

28 June 2017

Original: English

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**11<sup>th</sup> United Nations Conference on the Standardization  
of Geographical Names**

New York, 8 -17 August 2017

Item 8 of the provisional agenda\*

**Measures taken and proposed to implement United Nations  
resolutions on the standardization of geographical names,  
including the economic and social benefits.**

**Report on New Zealand's implementation of UN Resolutions**

Submitted by New Zealand \*\*

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\* E/CONF.105/1

\*\* Prepared by Wendy Shaw, Secretary, New Zealand Geographic Board Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa

## Report on New Zealand's implementation of UN Resolutions

### Eleventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names

New York, 8-17 August 2017

Measures taken and proposed to implement United Nations' resolutions on the standardization of geographical names, including the economic and social benefits



## Summary

This report focuses on twenty resolutions made by the United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (UNCSSGN) between 1967 and 2012. They have been chosen because of their relevance to the work of New Zealand's national naming authority, the New Zealand Geographic Board Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa (NZGB).

Geographic names play a significant role in New Zealand's historical, cultural, economic, administrative and linguistic matters. The NZGB's two fundamental roles under its legislation, the [New Zealand Geographic Board \(Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa\) Act 2008](#), are location identification and preservation of culture and heritage, which have both direct and indirect economic and social benefits for all New Zealanders.

The New Zealand government wants certainty about the names and locations of geographic features; therefore it recognises geographic names as a fundamental theme of New Zealand's spatial data infrastructure. Unique and usable geographic names are key to locating people and property, contribute to efficient government administration, and link data for a wide range of public and private purposes. Geographic names identify where we are as we go about our everyday business, they are a component of our infrastructure, and most importantly they matter in emergency responses. Geographic names also add to our sense of identity and belonging – helping us better connect with our identity: who we are, where we're from, and the importance of those who came before us. Many of New Zealand's geographic names describe physical aspects of features and provide information about the natural and cultural conditions at the time they were coined. The resources found in those places may be useful for survival or economic gain.

Implementation of the relevant UNCSSGN recommendations has been ongoing throughout the NZGB's long history, which began formally in 1946 after the Honorary Geographic Board of New Zealand, which was established in 1924. The NZGB's naming role has been developed and refined over the years to reflect lessons learnt, changing attitudes and to uphold best practice naming principles. The NZGB follows best practices that have been established by the recommendations in the UNCSSGN's resolutions, and that are applicable to New Zealand. The NZGB's decision making is independent and based on robust processes.

## Implementation of twenty UNCSGN resolutions

Refer to the full list of [UNCSGN Resolutions](#).

Since its last report in 2012, through its policies, practices, processes and protocols the NZGB has given practical effect to applying and adopting the recommendations of these UNCSGN resolutions:

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY UNCSGN	STATUS OF ACTION
<b>3. International cooperation in the Standardization of Geographical Names</b>	
<p><b>IV/2 Acceleration of work on standardization of geographical names</b></p> <p>The conference recommends that the standardization of geographical names should be accelerated by all possible means.</p>	<p>In March 2013 the NZGB agreed that one of its strategic priorities is to process unofficial recorded geographic names and approve them as official through a fast track process provided for in <a href="#">s.24 of the NZGB Act 2008</a>. The NZGB needs to be satisfied that the recorded geographic names are not likely to attract public objection, that there are no alternative recorded names for the features, and that they do in fact meet the definition of recorded geographic names in <a href="#">s.4 of the NZGB Act 2008</a>. To date the NZGB has reviewed and approved as official approximately 1,500 geographic names through this process. Another 33,000 (approx.) recorded geographic names continue to be processed at a rate of approximately 500 names each year.</p> <p>The NZGB will be supporting New Zealand's official addressing system with consistency in suburb, locality, town and city names. Ultimately the NZGB would like to have the names and extents of all suburbs, localities, towns and cities in New Zealand officially assigned. This would assist emergency services, addressing, and government administration by providing certainty and minimising ambiguity. It would also meet the fundamental need to identify and describe local communities, preserve heritage and culture, and help the NZGB to maintain consistent and standardised naming in New Zealand.</p>
<p><b>V/6 Promotion of national and international geographical names standardization programmes</b></p> <p>The conference recommends that state authorities be encouraged to provide appropriate support to standardization activities and that the standardization of geographical names be recognized as an important part of their programmes of international co-operation and technical assistance.</p>	<p>By having specific legislation on naming geographic features, New Zealand recognises the importance of geographic names as a significant part of its cultural heritage, and the economic advantage of standardising its geographic names. Geographic names provide context and a framework for international undersea and Antarctica scientific research, and other activities such as environmental management and tourism. Therefore, New Zealand cooperates and collaborates with a number of international naming authorities including PCPN<sup>1</sup>, USBGN<sup>2</sup> and SCUFN<sup>3</sup>.</p> <p>For geographic naming in Antarctica, New</p>

<sup>1</sup> **PCPN**: Permanent Committee on Places Names

<sup>2</sup> **USBGN**: United States Board on Geographic Names

<sup>3</sup> **SCUFN**: Sub-Committee on Undersea Feature Names

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY UNCISG	STATUS OF ACTION
	<p>Zealand actively engages with, and maintains, international relationships, protocols and liaisons, specifically with SCAGI<sup>4</sup>, SCAR<sup>5</sup>, US-ACAN<sup>6</sup> and other nations with specific interests in the Ross Sea Region of Antarctica.</p> <p>The NZGB has recently undertaken a project to rationalise the Antarctic names in its Gazetteer with the <a href="#">SCAR-CGA</a><sup>7</sup>. This will improve the positions of features in the SCAR-CGA, which were historically defined with relatively low accuracy.</p> <p>The NZGB's naming role in Antarctica supports operational safety, provides a consistent science reference, represents New Zealand's active presence and role, preserves historical place names given by early expeditions, and guards against over naming a pristine environment to preserve its wilderness characteristics.</p>
<b>5. National Standardization</b>	
<p><b>I/4 National Standardization</b></p> <p>(C) PRINCIPLES OF OFFICE TREATMENT OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES: The conference recommends that each names authority formulate, adopt and define the guiding principles and practices that it will normally apply in the course of operation, and that the names authority give adequate publicity to these principles and practices.</p>	<p>The NZGB weighs the information, evidence and views on name proposals and submissions against its rules, criteria, standards, guidelines and policies contained in its legislation, and <i>Frameworks</i> and <i>Standards</i> documents. These guiding principles and practices are publicly available at no cost on the NZGB's <a href="#">website</a>.</p>
<p><b>I/4 National Standardization</b></p> <p>(D) MULTILINGUAL AREAS: The conference recommends that in countries in which there exist more than one language, the national authority as appropriate: (a) Determine the geographical names in each of the official languages, and other languages as appropriate; (b) Give a clear indication of equality or precedence of officially acknowledged names; (c) Publish these officially acknowledged names in maps and gazetteers.</p>	<p>The NZGB uses dual names and alternative names to recognise the special historical and cultural significance to the community of both original Māori and non-Māori geographic names.</p> <p>Dual naming requires that both official names are used in the Gazetteer and on official documents, for example, Aoraki / Mount Cook. The formatting convention the NZGB uses is for dual names to be separated by a forward slash with a space either side. Both parts are the full name of the feature, and both parts have equal status. The forward slash (/) is shorthand for 'and', it does not mean 'or'. Generally the Māori name comes first in recognition of the right of first discovery.</p> <p>Alternative names also recognise the special historical and cultural significance of both the original Māori name and the non-Māori name. However, either one or the other can be used in official documents.</p> <p>The <a href="#">NZGB Act 2008</a> requires the NZGB to</p>

<sup>4</sup> **SCAGI**: Standing Committee on Antarctic Geographic Information  
<sup>5</sup> **SCAR**: Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research  
<sup>6</sup> **US-ACAN**: United States Advisory Committee on Antarctic Names  
<sup>7</sup> **CGA**: Composite Gazetteer of Antarctica

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY UNCISG	STATUS OF ACTION
	collect and encourage the use of Māori names, and dual and alternative names help to meet this requirement.
<p><b>I/4 National Standardization</b></p> <p>(E) NATIONAL GAZETTEERS: The conference recommends that each names authority produce and continually revise appropriate gazetteers of all its standardized geographical names. In addition to the standardized names, each gazetteer include as a minimum such information as is necessary for the proper location and identification of the named features.</p>	<p>New Zealand recognises the importance of managing an authoritative list of geographic names and making them freely available and accessible to everyone. <a href="#">Section 13 of the NZGB Act 2008</a> sets out the NZGB's Gazetteer requirements.</p> <p>The NZGB publishes all official geographic feature names in its online <a href="#">Gazetteer</a> along with contextual information such as position, extent, and history/origin/ meaning. The <a href="#">Gazetteer</a> is New Zealand's authoritative digital database of geographic name information, and enables the efficient administration of the country. Another tangible benefit of the <a href="#">Gazetteer</a> is the ability it gives to discover heritage, culture, connection, identity, and the origin and meaning of geographic names.</p> <p>The NZGB has undertaken a programme of data cleansing to ensure consistency between data fields and to improve the completeness of name records. This serves to assert its authority, reliability, accuracy and completeness. The NZGB has identified enhancements to its <a href="#">Gazetteer</a> to make the user experience more intuitive, and to provide more location context.</p> <p>The <a href="#">Gazetteer</a> provides users with full and free download options of the data either as a csv file or through the <a href="#">LINZ<sup>8</sup> Data Service</a>.</p>
<p><b>VIII/2 Commemorative naming practices for geographical features</b></p> <p>The conference recommends that the appropriate national authorities:</p> <p>(1) discourage the use of personal names to designate a geographical feature during the lifetime of the person in question, and</p> <p>(2) include in their guidelines clear statements on the length of the waiting period they wish to establish before using a commemorative name.</p>	<p>The NZGB will not assign a personal name during a person's lifetime, except in the Ross Dependency of Antarctica. In Antarctica the NZGB will consider the names of notable living people who have made a significant contribution to New Zealand's Antarctic activities.</p> <p>The NZGB's <a href="#">Frameworks</a> state that as a mark of respect the NZGB's policy is to observe a minimum of two years from the date of a person's death before it will consider a personal name.</p>
<p><b>X/4 Discouraging the commercialization of geographical names</b></p> <p>The conference recommends that national toponymic authorities discourage the designation of geographical names that seek a commercial purpose, as well as various practices involving the commercialization of geographical names, by adopting standards that address these issues.</p>	<p>The NZGB's <a href="#">Standard for undersea feature names NZGBS60000</a> states that the names of commercial entities or their products will not be accepted for naming an undersea feature.</p> <p>The NZGB's <a href="#">Frameworks</a> state that the NZGB's policy is to avoid naming geographic features after a commercial product or its manufacturer, institution or organisation.</p>

<sup>8</sup> Land Information New Zealand

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY UNCDSG	STATUS OF ACTION
<b>7. Education and training in treatment of Geographical Names</b>	
<p><b>VII/9 Standardization of geographical names utilizing the Internet</b></p> <p>The conference recommends that country toponymic web sites be established and used for a variety of purposes, including: (a) Information on the standardization of geographical names; (b) Toponymic guidelines; (c) Information on training courses in toponymy; (d) Nationally standardized names; (e) Interactive capabilities for handling geographical names enquiries; (f) Facilitation of the international exchange of toponymic data.</p>	<p>The <a href="#">NZGB's website</a> provides comprehensive information about the NZGB and its legislation, processes, guidelines, policies, principles and practices for naming geographic features.</p>
<b>8. Terminology (including glossaries)</b>	
<p><b>1/19 Geographical terms</b></p> <p>The conference recommends that:</p> <p>(B) national gazetteers should include a glossary, not necessarily published in the same volume.</p> <p>(C) the definition of Glossary is a 'Collection of generic terms with their meanings in geographical names'.</p>	<p>The NZGB's <a href="#">Gazetteer</a> includes a glossary.</p> <p>The NZGB has an <a href="#">online Generic Geographic Features Listing</a> in Māori and English. The listed terms are not intended to be a translation of each other, but are independent and uphold their uniqueness. The feature descriptions assist with understanding how they should be used. Graphic line drawings are currently being compiled to assist interpretation.</p>
<b>10. Preparation of Gazetteers</b>	
<p><b>I/4(E) National Gazetteers</b></p> <p>The conference recommends that:</p> <p>(1) each names authority produce, and continually revise, appropriate gazetteers of all its standardized geographical names.</p> <p>(2) in addition to the standardized names, each gazetteer include, as a minimum, such information as is necessary for the proper location and identification of the named features.</p> <p>(3) the following be included: (a) The kind of feature to which the name applies; (b) Precise description of the location and the extent, including a point position reference if possible, of each named feature; (c) Provision for the parts of natural features to be additionally defined by reference to the whole and for the names of extended features to be defined as necessary by reference to their constituent parts; (d) Such information on administrative or regional areas as is considered necessary and, if possible, reference to a map or chart within which the features lie; (e) All officially standardized names for a feature, if there are more than one; and provision for cross-references to be made to names previously used for the same feature.</p> <p>(4) when national authorities determine it</p>	<p>The NZGB has a statutory obligation under <a href="#">s.13 of the NZGB Act 2008</a> to maintain a publicly available Gazetteer – see 'I/4 (E) NATIONAL GAZETTEERS' above.</p> <p>Each official name in the NZGB's <a href="#">Gazetteer</a> has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- its feature type,</li> <li>- a precise description of its location and spatial extent,</li> <li>- a point reference,</li> <li>- a spatial view with linear and polygon geometry based on 1:50K mapping as applicable and where captured,</li> <li>- the regional area,</li> <li>- its status, i.e. the legislation that made the name official,</li> <li>- reference information,</li> <li>- whether or not it's a Māori name (for statistical purposes),</li> <li>- a cross reference to names previously used for the same feature,</li> <li>- may include the history/origin/meaning of the name.</li> </ul> <p>Standardised orthography applies to all New Zealand geographic names, including macrons on vowels for Māori names to denote long sounds, which may change the meaning of the words.</p>

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY UNCDSG	STATUS OF ACTION
<p>possible, both technically and economically, they may include such information on geographical names as gender, number, definite and indefinite forms, position of stress, tone and pronunciation in the system of the International Phonetic Association and such other linguistic information as may lead to the better understanding and use of names both nationally and internationally.</p>	<p>The NZGB does not include other International Phonetic Association requirements in its Gazetteer.</p>
<p><b>11. Bibliographies</b></p>	
<p><b>V/24 Semi-annual information bulletin</b> The conference recommends that countries provide the United Nations Secretariat with information on their activities related to geographical names (for a semi-annual information bulletin).</p>	<p>In 2016/2017 the NZGB's Secretariat has provided the articles 'National Names Authorities – structures and operations' and 'Making geographic names accessible and available' for publication in UNGEGN Bulletin's 51 and 52.</p>
<p><b>13. Automated data processing</b></p>	
<p><b>V111/6 Integration of geographical names data into national and regional spatial data infrastructures</b> The conference recommends that standardized geographical names data should be considered in the establishment of national and regional spatial data infrastructures and included in their design, development and implementation.</p>	<p>The New Zealand government recognises geographic names as a fundamental theme of New Zealand's spatial data infrastructure.</p>
<p><b>VIII/10 Toponymic data-collection procedures</b> The conference recommends that Governments expand their existing data-collection procedures for geographical names, and establish procedures for collecting names from all acceptable sources so as to be responsive to the needs of geographical names users.</p>	<p>In 2017 the NZGB has begun a project to capture in its <a href="#">Gazetteer all Recorded and Collected geographic names from official and authoritative documents, including</a> all of New Zealand's national topographic series maps.</p>
<p><b>IX/7 Dissemination of information concerning the origin and meaning of geographical names</b> The conference recommends that wherever possible, printed or web-based national gazetteers and databases should include information on the origin and meaning of geographical names, based on popular and/or scientific sources, along with the associated technical information.</p>	<p>Whenever available the NZGB's <a href="#">Gazetteer</a> includes details of a geographic name's history, origin and/or meaning, and a reference to the source. Providing these enhances the community's sense of identity and belonging to a place. Associated technical information is included in the <a href="#">Gazetteer's</a> 'Feature Description' field.</p>
<p><b>15. Romanization/General</b></p>	
<p><b>I/10 Diacritical signs which accompany letters of the Roman alphabet</b> The conference recommends that in international use all geographical names officially written in these alphabets by the countries concerned should remain unmodified and keep their distinguishing marks, even, and indeed particularly, when they are written in capital letters.</p>	<p>To carry out its principal functions under <a href="#">s.11 (1)(f) of the NZGB Act 2008</a> the NZGB may seek the advice of Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori (the Māori Language Commission) on the correct orthography of any Māori name. The NZGB has a Memorandum of Understanding with Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori (the Māori Language Commission), whose registered translators provide advice on the correct orthography of all Māori geographic names,</p>

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY UNCDSG	STATUS OF ACTION
	including the correct use of diacritic marks and capital letters.
<b>18. Names of features beyond a single sovereignty</b>	
<p><b>I/8 (A) Treatment of names of features beyond a single sovereignty - General</b></p> <p>The conference recommends that:</p> <p>(1) it is preferable that a common name or a common application be established, wherever practicable, in the interest of international standardization.</p> <p>(2) the geographical names authorities of the nations concerned attempt to reach agreement on these conflicting names or applications.</p>	<p><a href="#">Section 8 of the NZGB Act 2008</a> defines the extent of the NZGB's naming jurisdiction<sup>9</sup>.</p> <p>For information on international naming authorities that New Zealand cooperates and collaborates with in Antarctica see '<b>V/6 Promotion of national and international geographical names standardization programmes</b>' above.</p> <p>The NZGB has a Relationship Protocol with the USBGN (US-ACAN) that seeks the agreement of both parties on one name for features in Antarctica. Where the NZGB and USBGN (US-ACAN) are not able to agree on one name for a feature, then two different names from each respective country may be assigned, but this is very rare.</p> <p>The NZGB has expressed a desire to work with the Republic of Korea, which has recently established an operational scientific base in Antarctica, to ensure that features already named are not named again, and that good naming practices are upheld.</p>
<p><b>I/8 (B) Treatment of names of features beyond a single sovereignty – Maritime and Undersea Features</b></p> <p>The conference recommends:</p> <p>(1)(c) developing procedures for international standardization of naming new undersea features as they are discovered, defined and identified in the future.</p> <p>(1)(d) continuing to consult with and, as appropriate, to use the facilities of IOC, IHB, IAPO and other relevant bodies to further United Nations objectives in international standardization of names of maritime and undersea features.</p>	<p>Section 25 of the NZGB Act 2008 provides for naming jurisdiction beyond New Zealand's territorial limits.</p> <p>The NZGB's <a href="#">Standard for undersea feature names NZGBS60000 aligns with the IHO<sup>10</sup>'s B-6 guidelines</a>.</p> <p>The NZGB works closely with SCUFN to ensure that New Zealand's undersea feature names beyond its 12 nautical mile territorial boundary are accepted for use on international graphic and digital products. In response to the volume of proposals from New Zealand, SCUFN has recently adopted a process for fast tracking proposals for existing undersea feature names.</p> <p>By actively naming undersea features over New Zealand's continental shelf, the NZGB contributes to managing those areas for science, exploration, protection, maritime safety purposes, as well as New Zealand's sense of place.</p> <p>New Zealand's National Hydrographer is an ex-officio member of the NZGB. He is aware of all</p>

<sup>9</sup> New Zealand, its offshore islands and continental shelf, and the Ross Dependency of Antarctica (the area south of 60° south latitude, and between 160° east and 150° west longitude).

<sup>10</sup> IHO: [International Hydrographic Organization](#)

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY UNCISG	STATUS OF ACTION
	<p>IHO standards and is informed of any changes by circular letter, which require a vote from member countries.</p> <p>An NZGB Undersea Feature Names Committee member, Dr Vaughan Stagpoole, is also a member of SCUFN.</p>
<p><b>V/25 Features beyond a single sovereignty</b></p> <p>(2) The conference recommends that those national geographical names authorities that have not yet done so establish with neighbouring authorities joint or interrelated programmes for the collection and treatment of names of features extending across their common borders.</p>	<p>The NZGB has a <i>Protocol for undersea feature naming</i>, which encourages other nations to consult with the NZGB before naming undersea features within its jurisdiction, and before submitting a proposal to SCUFN.</p> <p>At the NZGB's request, in 2012 SCUFN included in the IHO <a href="#">B-6 guidelines</a> that 'There is significant benefit to be gained from mutual consultation by all interested parties in preparing and submitting proposals to SCUFN. National naming authorities are encouraged to consult on undersea features names in their mutual areas of interest prior to submitting proposals to SCUFN'.</p>
<p><b>21. Manual of National Name Standardization</b></p>	
<p><b>V/24 Semi-annual information bulletin</b></p> <p>(1) The conference recommends that countries provide the United Nations Secretariat with information on their activities related to geographical names.</p>	<p>The NZGB regularly reports to UNGEGN and UNCISG on New Zealand's activities related to geographic names.</p>
<p><b>23. Minority Languages</b></p>	
<p><b>V/22 Aboriginal/native geographical names</b></p> <p>The conference recommends that:</p> <p>(1) all countries having groups of aboriginal/native people make a special effort to collect their geographical names along with other appropriate information.</p> <p>(2) whenever possible and appropriate, a written form of those names be adopted for official use on maps and other publications.</p>	<p>Although a minority language, te Reo Māori (the Māori language) is one of New Zealand's three official languages. Māori geographic names are an integral part of New Zealand's language and history, and part of our identity.</p> <p>The NZGB is committed to supporting and helping to revive the Māori language through the use of geographic names.</p> <p>A principal function of the NZGB under <a href="#">s.11(1)(e)&amp;(f) of the NZGB Act 2008</a> is to collect original Māori names for recording on official charts and maps, and to encourage the use of original Māori names on official charts and maps.</p> <p>The NZGB has a Relationship Protocol with Te Puni Kōkiri (the Ministry of Māori Development) to ensure that the appropriate Māori groups with an ancestral interest in a place are identified and consulted with. The NZGB also seeks the advice on the correct orthography of Māori geographic names from a registered Māori language translator.</p> <p>An area also of significant interest to the NZGB</p>

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY UNCSGN	STATUS OF ACTION
	<p>is the restoration of Māori geographic names through the Treaty of Waitangi<sup>11</sup> settlements' process.</p> <p>To support and help revive the Māori language, the NZGB's Secretariat provides stories about Māori geographic names to media whenever requested.</p>

For more information about geographic naming in New Zealand contact:

Wendy Shaw  
Secretary for the New Zealand Geographic Board Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa  
c/- Land Information New Zealand  
Radio New Zealand House  
155 The Terrace  
PO Box 5501  
Wellington 6145  
New Zealand  
Phone +64 4 460 0581  
Email [wshaw@linz.govt.nz](mailto:wshaw@linz.govt.nz)

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<sup>11</sup> The agreement signed by representatives of the Queen of England and leaders of most Māori tribes when Great Britain first claimed New Zealand as a colony in 1840.