General to make an Order in Council under section 260 of the Local Government Act 2002 to amend the name of the relevant local authority in Schedule 2 of that Act to give effect to the alteration.
- (3) An Order in Council must specify the date when the amendment takes effect, which must allow the Board sufficient time to give public notice as required by section 23(2)(a).

Media

ODC made a press release on 13 June 2018¹⁰ following its resolution on the name. Media has occasionally referred to the proposal in other news¹¹. Further media coverage is possible.

Supporting information

1. Proposal from Opotiki District Council
2. Secretariat map of local authorities
3. Email from Whakatane District Council – 2019-05-22

¹⁰ [Correct Spelling of Opotiki](#), *Scoop.co.nz*, 13 June 2018. Accessed 3 May 2019

¹¹ [Use of tohūtō \(macrons\) a sign of respect](#), *Stuff.co.nz*, 9 September 2018. Accessed 3 May 2019