

= New Zealand place names =

Most New Zealand place names are derived from Māori and British sources. Both groups used names to commemorate notable people, events, places from their homeland, and their ships, or to describe the surrounding area. The Māori did not have a collective name for New Zealand before European arrival, but post-European colonisation the name Aotearoa (commonly translated as 'long white cloud') was used to refer to the whole country. Dutch cartographers named the islands Nova Zeelandia and British explorer James Cook subsequently anglicised the name to New Zealand.

Many of the early Māori names were replaced by Europeans during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Government amendments in 1894 and the establishment of the New Zealand Geographic Board in the mid-1940s led to the encouragement of original Māori names, although incorrect spellings and pronunciations persisted. Many names now have alternative or dual English and Māori names or, in a few rare cases, dual Māori names or dual English names. Most names have never been made official, but if they are mentioned in authoritative publications they are considered recorded names. Colloquial names in New Zealand result from an ironic view of the place's entertainment value, or plays on advertising mottos, or are shortened versions of the full name. Some places tried to capitalise on the success of the The Lord of the Rings films by linking themselves to the movies.

= = Country and main islands = =

No known pre-European contact Māori name for New Zealand as a whole survives, although the Māori had several names for the North and South Islands; including Te Ika-a-Māui (the fish of Māui) for the North Island and Te Waipounamu (the waters of greenstone) or Te Waka o Aoraki (the canoe of Aoraki) for the South Island. Until the early 20th century, Māori also referred to the North Island as Aotearoa, (commonly translated as 'long white cloud'); in modern Māori usage this has become the name for the whole country.

The first European visitor to New Zealand, Dutch explorer Abel Tasman, named the islands Staten Landt, believing it formed part of the land which Jacob Le Maire had seen off the coast of Tierra del Fuego. Hendrik Brouwer proved the supposedly South American land an island in 1643, and Dutch cartographers subsequently renamed Tasman's discovery Nova Zeelandia, after the Dutch province of Zeeland. The Latin Nova Zeelandia became Nieuw Zeeland in Dutch, and British explorer James Cook subsequently called the archipelago New Zealand, an anglicised form of the Dutch name.

The 1840 Letters Patent established New Zealand as a British colony and claimed the "principal islands" of New Zealand, identified by their commonly known names at the time: the Northern Island (the North Island), the Middle Island (the South Island) and Stewart's Island or "South Island". The letters patent attempted to rename the islands New Ulster, New Munster and New Leinster after the provinces in Ireland. New Ulster, New Munster and New Leinster were also used for the initial provinces of New Zealand, but the names did not endure. In the 1830s the South Island was used as an alternative to Middle Island and by 1907 it became the common name. The North and South Island names arose through common usage rather than official declaration and in 2009 it was revealed that they had never been formalised.

In 2013, alternative names were formalised for the two main islands, as North Island or Te Ika-a-Māui, and South Island or Te Waipounamu, with either English or Māori name being used or a combination of both.

= = Māori names = =

Many Māori place names possess either historical or mythological significance. Their meaning is not always apparent from literal translations and they have been passed down through oral tradition. Before European arrival, place names commemorated notable or historical incidents, described

features of the location or were derived from traditional Hawaiki names or myths . After European arrival many locations became known as M?ori versions of European words or poorly pronounced contractions of the original M?ori names .

Early M?ori explorers Kupe , Ngahue , and Toi named many of New Zealand 's coastal features . Like later European explorers , they named things after themselves , their family members and events that occurred at the newly discovered location . Kahumatamomoe named Manukau Harbour after a manuka @-@ stake that he used to claim ownership of the area , and Kaipara Harbour after the para fern he ate there (kai means food) . The M?ori name for Wellington Harbour , Te Whanganui a Tara , derives from Tara , a grandson of Kupe and ancestor of several local iwi . Names from other islands visited during the " Great Migration " have been used to identify some New Zealand landmarks , for example Raratoka Island (from Rarotonga) and Tawhiti (from Tahiti) . Whakatane , Rangitoto Island , Taupo , Urewera , Ngongotaha , and Tikitapu all commemorate incidents that occurred during the early arrivals , many of which are now forgotten .

Maketu and Mount Moehau are two of the few remaining names connected to places in Hawaiki . The use of Polynesian mythology in names is more apparent , with T?ne (the forest god) lending his name to Otane and Taneatua among others . Descriptive words are often used as part of a place name , with Ara (road) , Maunga (mountain) , Wai (water) , Whanga (bay) , Roto (lake) and nui (big) among some of the more widely used . Whanganui means " wide river @-@ mouth " and Waikanae indicates good waters for catching kanae , or flathead mullet . European arrival exposed M?ori to Christianity , leading to the settlements of Hiruharama , Petane and Hamaria being named after the biblical Jerusalem , Bethany and Samaria . The R?nana , ?tene and Karaponia settlements are M?ori transliterations of London , Athens and California . Moriori , descendants of M?ori , migrated to islands off the eastern coast of New Zealand and named them R?kohu (Misty Sun) . Sometime before 1835 M?ori settled at R?kohu and confused the name of the settlement , Wharekauri , for the name of islands . It has been known as Wharekauri to M?ori ever since .

= = = Post @-@ colonial recognition = = =

Early Europeans displaced most of the original M?ori names with their own , although some M?ori names persisted in the north and central regions of the North Island . The Royal Geographical Society of London was responsible for place names until 1894 when authority was given to the New Zealand Governor @-@ General . Prime Minister Joseph Ward moved an amendment in 1894 that gave preference to M?ori names for any new features and allowed misspelt names to be altered (although this did not always occur) . In 1924 the Honorary Geographic Board of New Zealand was set up to advise on place names , and in 1946 the New Zealand Geographic Board (NZGB) was established and given power to change or implement M?ori and English names . Anyone can propose a geographical name to the board , who consult local M?ori and allow public submissions before determining if the name should be made official . Names can also be made official through an Act of Parliament and the NZGB is required to keep a public list of all the official New Zealand geographical names .

The NZGB encourages the use of original M?ori names and has given some places official double names . These can be expressed as alternative names where officially either name could be used (Mount Taranaki or Mount Egmont) or dual names where both names should be used together (Matiu / Somes Island) . In 1998 , as a result of the settling of the Ngai Tahu Treaty claim , New Zealand 's tallest mountain officially became Aoraki / Mount Cook . There are also a few English dual names , with Wellington harbour also officially known as Port Nicholson .

M?ori groups have campaigned to correct inaccurately spelled or pronounced M?ori language place names . In 2000 , the local iwi suggestion to rename the Wellington suburb of Hataitai to Whataitai , referring to a taniwha (sea @-@ monster) that legend says lived in Wellington Harbour , was declined by the Geographic Board . More recently the NZGB recommended renaming the town of Wanganui to Whanganui as the town was originally named after the Whanganui River and the word wanga is not in the M?ori lexicon . The government decided in 2009 that both Whanganui and Wanganui would be accepted as alternative official names . The origin of Wanganui has been

claimed to reflect the dialectal pronunciation of local Māori, who pronounce 'wh' (an "f" -like sound in other dialects) as [ʔw] ? a glottalised "w" .

= = European names = =

Tasman named a few geographic features as he sailed along New Zealand 's west coast . Many such as Murderers Bay did not last , while some like Cape Maria van Diemen (the wife of the governor of Batavia) and Three Kings Islands are still in use . Cook named many more on his voyage , including Bay of Islands , Bay of Plenty , Poverty Bay , Cape Farewell , Queen Charlotte Sound , Mount Egmont and Banks Peninsula . Cape Kidnappers commemorates a Māori attempt to kidnap one of Cook 's crew members . Dumont d 'Urville named French Pass after sailing through it . The explorers lent their names to many places , including Mount Tasman , Tasman Glacier , the Tasman Region , Cook Strait , Mount Cook and D 'Urville Island . The Coromandel , Chatham and Pegasus ships visited New Zealand 's shores between 1791 and 1820 and were used to name Coromandel Peninsula , Chatham Islands , Pegasus Bay and Port Pegasus . Stewart Island was named after the first officer aboard the Pegasus .

Most European names came during the 1840s to the 1910s and were given by surveyors who worked for colonising associations or provincial governments . Names acknowledged the colonising associations sponsors (Hutt Valley , Wakefield , Port Chalmers , Ashburton) , ships (Bombay) , government officials (Featherston , Rolleston , Invercargill) , politicians (Foxton , Fox Glacier , Gisborne) and church leaders (Selwyn) . Military heroes and famous battles were popular place names , with Auckland , Napier , Hastings , Havelock , Wellington , Picton , Marlborough , Nelson and Blenheim . British politicians and royalty lent their names to Russell , Palmerston , Cromwell , Queenstown and Alexandra , while Franz Josef is named after the Austrian emperor . Royal names are more popular for streets than towns or geographical features , although both Auckland and Wellington have Mount Victoria . Gore is named after governor Thomas Gore Browne and George Grey 's name is used for Greytown , Greymouth , Grey Lynn and many natural features . Relatively few names are derived from United Kingdom towns , with Dunedin (after Edinburgh ? Dùn Éideann in Scottish Gaelic) , New Plymouth and the Canterbury Province among the most notable .

Many inland locations (including Helensville , Dargaville , Morrinsville , Bulls , Masterton and Levin) were named after the early settlers . Mackenzie Country takes its name from a sheep stealer and King Country references the region where the Māori king defied colonial government for many years . Mountains and passes were named after their discoverers (Haast , Lewis) or scientists (Newton , Lyell) . Other names were descriptive , such as Woodville , Island Bay , Riverton , Whitecliffs and Bluff . A few derive their names from descriptions in languages other than English or Māori , for example : Miramar , which means " sea view " in Spanish ; and Inchbonnie , which means " beautiful " (bonnie in Lallands) " island " (innis in Scottish Gaelic) .

= = = Regional patterns = = =

Many Scottish names occur in Otago and Southland (the Lammerlaws , Invercargill , Wedderburn , Glenfalloch) and Scottish settlers also named Riccarton and the Avon River in Christchurch . Canterbury has an English flavour to its nomenclature with Christchurch and Oxford , but also contains Belfast and French names throughout the Akaroa area . Scandinavian migrants left their mark in the Seventy Mile Bush with Dannevirke and Norsewood and some of the suburbs and streets of Auckland and Wellington reflect Australian immigration (Footscray and Botany Downs) . There is very little Asian influence in New Zealand place naming , with Khandallah in Wellington and Cashmere (Kashmir) in Christchurch , reflecting British imperial connections rather than Indian influence .

= = Unofficial names = =

Many of New Zealand 's place names have never been officially approved by the NZGB . They

either fall outside the board 's jurisdiction (homesteads , lighthouses) or were common names before the board was established and have never been officially formalised . Unofficial recorded names are defined as " names that have appeared in at least two publicly available authoritative publications or databases " . Recorded names include major cities (Wellington , Auckland , Hamilton , Christchurch) , mountains (Mount Tasman , Mount Dampier) , islands (Auckland Islands , Great Barrier Island) and many other geographical features .

New Zealand and various parts of it have acquired a range of colloquial names over the years . Unofficial late 19th century names for New Zealand included " Maoriland " and " God 's Own Country " . The former occurred widely in the labour movement and an early labour newspaper was named the Maoriland Worker . Premier Richard John Seddon (in power 1893 @-@ 1906) popularised " God 's Own Country " . Both names fell out of popularity in the 20th century , although " God 's Own Country " (or " Godzone ") still occasionally appears . Latinate names for the country have included " Zealandia " and " Nova Zealandia " .

Many cities and towns have nicknames based on a prominent feature or one which promoters wish to emphasise . Christchurch is promoted as the " Garden City " and Auckland is commonly referred to as the " city of sails " . Various councils have come up with mottos to advertise their cities , with Hamilton going from " Where It 's Happening " to " More Than You Expect " in 2000 and Dunedin using the " I am Dunedin " slogan from 2001 until 2010 . Hamilton acquired the nickname " the Tron " after " Hamiltron : City of the Future " was suggested for a city slogan . Wellington is also known as the " windy city " due to its strong and unpredictable winds .

Following the release of Peter Jackson 's The Lord of the Rings films , New Zealand has sometimes been called " Middle @-@ earth " after the fictional setting of the films . Wellington , the centre of the films ' production , was sometimes called Middle @-@ earth , and for about a week around the release of the first movie the local newspaper The Evening Post renamed itself to The Middle Earth Post . The town of Matamata , near the location of many of the Hobbiton scenes , unofficially renamed itself " Hobbiton " . The flourishing of the film @-@ industry in Wellington has led to the nickname " Wellywood " , and a proposal to erect a " Hollywood " style sign near the airport was overturned due to public resistance and possible copyright infringements .

A number of towns have acquired ironic nicknames comparing them to the " more exciting " city of Las Vegas ; " Rotovegas " for Rotorua , " Ashvegas " for Ashburton and " Invervegas " for Invercargill . Other areas have nicknames or popular designations based on abbreviations or mangling of the M?ori name . New Zealanders will sometimes refer to the Taranaki Region as " The Naki " , Palmerston North as " Palmy " , Gisborne as " Gizzie " , Cardrona as " Cardie " , Paraparaumu as " Paraparam " , Waimakariri as " Waimak " and Paekakariki as " Pie @-@ cock " .

Waikikamukau (/ wa?k?k??mu?ka? / , as if saying " Why kick a moo @-@ cow ") is a generic name for a small rural town or locality in New Zealand .