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Geographical names as culture, heritage and identity, including indigenous, minority and regional languages and multilingual issues

(Working Group on Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage)

Report of New Zealand on the project to combine Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu's Cultural Heritage Atlas, *Kā Huru Manu*, with the New Zealand Geographic Board gazetteer

Submitted by New Zealand**

Summary:

The full report from New Zealand provides information on a project that will help promote indigenous and minority geographical names as a means of cultural retention and revitalization. The legal functions of the national naming authority, the New Zealand Geographic Board Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa, are to collect and encourage the use of original Māori names and to apply their correct orthography. The Geographic Board also has Treaty of Waitangi partnership obligations to meet. In the report, the author discusses the Geographic Board's recent decision to recognize the *Kā Huru Manu* online Atlas as an authoritative source of geographical names. The Geographic Board recognizes that the Atlas is a highly valuable information resource outside of government, and acknowledges the huge effort made to produce this cultural mapping atlas over many years, using various forms of public records, authoritative published historical works, oral histories, and *hapū*¹ /*marae*² *wānanga*,³ all with oversight from a core forum of *kaumātua*.⁴ Geographical names in the *Kā Huru Manu* will be added to the New Zealand gazetteer as official, recorded or collected names. The inclusion of these traditional names, original information sources and Ngāi Tahu⁵ will add significant depth to the official records. The impact on the Ngāi Tahu people is hugely positive and there is much excitement about the collaboration.

*GEGN.2/2019/35/CRP.35

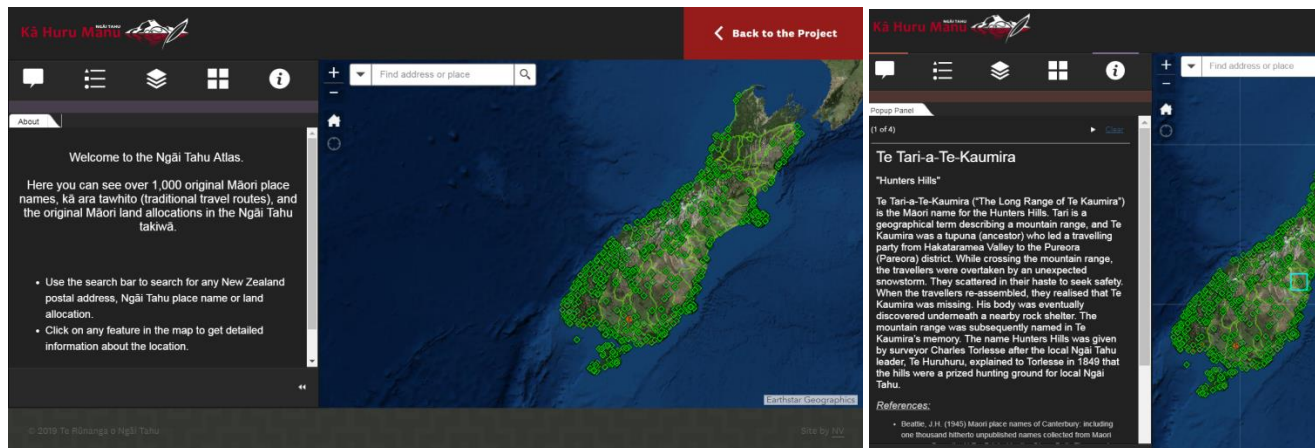
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1 Subtribe.

2 A common place where people meet.

3 To meet and discuss, deliberate, consider.

4 An elderly person of some status.



Images sourced on 4 March 2019 from <http://www.kahurumanu.co.nz/atlas>

Annual relationship meeting with Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu

At the annual relationship meeting in June 2018, representatives from the NZGB and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu (TRONT) discussed the possibility of recognising TRONT's cultural mapping atlas of place names and histories, *Kā Huru Manu*, as an authoritative publication or database of recorded names as defined in [section 4 of the NZGB Act 2008](#). Being categorised under this legal definition is a pre-requisite for the NZGB to 'approve' it (make official) under [section 24 of the NZGB Act 2008](#) (ie a 'fast track' process), provided certain criteria are met. Names that do not meet the section 24 criteria would be 'collected'. 'Collecting' is another process under [section 11\(d\) of the NZGB Act 2008](#) for original Māori names.

To date, the NZGB had only accepted government documents as authoritative sources of recorded place names. TRONT advised of the depth of scholarly research, consultation and *kaupapa*¹ that took place during its *Cultural Mapping Project*. TRONT advised the project took ten years and resulted in over 5000 Ngāi Tahu place names being identified and transformed into their cultural mapping database, the online *Kā Huru Manu* atlas. Approximately 1200 tūturu (*lit.* authentic) Ngāi Tahu place names are publicly discoverable in *Kā Huru Manu*, being those TRONT categorises as correctly spelled, accurately positioned, reliable and comprehensively researched. The other ~4000 names are accessible only to TRONT's rūnanga/rūnaka² at present, undergoing the same rigorous investigation before public release.

TRONT systematically and methodically collected and verified the ~1200 names, using various forms of public records, authoritative published historical works, oral histories, and hapū/marae wānanga, with oversight from a core forum of kaumātua. Therefore, TRONT considered that *Kā Huru Manu* should meet the NZGB's threshold of being an authoritative source of recorded place names as defined in [section 4 of the NZGB Act 2008](#).

In addition, TRONT encouraged the NZGB to accept the published works cited within *Kā Huru Manu* as 'authoritative publications'. A large part of the research involved identifying the Ngāi Tahu informants who supplied a large amount of these place names to Pākehā historians during the late 19th and early 20th century. In 2017 Ngāi Tahu launched *Tāngata Ngāi Tahu* – an ongoing series of Ngāi Tahu biographies

¹ Kaupapa means policy

² rūnanga/rūnaka mean the individual assemblies/councils within the tribe. Within TRONT this is by traditional geographic areas.

which include many of the key Ngāi Tahu place name informants. Both Kā Huru Manu and Tāngata Ngāi Tahu are part of a wider archives project to develop a public on-line archive database that will be launched in 2019.

Under the NZGB Act, a recorded name must appear in at least two publications or databases that are publicly available and in the opinion of the NZGB, are authoritative. The atlas' published works would be deemed authoritative as they apply to the atlas only. For any other place names in those published works, the NZGB's acceptance of the published works as authoritative, would be decided case by case.

Subject to agreement from the NZGB, TRONT and the NZGB Secretariat agreed at the June 2018 meeting to work towards rationalising the ~1200 [Kā Huru Manu](#) place names with the NZGB's [Gazetteer](#), to either record or collect the names. Independent expert advice from a licenced Māori language translator would be required to verify the names' orthography. Provided the fast-track criteria are met, the NZGB may then approve the recorded place names as official.

The NZGB's consideration

At the NZGB's September 2018 meeting, it considered TRONT's request for [Kā Huru Manu](#) to be an authoritative publication for identifying recorded place names. The NZGB agreed significant sources were consulted and cited, including various forms of public records, authoritative and published historical works, oral histories, within TRONT's hapū, marae, wānanga and kaumātua, and noted orthographical checks aligned with the Māori Language Commission's conventions. However, the NZGB had concerns that agreeing to both [Kā Huru Manu](#) and its cited references as authoritative, could be circular reasoning.

The NZGB noted place names in the atlas may have a number of corroborating reference sources, some of which are strong, and others less so. However, TRONT did not claim all sources to be authoritative or equal.

The NZGB's decisions:

- The NZGB accepted TRONT's [Kā Huru Manu](#) atlas as an 'authoritative publication' for the purpose of recognising TRONT place names as 'recorded names' as defined in [section 4 of the NZGB Act 2008](#), based on TRONT having systematically and methodically collected and verified these names, and
- The NZGB accepted the reference sources (authoritative published historical works) cited in [Kā Huru Manu](#) as 'authoritative publications' as defined in [section 4 of the NZGB Act 2008](#), based on TRONT having corroborated many of its place names through one or more of these sources. Noting this authority would not extend to place names that are not in the atlas, and
- The NZGB recognised that [Kā Huru Manu](#) is a highly valuable resource of information outside of government. It acknowledged the huge effort from the TRONT team to produce this cultural mapping atlas over many years, using various forms of public records, authoritative published historical works, oral histories, and hapū/marae wānanga, all with oversight from a core forum of kaumātua.

Those place names in [Kā Huru Manu](#) that already have a name recorded for the feature in the NZGB [Gazetteer](#) will not become a recorded name, rather they will be 'collected' in terms of the process for original Māori names under section 11(d) of the NZGB Act 2008.

Follow up meeting with Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu

In November 2018, the NZGB Secretariat met with TRONT to discuss how to give operational effect to recording and approving many of the place names as official and collecting others, with their stories, in the NZGB's [Gazetteer](#) for public discovery.

Commitments included:

- TRONT to match place names between [Kā Huru Manu](#) and the NZGB [Gazetteer](#)
- TRONT to enhance their database with direct URLs³ for each of their ~1200 Kā Huru Manu names and/or an API⁴ to connect to.
- The NZGB would not copy and paste TRONT's History/Origin/Meaning for each name, instead references would be added the NZGB [Gazetteer](#) pointing to [Kā Huru Manu](#) to direct people to the source of the information (where it is maintained), ie [Kā Huru Manu](#).

Three high level categories were identified:

1. ~300 exactly the same names:
 - For the same feature/place
 - Where applicable, the orthography could be standardised with macrons, subject to confirmation
 - Generic terms in the NZGB [Gazetteer](#) – would remain – English generics are not used in [Kā Huru Manu](#)
 - No changes to existing official names
 - Recorded names (incl generic terms) to be recommended to the NZGB for approval as official under the fast track process (section 24 NZGB Act 2008), subject to TRONT confirming the criteria that there is no known alternative recorded name and that approving the name is not likely to be controversial
 - NZGB [Gazetteer](#) H/O/M to include a link to the [Kā Huru Manu](#) entry for each name.
2. ~100 not named in NZGB [Gazetteer](#):
 - Add to the NZGB [Gazetteer](#) (asap) as recorded names, subject to orthographic confirmation
 - To be exactly as per [Kā Huru Manu](#), ie no English generic terms (subject to the NZGB's confirmation). If the NZGB thinks that any names need generics, then it can decide what process to follow: either add generic as part of the s.24 fast track process, or leave to TRONT to make a full proposal
 - NZGB to approve as official under the fast track process, subject to TRONT confirming they meet the criteria,
 - NZGB [Gazetteer](#) History/Origin/Māori to include the link to the name in [Kā Huru Manu](#)
3. ~800 different names:
 - Completely different words or spelling corrections beyond just standardisation with macrons
 - Subject to confirmation that the [Kā Huru Manu](#) and NZGB [Gazetteer](#) names are for the same feature/place. Positions might be updated in either database, or not.
 - Secretariat to add to the NZGB [Gazetteer](#) (asap) as 'Collected names', subject to orthographic confirmation
 - NZGB to note that the names have been 'Collected' in the NZGB [Gazetteer](#)
 - To be recorded in NZGB [Gazetteer](#) exactly as per [Kā Huru Manu](#), ie no generic terms (to be confirmed by the NZGB)
 - NZGB [Gazetteer](#) H/O/M to include the link to [Kā Huru Manu](#) for each name

³ Uniform Resource Locator

⁴ Application Programming Interface

- Over time users of the Gazetteer data might show these names on their products, leading to increased use which could assist with full proposals from TRONT to the NZGB to restore/correct their names.

The NZGB will consider batches of *Kā Huru Manu* names at its meetings in April, June and October 2019. The NZGB will discuss all issues with TRONT to confirm desired and mutually agreed outcomes.

Other place names added to *Kā Huru Manu*, in the future, will be processed separately, perhaps annually at one time, though this has yet to be decided.

Examples

<i>Kā Huru Manu</i>	NZGB Gazetteer	Future Category, Process, Status	
Ngākawau	Ngakawau River Recorded	Ngākawau River Category 1 > standardise orthography > s.24 > Official Approved	
Ōpiro	Not named	Ōpiro Category 2 > confirm orthography > Recorded > s.24 > Official Approved	
Ōtemakura	Jacks Bay Recorded	Jacks Bay Recorded	Ōtemakura Category 3 > confirm orthography > Collected

Importance to the NZGB and Ngāi Tahu

For the NZGB, the restoration of original Māori place names clearly meets its statutory purpose, functions and duties, and its Treaty of Waitangi partnership obligations between Crown and Māori.

TRONT are very excited about this work and the impact on their people. Many of these place names have endured through oral tradition, despite not being on published material. TRONT has communicated the project within its tribal groups noting this decision also marks a shift in the way that Ngāi Tahu can officially reinstate their traditional Māori place names.

The cultural restoration of original Māori place names and their stories carry deep emotions; the acknowledgement, restoration and revitalisation helps to raise their sense of place, belonging, identity and ownership.

An exhibition at the Christchurch Library on *Kā Huru Manu* ran from 26 January – 28 April 2019 – see information [here](#).

New Zealand will report to UNGEGN at a future Session on the results of this project.



Challenges

NZGB

Giving practical effect to the project will not be straight forward as not all names will fit exactly into the three categories. There will be sub categories that will need individual consideration and discussion between the NZGB and TRONT, eg orthographical differences, feature type clarification, extent clarification, addition of English generic terms, etc. These will likely slow down the project because they will need to be assessed, discussed and agreed case by case.

The NZGB Secretariat observes that the [Kā Huru Manu](#) names start from a different cultural viewpoint and can reflect a space and time prior to European settlement. How should the NZGB recognise culturally significant names despite change or loss of the physical features to which they applied? Many significant kāinga mahinga kai (food gathering places) such as wetlands and lagoons as named in [Kā Huru Manu](#), were drained for farm development by European settlers. Areas of forest and bush were cut down, and their original names taken on by new settlements. But has a settlement built near, around, or over a traditional name ‘taken’ the name as another feature, or is it an evolutionary continuation of the name? Perceptions and understandings of some features may differ. In collaboration with iwi, including TRONT, the NZGB has from time to time purposefully ‘re-assigned’ traditional Māori geographic names to different features to ensure the name remains represented through some physical expression. The alternative could be relegating names to an intangible ‘historic’ categorisation despite their enduring cultural currency and significance. It is important therefore to recognise these differences in considerations and discussions, and to be sensitive and open-minded.

From a user perspective, the macron changes may be welcome, or may be criticised. There could also be some confusion for people searching the NZGB [Gazetteer](#) with collected unofficial geographic names – the ‘recorded’ or ‘official’ geographic names are what are typically shown in official documents.

The capacity of the NZGB Secretariat to undertake the project as a priority poses a challenge. The project competes with other priority tasks and so may take longer to process the first ~1200 than anticipated. It is hoped that most of the work is completed by the end of 2019.

The project will continue indefinitely beyond the initial ~1200 as TRONT adds more names to the public facing [Kā Huru Manu](#) atlas. There may be criticism from other iwi⁵ that TRONT names are being given preference by the NZGB. However the NZGB will welcome the same information from other iwi and will apply the same categories and process.

Another challenge will be in depicting the resultant official geographic names on official documents, especially for maps and charts produced by LINZ. The NZGB Secretariat will therefore closely monitor compliance by LINZ following decisions on official geographic names.

TRONT

Engaging with the NZGB Secretariat throughout the project will also create strain on TRONT’s staff resources. However TRONT has prioritized this project for 2019, recognising the cultural benefits to their people, especially honouring ancestors and the window to the stories and host of information that these geographic names offer.

Global context

⁵ Iwi means tribe

For other nations' naming authorities, the prospect of partnering or collaborating with indigenous groups to restore and make official or discoverable their geographic names (in their standardised languages), may be difficult and challenging. Indigenous groups worldwide are investigating their geographic names and how best to restore them, eg see Australia's media coverage from early 2019 entitled '[To learn your country, start by learning its Aboriginal names](#)'. Depending on the circumstances and needs, this may be something that other countries might consider beneficial to pursue. Or they may wish to communicate why this may not be appropriate for whatever reason(s). Whatever stage national naming authorities are at, the restoration of traditional geographic names has tangible social impact for indigenous people and contributes to the [UN Sustainable Development Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities](#), specifically 10.3 'Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard.'

Contact

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