

**Twenty-eight session  
28 April – 2 May 2014**

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**Item 4 of the Provisional Agenda**

**Report of the divisions**

**Report of the South West Pacific Division \***

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## **Background**

The South West Pacific Division was formed at the 10th United Nations Conference on the Standardisation of Geographical Names, when the Asia South East Pacific South West Division was split.

The Counties proposed to form the Division Australia, Fiji, Nauru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Samoa, Timor Leste (East Timor), Tonga and Vanuatu.

It is possible other South West Pacific nations may, in time, be interested in the work of the Division. However, it is proposed that these nations would be the initial member so each chose to be so.

## **Meetings**

Given that Australia and New Zealand are the only two countries active in UNGEGN at present, a Division meeting was held in conjunction with the annual Committee for Geographical Names in Australasia (CGNA) meeting in September 2013.

At this meeting, the following steps were decided to promote the new UNGEGN division.

- Use contacts in the New Zealand Department of Foreign Affairs to find the best contact within the respective government organisations.
- Produce an information kit to be sent to the identified contacts containing:
  - UN Publications
    - Media Kits
    - Manual for the National Standardisation of Geographical Names
    - Technical Reference Manual for the Standardisation of Geographical Names
    - AfricaGaz schema
  - Examples of New Zealand and Australian Legislation
  - CGNA guidelines
  - CGNA Education Kit
  - DVD containing copies of the former South East Asia South West Pacific Division Regional Gazetteer and Map
  - An open invitation to attend any CGNA meeting and/or the jurisdictional board meetings
- Investigation of possible communication strategies, including
  - Email forums
  - Web sites
  - Tele- and Video Conferencing

- Jurisdictional officers acting as a first point of contact / mentor for specific nations
- Once the information kit has been sent out:
  - Assess the response from the initial contact.
  - Follow up as required.

The identification of possible contacts has been completed and the information kits prepared and have started to be sent to the identified parties.

### **Other Issues**

Australia and New Zealand continue to work in a cooperative manner through the CGNA organisation. At present there are a few prominent key issues summarised as follows:

- ***New Zealand***
  - Recent changes to the Geographical Names Act resulted in a considerable expansion of the geographical area covered by the Act to include all the continental shelf area, with the responsibility for undersea features now being covered by the Act.
  - New Zealand has recently completed a process to formally approve alternative geographical names for the North and South Islands, being Te Ika-a-Māui and Te Waipounamu respectively. This process attracted considerable public interest, with debate both for and against the proposal. The result is that the Maori names for the two islands have now been recognised as official.
- ***Australia***
  - Continuation of work to improve content, quality and accessibility of the gazetteer data at a national level.
  - As part of the ongoing process of dual naming features in Australia, a dual naming of Lake Eyre to include the Arabana name Kati Thanda has been undertaken., being one of the major landscape features in Australia