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Toponymic data files and gazetteers:

(e) Data services, applications and products

(for example, gazetteers and web services)

Report on a new Gazetteer Database System for New Zealand

Submitted by New Zealand **

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Summary

This paper/PowerPoint presentation outlines the new Gazetteer Database System for New Zealand, set for launch later in 2012 as a web application and also available as raw data layers via the Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) Data Service (<http://data.linz.govt.nz/>).

In order to provide a process framework for altering, assigning, adopting, approving, validating, and discontinuing geographic names, New Zealand's national naming authority, the New Zealand Geographic Board Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa (NZGB), ensures that information about those names is authoritative, standardised, accurate, consistent, accessible and comprehensive.

To more effectively and efficiently carry out these functions and to comply with the legislative requirements of the [NZGB Act 2008](#), the NZGB is currently developing a modern, standards-based Gazetteer Database System that allows effective management of, and access to, official and unofficial geographic names, and which also gives recognition to those names as a fundamental dataset of geospatial information in any spatial data infrastructure.

The new Gazetteer Database System (which will replace a number of spreadsheet based Gazetteers) will provide for the increased use of official names by organisations who are directly interested in official names as well as by others who can add value to the information and disperse it as a core and authoritative part of other datasets, thereby adding value to the New Zealand Government and economy and helping to accurately determine location and extent, as well as preserve our heritage and culture.

Current Gazetteer

The current Gazetteer data is [published](#) as six separate spreadsheets and as PDF formatted documents. Although this meets the legal minimum in terms of compliance with the Act, it is not a robust way to maintain what is a fundamental dataset of national significance, and is not efficient in terms of facilitating other agencies to comply with the Act.

Specific issues with the current solution include:

- Makes compliance with the Act difficult for users especially government agencies, including other business groups of LINZ.
- The Gazetteer includes little spatial information and so users cannot spatially search for official names.
- The Gazetteer does not easily show non official names whose status is still noteworthy e.g. 'recorded' or 'historical' names.
- Not recommended best-practice by the geospatial community.
- Annual reporting on the NZGB activities for the Minister is time consuming with the scattered distribution of data/information (both hard and soft copy).

Proposed Solution

The new NZGB Gazetteer Database system will provide a solution that leverages off the [LINZ Data Service](#), Datacom (LINZ's IT services provider) web development and infrastructure support, as well as a significant level of LINZ internal expertise.

The new Gazetteer Database will have enhanced searching capability for users, easier administrative functionality, and connection to the LINZ Data Service allowing automatic access to Gazetteer data via Web Services.

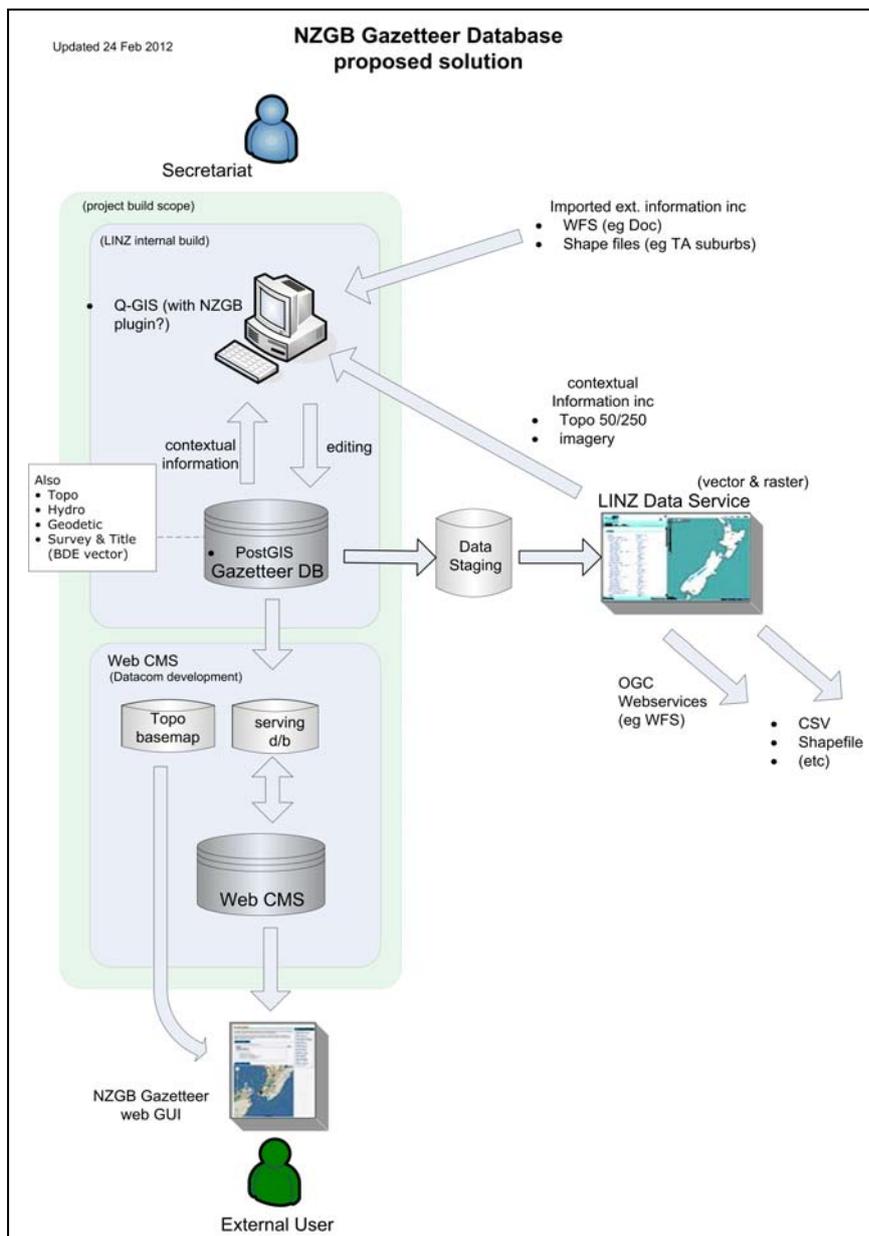
Project Purpose

- Improve LINZ's compliance with the NZGB Act 2008 beyond the legal minimum it currently achieves by incorporating data elements specified but not mandated in the Act.
- Provide greater discoverability and access of the Gazetteer data to New Zealanders, especially Government and other agencies required to use official names in official documents.
- Enhance the value of the Gazetteer Database System by incorporating spatial information.
- Provide a more robust, authoritative and resilient database for the NZ Gazetteer data.

Benefits

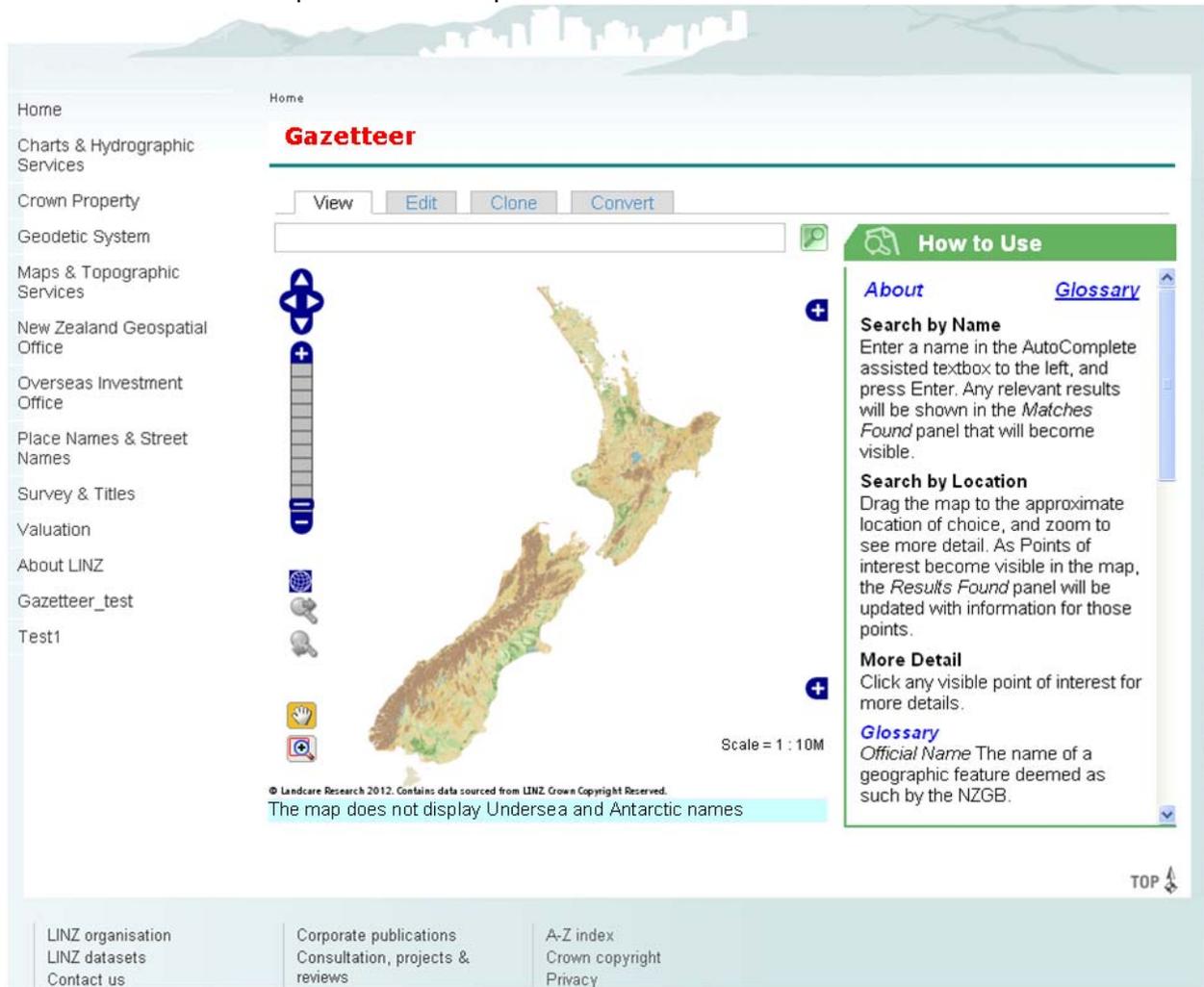
- Aligns with the general across-Government initiatives on dissemination and reuse of Government data.
- Database functionality including better storage and maintenance – geographic names in a single location and including background information (currently stored elsewhere).
- Increase the efficiency of the NZGB Secretariat by:
 - allowing the public to find out information about names themselves, especially those wishing to make name proposals.
 - assisting the Secretariat to perform their own research and investigation e.g. duplication checks and historical research.
 - significantly reducing the resource requirement from the NZGB Secretariat, IT and Strategic Communications to publish updates to the Gazetteer.
 - reducing the resource requirement for annual reporting to the Minister.
- Benefits beyond LINZ including:
 - Supporting the ministerial priority to support Treaty Settlements.
 - Emphasizing New Zealand's jurisdiction and governance.
 - Supporting the United Nations gazetteer framework project.

Solution Diagram



The Web Application

This draft screen shot provides a sample of what the initial view will look like for the user:



PowerPoint Presentation at the Conference

During the 10th UNCSGN Conference, a lunchtime workshop on Tuesday 31 July 2012 has been set aside for demonstrations and discussions on new Gazetteers and Databases. Though the NZGB Gazetteer will not have yet been launched, a PowerPoint presentation will be given, with screen shots showing the new web application, and the availability of the raw data in the LINZ Data Service.

For more information about geographical naming in New Zealand, contact:

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