

# Report on proposals for:

Waitangitāhuna River [altered from Waitangitaona River (recorded name)]

Waitakitāhuna-ki-te-Toka [altered from Waitangitaona River (recorded name)]

## MAP<sup>1</sup>



## SUMMARY

Waitangitaona River on the West Coast of Te Waipounamu was historically one connected river that the proposer advises flowed 'ki uta ki tai, from the mountains to the sea' but in 1967 it became two discrete rivers. Both have continued to be called Waitangitaona River, which is a recorded name that has been in long term use.

Te Rūnanga o Makaawhio (TRoM), who are mana whenua, is seeking to alter Waitangitaona River to its original Māori name **Waitangitāhuna River** for the northern (lower) river, and to assign the Ngāi Tahu dialectal form, **Waitakitāhuna-ki-te-Toka**, without the generic term 'River', to the southern (upper) river.

Waitangitaona River became two discrete rivers in March 1967 after

<sup>1</sup> Land Information New Zealand

flooding triggered an avulsion<sup>2</sup> and the river's flow diverted from its historical route to a new course across an ancient alluvial fan. Most of the southern flow runs into the northeast shore of Lake Wahapo. However, some of the flow was redirected into Graham Creek, which flows into the northern Waitangitaona River at its confluence with Matainui Creek, and then into Tasman Sea.

Major stopbanks were erected on the alluvial fan in the mid-1980s to reduce the possibility of another avulsion of the river back to its former course. The river is unlikely to return to its former course without substantial earthworks.

The southern river flows generally north for approximately 21km from its source below McFetrick Peak in Tatara Range, approximately 14.5km south of Whataroa, into the northeast shore of Lake Wahapo.

The northern river flows generally north then westwards for approximately 28km from its source at the confluence of Graham Creek and Matainui Creek to its mouth at the Tasman Sea, approximately 75km southwest of Hokitika. The water in the northern river is no longer fed by the water in the southern river.

TRoM advises that the spelling 'Waitangitaona' is based on an incorrect mid-19<sup>th</sup> century spelling that is untranslatable. TRoM has provided a copy of a manuscript, which it regards as an authoritative source of correctly spelled place names, with the correct spelling 'Waitangitahuna'.

A Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori (Māori Language Commission) registered translator has advised that the orthography of 'Waitangitāhuna' is correct. TRoM accepts the translator's advice that Waitakitāhuna-ki-te-Toka should be hyphenated and 'Toka' should be upper case.

TRoM's preference is to not retain the English generic term 'River' in the proposal for the southern river. However, assigning Waitakitāhuna-ki-te-Toka without the generic term 'River' may cause identification problems.

Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu supports the proposals, and has no concerns with the orthography. The proposer has not provided evidence of consultation with interested groups. If the NZGB accepts these proposals, then affected groups may make a submission during the notification period.

Both rivers have significant recreational use. Altering Waitangitaona River to Waitangitāhuna River for the northern river, and assigning Waitakitāhuna-ki-te-Toka to the southern river would:

- make it easier to identify the discrete rivers in an emergency,
- recognise the historical significance of each name,
- apply a flexible solution to the contemporary effect of avulsion, and
- meet the NZGB's statutory function to collect and encourage the use of original Māori names on official charts and maps.

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<sup>2</sup> Sudden separation

## SECRETARIAT RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1 **Accept** the proposal to **alter** Waitangitaona River to **Waitangitāhuna River** for the northern (lower) river that flows into the Tasman Sea, based on:

- the NZGB's function to collect original Māori names for recording on official charts and maps,
- documentary evidence of the original Māori name,
- Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori translator having confirmed the standardised orthography, and
- it being of benefit to users to be able to identify the discrete river especially in an emergency,

**and**

**Notify** as a proposal to alter for three months in terms of Section 16 of the NZGB Act 2008.

**AND**

Recommendation 2 ~~**Accept** the proposal to **alter** Waitangitaona River to **Waitakitāhuna-ki-te-Toka** (without the generic term 'River') for the southern (upper) river that flows into Lake Wahapo, based on:~~

- ~~— recognising that the English generic term 'River' is unnecessary,~~
- ~~— the NZGB's function to collect original Māori names for recording on official charts and maps,~~
- ~~— documentary evidence of the original Māori name,~~
- ~~— a Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori translator having confirmed the Ngāi Tahu dialectical orthography, and~~
- ~~— it being of benefit to users to be able to identify the discrete river especially in an emergency,~~

~~**and**~~

~~**Notify** as a proposal to alter for three months in terms of Section 16 of the NZGB Act 2008.~~

**AND**

Recommendation 3 For consistency, **request** the Department of Conservation to consider altering Waitangitaona Scenic Reserve to **Waitakitāhuna-ki-te-Toka Scenic Reserve**, since it is adjacent to the southern (upper) river.

**AND**

Recommendation 4 Advise the agency administering the [Whitebait Fishing \(West Coast\) Regulations 1994](#), which records that special conditions apply on Waitangitaona River that if the river's name changes then the Regulations should be amended.

## OPTION

Option 5  
(replaces  
Recommendation 2)

**Accept** the proposal to **alter** Waitangitaona River to **Waitakitāhuna-ki-te-Toka River** for the southern (upper) river that flows into Lake Wahapo, with the addition of the generic geographic term 'River' to help identify the feature, based on:

- consistency with the generic term used for the northern river,
- the NZGB's function to collect original Māori names for recording on official charts and maps,
- documentary evidence of the original Māori name,
- a Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori translator having confirmed the Ngāi Tahu dialectical orthography, and
- it being of benefit to users to be able to identify the discrete river

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especially in an emergency,  
**and**  
**Notify** as a proposal to alter for three months in terms of Section 16 of the NZGB Act 2008.

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## SECRETARIAT ANALYSIS

### The proposal

Te Rūnanga o Makaawhio (TRoM), which is one of 18 papatipu rūnanga (*lit.* governance structures) of Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu (TRoNT), initially made a proposal to alter Waitangitaona River to Waitangitāhuna River. TRoM noted that although on current maps Waitangitaona River names the river 'ki uta ki tai, from the mountains to the sea', it is two separate rivers.

Following correspondence with the Secretariat, TRoM amended the proposal and is seeking to alter Waitangitaona River to Waitangitāhuna River for the northern river, which flows into the Tasman Sea, and to Waitakitāhuna-ki-te-Toka, without the generic term 'River', for the southern river that flows from the mountains into Lake Wahapo.

TRoM advises that the spelling of the existing name 'Waitangitaona' is untranslatable and is based on an incorrect mid-19<sup>th</sup> century spelling by the first European who attempted to write it down. TRoM has provided a copy of a manuscript, which it advises tangata whenua of South Westland regard as an authoritative source of correct place names.

The manuscript has 'Waitangi' with 'Waitangi ta ona' added in pencil in the 'English' column. 'Waitangitahuna' is written in the 'Maori' column. In the 'meaning' column 'waitangi' is translated as 'crying for water' and 'tahuna' as 'river bed'. TRoM advises that William Wilson, a surveyor at the Hokitika District Office of Lands and Survey, collected and cross-checked the names with local Māori in 1897 at the request of Percy Smith, who was Surveyor-General at the time.

TRoM has also provided a copy of a hand written list of place names made by Katau Te Naihi who lived at Makaawhio c.1897, which shows 'Wai tangi tahuna'.

TRoM advises that while there are other place names in South Westland that are misspelled, the correction of this particular name is a priority for them.

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### Names shown on plans and maps

As the result of severe flooding in 1967, maps published after 1971 show the river as two discrete features, with both continuing to be named Waitangitaona River.

The current edition of NZTopo50-BW16 depicts the southern river disconnected in parts across the alluvial fan. LINZ<sup>3</sup> Mapping advises that the aerial imagery it used was taken in summer when the river was flowing underneath the shingle. As the result of more recent imagery the new edition of the map to be published in July 2018 will show the southern river flowing across the fan and into Lake Wahapo.

Plan/map	Date	Name
WD(R)147	1860	RIVER WAITANGI TAUNA
WD(R)139	1874	R. Waitangi-taona [one feature]

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<sup>3</sup> LINZ: Land Information New Zealand

SO 3990	1885	WAITANGI TAONA RIVER
SO 554	c.1901	R. WAITANGI TAONA
SO 1165	1908	WaitangiTaona River
SO 1879	1915	Waitangi Taona River [one feature]
NZMS 26	1920	Waitangi taona
SO 2611	1923	Waitangi-taona River [one feature]
NZMS 15, Westland 4, 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> eds.	1934, 1957	Waitangi-taona River [one feature]
NZMS 13, WD38, 1 <sup>st</sup> ed.	1955	Waitangitaona River [one feature]
NZMS 180, 1 <sup>st</sup> ed.	1961	WAITANGITAONA RIVER [one feature]
NZMS 1, S63, 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> eds. NZMS 1, S71, 1 <sup>st</sup> ed.	1963, 1970 1971	Waitangitaona River [one feature]
NZMS 1, S71, 2 <sup>nd</sup> ed. NZMS 1, S63, 3 <sup>rd</sup> ed.	1977 1981	Waitangitaona River [two features]
NZMS260-I34 NZMS260-H34 NZMS260-I35	1994, 2003 1995 1993, 2002	Waitangitaona River [two features]
NZTopo50-BW16, ed. 1.03	2017	Waitangitaona River [two features]

Location and extent of the feature

Because of flooding and human intervention the course and extent of the river has changed over time.

#### **Changes to the river mouth**

The NZGB's archives record Gerhard Mueller's account of his survey in December 1865 where 'the Wataroa, the Waitangi-Toana and the Waitangi-Roto are running into one, and emptying into the sea a mile to north of the camp', which was 'two miles north of Okarito'.<sup>4</sup>

In 1964 whitebaiters bulldozed a cut through the beach ridge opposite the mouth of Waitangitaona River to give whitebait access to the streams and rivers flowing into the lagoon. In August 1965 Whataroa River, Waitangitaona River and Waitangirotto River emptied into the same lagoon with a single channel to the sea. However, by August 1967 Whataroa River had formed its own channel to the sea. The lagoon opening to the sea used by Waitangitaona River and Waitangirotto River gradually made its way south until in August 1967 it was opposite the mouth of Waitangirotto River.<sup>5</sup>

#### **The river changes course and becomes two features**

In March 1967 flooding triggered an avulsion of Waitangitaona River. The whole flow of the river diverted from its historical route to a new course across an ancient alluvial fan to the southwest of the breach. Most of the river's flow ran into the northeast end of Lake Wahapo, 6km away. However, some of the flow was directed from the fan into Graham Creek, and back into the original Waitangitaona River bed, which flows into Tasman Sea. Major stopbanks were erected on the alluvial fan in the mid-1980s to reduce the possibility of another avulsion of the river towards its

<sup>4</sup> NZGB Archives. Volume 33, p.50.

<sup>5</sup> Rennison, G. [Results of the Waitangitaona River course change, March 1967](#). Tane (1971) 17:173-179.

former course.<sup>6</sup> The effect of this is that none of the water from the southern river flows into the northern river.

The river is not likely to return to its former course without massive human assistance.<sup>3</sup>

### Extents of the two rivers

The southern river flows generally northwards for approximately 21km from its source below McFetrick Peak in Tatare Range, approximately 14.5km south of Whataroa, into the northeast shore of Lake Wahopo (NZTopo50-BW16 823929 to 792082).

The northern river flows generally northwards then westwards for approximately 28km from its source at the confluence of Graham Creek and Matainui Creek to its mouth at the Tasman Sea, approximately 75km southwest of Hokitika (NZTopo50-BW16 837093 to 754200).

Generic term and geographic feature type

'Wai' is a composite part of both proposed specific names, but it is not distinct. The existing recorded name has the English generic term 'River', which is appropriate and may help emergency services to identify and locate the two rivers.

However, the NZGB is beginning to accept the use of more commonly known Māori generic terms to reflect its partnership with Māori and to help with language revitalisation as required by the Māori Language Act 2016. TRoM has advised that it is their preference not to retain the English generic term 'River' in the proposal for the southern river, Waitakitāhuna-ki-te-Toka.

New Zealand Gazetteer, associated names and duplication

Waitangitaona River is a recorded name in the New Zealand Gazetteer. The reference point is currently on the northern river.

Waitangitaona River Scenic Reserve, which adjoins the southern river, is an official Crown protected area (CPA) name. If the NZGB accepts the proposal to alter the southern river to Waitakitāhuna-ki-te-Toka, for consistency it should ask DOC to consider altering the CPA name.

Waitangitaona Road follows the northern river for approximately 6.5km.

No other features in New Zealand are named 'Waitangitaona', 'Waitangitāhuna' or 'Waitakitāhuna'. While numerous features in Te Ika-a-Māui and on Chatham Island are named 'Waitangi', Waitangi Stream, approximately 92km east of Invercargill, is the only duplication in Te Waipounamu.

Waitaki, which is the Ngāi Tahu dialectal form of Waitangi, is duplicated only in Te Waipounamu. Waitaki River, which flows from Lake Waitaki into the Pacific Ocean approximately 22km north of Oamaru, is too far distant to cause confusion.

'Tahuna' and its variations are duplicated throughout New Zealand.

The name proposed for the southern river also has the Ngāi Tahu dialect directional 'ki-te-Toka' *lit.* 'towards the south', which would also help avoid any confusion with Waitaki River on the east coast.

Research, history and references to

The NZGB's archives record that in 1963 the NZGB declined a proposal from Noel Read of the NZAC<sup>7</sup> to name Waitangitaona Glacier and

<sup>6</sup> Korup, O. [Landslide-induced river channel avulsions in mountain catchments of southwest New Zealand](#). *Geomorphology* (2004) 63:57-80.

<sup>7</sup> **NZAC**: New Zealand Alpine Club

the feature	<p>Waitangitaona Col. The proposer described the glacier as starting from the col, and being the main source of Waitangitaona River. The NZGB considered the col and glacier to be minor features whose coordinates needed to be determined more accurately. The NZGB also questioned the life expectation of the glacier.<sup>8</sup> Current aerial imagery still shows the glacier, although it may not be as substantial as it was in 1963.</p> <p>An article in the <i>Grey River Argus</i> in June 1908, extracted from Gerhard Mueller's 1865 letter to his wife, records 'WAITANGI-TOANA RIVER = weeping water to dash him down'<sup>9</sup>.</p> <p>Reed<sup>10</sup> records, 'Waitangitaona River: <i>West Coast</i>. Waitangitahuna is the correct spelling i.e. Sounding or weeping water'.</p> <p>There is no entry in Fletcher's <i>Index of Māori Names</i> for 'Waitangitaona', 'Waitangitāhuna' or 'Waitakitāhuna'.</p>
Consultation with iwi and others	<p>TRoNT has advised that it supports the proposals.</p> <p>The proposer has not provided evidence of consultation with interested groups such as DOC, tramping and fishing clubs, the local communities at Whataroa, Franz Josef / Waiau and Ōkārito, Westland District Council or the West Coast Regional Council.</p> <p>If the NZGB accepts these proposals it may consider advising the affected groups directly of them. They may then make submissions during the notification period.</p>
Secretariat comment on orthography	<p>The 'tauna' (Waitangi tauna) spelling shown on an 1860 plan is probably a contraction of 'tahuna'. The diphthong /au/ in te Reo sounds like /o/ in NZEnglish, so 'tauna' seems to have contracted further to become 'taona' (Waitangitaona).</p> <p>TRoM's proposal to name the southern river Waitakitāhuna-ki-te-Toka follows the Ngāi Tahu dialect of [k] replacing /ŋ/. In standard te Reo orthography 'Waitakitāhuna-ki-te-Toka' would be 'Waitangitāhuna-ki-te-Tonga'.</p> <p>While the two proposed river names are essentially the same word, using Ngāi Tahu dialectical orthography provides for a subtle distinction between the two names, Waitangi vs Waitaki. Therefore it is appropriate that the Ngāi Tahu dialect 'Toka' is used with Waitaki rather than the standardised 'Tonga'.</p>
Advice on orthography	<p>A Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori (Māori Language Commission) registered translator has advised that TRoM's proposed standardised orthography 'Waitangitāhuna' is correct.</p> <p>TRoM has also accepted the translator's advice that Waitakitāhuna-ki-te-Toka should be hyphenated and 'Toka' should be upper case. TRoNT has advised that it has no concerns with the orthography of the two names.</p>
Relevant sections from the NZGB Act 2008	<p>Section 3(e): the purpose of the Act is to 'provide the means for appropriate recognition to be accorded to cultural and heritage values associated with geographic features'.</p>

<sup>8</sup> NZGB archives. Volume 36. pp.3,42-43, 110, 161.

<sup>9</sup> NZGB archives. Volume 33, p.53.

<sup>10</sup> Reed, AW & Dowling, P (ed.). (2010). *Place names of New Zealand*. Penguin Group: North Shore.

Section 6 recognises and respects the Crown's responsibility to take appropriate account of the Treaty of Waitangi.

Under Sections 11(1)(b),(e) and (f) functions of the NZGB are to:

- examine cases of doubtful spelling of names and determine the spelling to be adopted on official charts or maps
- encourage the use of original Māori names on official charts and maps
- seek advice from Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori on the correct orthography of any Māori name

*TRoM, who are mana whenua, has provided evidence that supports the meaning of Waitangitāhuna and Waitakitāhuna-ki-te-Toka. A TTWh registered translator has confirmed that the orthography is correct. Altering the spelling would recognise the historical significance of the names and support the desire of TRoM to have the meaning behind the names live on.*

Relevant policy from the NZGB's Frameworks v. 8

Name alterations: The Board may alter a name, for example by correcting its spelling where the correction is important, such as when it is a form of redress and it may correct a significant wrong and grievance of a community. However, other criteria and legislative considerations may outweigh this policy.

*As a part of TRoNT, TRoM settled its Treaty negotiations some years ago, so this proposal is not part of a Treaty settlement. However, altering the northern river's name will correct a grievance of mana whenua, who have a significant connection to the rivers.*

Spelling standards: A name that has been in long term local use may take precedence over any proposal to alter spelling. However, subject to safety concerns, the Board may alter the spelling if the correct or original version is discovered.

*Although the river became two features in 1967, now separated at the shortest distance by approximately 3.5km, they have continued to have one recorded name that has been in long term use. However, as the rivers are now two distinct features it would be useful for emergency services if the southern river was to have a different name assigned to it.*

*TRoM has a strong desire to have the original Māori name restored to the northern river, and to have the southern river identified by a different name.*

Spatial extents of geographic features: The Board will consider the spatial extent of a geographic feature on a case-by-case basis, and where possible will determine those extents.

*TRoM has provided a map that defines the extents of the two rivers, which are relatively large.*

Concerns or issues for emergency services

The proposer has not provided evidence of consultation with emergency services.

The southern river, which is adjacent to the central section of the Alpine fault<sup>11</sup>, is a popular recreational area for fishing<sup>12</sup> and hiking<sup>13</sup>. Tours to view the Kōtuku (White Heron) Sanctuary are accessed by a jet boat down the southern river during the breeding season<sup>14</sup>. The upper reaches of the southern river also has a route for climbers to access Price Range<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> De Pascale, GP & RM Langridge. [New on-fault evidence for a great earthquake in A.D. 1717, central Alpine fault, New Zealand](#). Geology (2012). doi:10.1130/G33363.1. Accessed 25 August 2017.

<sup>12</sup> [Waitangitaona River Trout Fishing](#). Accessed 25 August 2017.

<sup>13</sup> Department of Conservation. [Waitangitaona Wetland Walk](#). Accessed 25 August 2017.

<sup>14</sup> Westland District Council. [Whataroa](#). Accessed 25 August 2017.

In 2009 a nine year old boy riding his bike on a stopbank next to the southern river fell and died from head injuries caused by hitting rocks<sup>16</sup>.

Whitebaiting is permitted in season in the northern river<sup>17</sup>. The [Whitebait Fishing \(West Coast\) Regulations 1994](#) record that special conditions apply on Waitangitaona River, so this legislation would need amendment if the name is changed.

If both rivers are officially named they would be named on maps, which would assist emergency services.

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Media

There may be some media attention as Waitangitaona River is well known in the surrounding communities and is used recreationally and commercially.

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[Online Dictionary of New Zealand Sign Language](#)

NZSL is an official language of New Zealand. Under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) the NZGB is obliged to recognise the existence and importance of geographic names in NZSL.

There is no standardised New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) sign for Waitangitaona River in the online Dictionary. The NZGB may consider recommending that if Waitangitāhuna River and Waitakitāki-ki-te-Toka become official names that they be added to the NZSL Dictionary.

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## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. Proposal received 5 July 2017
2. Email from Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori registered translator with orthographic advice – 15 August 2017
3. Email correspondence with proposer – July/August 2017
4. Email of support from TRoNT – 25 August 2017
5. Email from LINZ Mapping – 30 August 2017

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<sup>15</sup> Climb NZ National Route Database. [Waitangitaona River](#). Accessed 25 August 2017.

<sup>16</sup> [Plea to carry on despite death](#). *The Press*. (2009). Accessed 28 August 2017.

<sup>17</sup> Department of Conservation. [The whitebaiter's guide to whitebaiting on the West Coast](#). Accessed 25 August 2017.