

15 March 2021

English

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**United Nations Group of Experts on  
Geographical Names  
2021 session**

New York, 3 – 7 May 2021

**Item 6(a) of the provisional agenda \***

**National and international standardization of geographical names: Names collection,  
office treatment, national authorities, features beyond a single sovereignty and  
international cooperation**

**New Zealand Geographic Board Ngā Pou Taunaha o  
Aotearoa\*\* implementation of three new place naming  
standards**

Submitted by New Zealand \*\*\*

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\* GEGN.2/2021/1

\*\* Memorial markers of the landscape

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Under [section 11\(1\)\(a\) of the New Zealand Geographic Board \(Nga Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa\) Act 2008](#) (the NZGB Act 2008) the New Zealand Geographic Board may adopt standards to carry out its function of making place names official.

To ensure quality and consistency in its decision making and to provide proposers with concise criteria for making place name proposals, in October 2020 the Board approved publishing three new standards – the *Standard for New Zealand place names*, the *Standard for Antarctic place names* and the *Standard for altering Region and District names*. In draft form, the three standards were widely circulated for public comment and feedback between June and August 2020, and where applicable the feedback received was incorporated into them.

The three new standards have removed the statutory and operational processes in the Board’s [Frameworks](#) v.10 and concentrate on the fundamental criteria for good place naming using clear and simple language. The naming criteria are closely aligned to international best practice for standardized, consistent, and accurate place naming. The standards are also designed to ensure that naming places and features in New Zealand and New Zealand’s area of interest in Antarctica is undertaken in a way that meets the provisions of the NZGB Act 2008, delivers the Board’s strategic goals, contributes to effective location identification, and reflects New Zealand’s culture and heritage. By having publicly available standards it is also more likely that geographic name proposals will focus on the relevant requirements.

In consultation with the Minister of Conservation, the Board also reviewed its [Standard for Crown protected area names](#) during 2019-2020, and in May 2020 version 3 of the standard came into effect. This standard now includes Wetlands, Ramsar Wetlands, World Heritage Area and World Heritage Site as acceptable generic terms, aligning it to international practice for the standardized naming of protected areas.

The Board’s [Standard for undersea feature names](#), which aligns with the IHO<sup>1</sup> [B-6 guidelines](#), has proven to be effective for the Board’s decision-making when naming features on the ocean floor.

In November 2020 the Board published its [Standard for New Zealand place names](#) in English and Māori. The Māori versions of the standards for Antarctic place naming, undersea feature naming, and altering Region and District names are also available online.

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<sup>1</sup> International Hydrographic Organization