



**ROTORUA  
LAKES COUNCIL**  
Te Kaunihera o ngā Roto o Rotorua

# **Kaupapataka Late Items**

## **NOTICE OF A MEETING OF COUNCIL**

**Date:** Wednesday 20 May 2026

**Time:** 9:30 am

**Venue:** Council Chamber

### **MEMBERSHIP**

#### **Chair**

Mayor Tapsell

#### **Members**

Deputy Mayor Kai Fong (Deputy Chair)

Cr Barker

Cr Brown

Cr Lee

Cr Wang

Cr Maxwell

Cr Paterson

Cr Raukawa-Tait

Cr Sandford

Cr Temara-Benfell

#### **Quorum**

6

**Andrew Moraes  
Chief Executive**

## Order of Business

|           |                                                                                        |            |
|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>12</b> | <b>Pūrongo Kaimahi – Staff Reports .....</b>                                           | <b>108</b> |
| 12.7      | Remit to LGNZ 2026 AGM: Devolution of Place-naming Authority to Local Government ..... | 108        |

## 12 PŪRONGO KAIMAHI – STAFF REPORTS

### 12.7 REMIT TO LGNZ 2026 AGM: DEVOLUTION OF PLACE-NAMING AUTHORITY TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Doc ID:

Prepared by: Robert Griffith, Governance and Democracy Advisor

Approved by: Greg Kieck, Manager, Governance, Strategy & Compliance

Attachments: 1. Far North District Council Remit to Local Government New Zealand 2026 Annual General Meeting - Devolution of Place-naming Authority to Local Government

#### 1. TE PŪTAKE PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek councillors' support for a Far North District Council (FNDC) remit to devolve place-naming authority to local government, to be considered at the Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) 2026 Annual General Meeting (AGM), being held on 31 July.

#### HE TŪTOHUNGA RECOMMENDATION

1. That the report 'Remit to LGNZ 2026 AGM: Devolution of Place-naming Authority to Local Government' be received.

2. That the Council support the Far North District Council remit 'Devolution of Place-naming Authority to Local Government', to be considered at the Local Government New Zealand 2026 Annual General Meeting.

#### 2. TE MATAPAKI ME NGĀ KŌWHIRINGA DISCUSSION AND OPTIONS

Local Government New Zealand have called for member authorities to submit proposed remits for consideration at the LGNZ 2026 Annual General Meeting.

Remits are positions or policies put to LGNZ's AGM for a vote. Any remit needs the support of either an LGNZ Zone, Sector or five councils. LGNZ reviews all proposed remits to ensure they meet the criteria below.

1. The remit is relevant to local government as a whole, not just a single Zone, Sector or council;
2. The remit relates to significant matters, including constitutional and substantive policy, rather than matters that can be dealt with administratively;
3. The remit concerns matters that can't be addressed through channels;
4. The remit does not deal with issues that are already being actioned by LGNZ. This covers work programmes underway as part of LGNZ's strategy.

The LGNZ Remit Screening Committee will determine which of the proposed remits will be put forward to the 2026 AGM to be voted on by members.

**3. TE TINO AROMATAWAI  
ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The decisions of this report are not significant in accordance with Council's Significance and Engagement Policy.

**4. NGĀ KŌRERA O TE HAPORI ME TE WHAKATAIRANGA  
COMMUNITY INPUT/ENGAGEMENT AND PUBLICITY**

Consultation on this matter is not required as remits to LGNZ are considered advocacy positions or policy proposals to seek a collective mandate for advocacy toward central government.

**5. HE WHAIWHAKAARO  
CONSIDERATIONS**

**5.1. Mahere Pūtea  
Financial/Budget Considerations**

There are no financial costs associated with this matter.

**5.2. Kaupapa Here Me Ngā Hiraunga Whakariterite  
Policy and Planning Implications**

The matters of this report are part of a LGNZ remit process to arrive at a decision that may have consequences for Council policies and planning in the future.

**5.3. Te Aromatawai Whakapātanga Ki Te Tāngata Whenua  
Tāngata Whenua Impact Assessment**

The decision to support this remit does not of itself give rise to direct impacts on Māori. The outcome sought by the remit, for local authorities to be devolved the power to set official place names, would be of significance to Māori.

**5.4. Tūraru  
Risks**

There are no risks associated with this matter.

**5.5. Te Whaimana  
Authority**

To progress, the remit requires the support of either an LGNZ Zone, Sector or five councils and a determination from the LGNZ Remit Screening Committee to be put forward to the 2026 AGM.



# REMIT APPLICATION FORM

## How to submit a remit/

Remits are positions or policies put to LGNZ's AGM for a vote.

Any remit needs the support of either an LGNZ Zone, Sector or five councils.

LGNZ reviews all proposed remits to ensure they meet the criteria below.

If your council wants to propose a remit for consideration by the 2026 AGM, please complete this form and email it, along with any supporting information, to [agm@lgnz.co.nz](mailto:agm@lgnz.co.nz) by Monday 25 May, 2026.

If you have any questions about the remit process, or want help completing your application, please contact [Simon Randall](#), Director Policy.

## Criteria for remits/

1. The remit is relevant to local government as a whole, not just a single Zone, Sector or council;
2. The remit relates to significant matters, including constitutional and substantive policy, rather than matters that can be dealt with administratively;
3. The remit concerns matters that can't be addressed through channels other than the AGM.
4. The remit does not deal with issues that are already being actioned by LGNZ. This covers work programmes underway as part of LGNZ's strategy. National Council will finalise LGNZ's strategy in early 2026: if you have questions in the interim, please contact Simon.

## The process from here/

Once LGNZ receives your proposed remit, it will be considered by our Remit Screening Committee. This Committee is made up of LGNZ's President, Vice-President, Chief Executive and Director Policy. The Remit Screening Committee will determine whether your proposed remit satisfies the criteria above, and whether or not to put it forward to the 2026 AGM.

We will let you know whether your remit is going forward to the AGM by Wednesday 10 June 2026.

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## REMIT APPLICATION FORM

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**Council proposing remit:** Far North District Council

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**Contact name(s):** Kahika Moko Tepania

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**AGM speaker:** Kahika Moko Tepania

This person must attend the AGM and be registered as a delegate.

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**Phone:**



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**Email:** mayor@fndc.govt.nz

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**Remit subject:** Devolution of place-naming authority to Local Government

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**Remit:** That LGNZ advocate for legislative changes to devolve decision making authority for officiating specified geographic place names from the Minister for Land Information to local authorities, while retaining a national role for the New Zealand Geographic Board Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa in setting standards, providing guidance, and supporting national consistency.

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**Who supports the proposed remit?**

Remits must be endorsed by either an LGNZ Zone, Sector Group, or five councils.

// 2



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**Why is this remit important?**

Briefly describe what the issue is and why it requires action.

*Max. 150 words*

Local communities are best placed to make decisions about names that reflect their identity, history, and sense of belonging. While councils already name roads and streets, authority over official geographic names - such as mountains, rivers, towns, and bays - sits with the New Zealand Geographic Board Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa and the Minister for Land Information under the New Zealand Geographic Board Act 2008. This centralised system has produced outcomes that lack local knowledge, overlook iwi and hapū relationships, or fail to reflect a community's lived history. Councils have highlighted examples such as the decline of locally supported historical names (Russell, Kororāreka), or cases where official spellings have been approved that do not reflect how names are commonly used, spoken, or understood locally.

Devolving authority to local government, in partnership with mana whenua, would ensure place naming is grounded in authentic local voice while reducing unnecessary bureaucracy. At the LGNZ Rural and Provincial meeting in November 2025, Minister Penk indicated support for this remit and the localised outcomes it seeks to achieve.

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### Background and context:

You may wish to include:

- > What has caused this issue?
- > Relevant legislation, policy or practice
- > Key statistics to show the scope of the issue
- > An outline of what your council/others have already done to address this issue or bring about the proposed change.

*Max 500 words*

Under the New Zealand Geographic Board (Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa) Act 2008, responsibility for the assignment, alteration, and discontinuance of official geographic place names sits within a national statutory framework involving the New Zealand Geographic Board (NZGB) and, in certain circumstances, the Minister for Land Information. This remit does not propose the disestablishment of the NZGB. Rather, it seeks legislative change to enable local authorities to become the primary decision makers for place naming within their rohe, while retaining a national body responsible for standards, guidance, coordination, and oversight. This model would be comparable to existing devolved local government functions, where councils exercise decision making authority within nationally defined frameworks. It would allow for local determination of outcomes while maintaining coherence, transparency, and consistency at a national level through the continued role of the NZGB.

Local authorities already demonstrate strong capability in place based naming through their existing statutory functions. These decisions routinely incorporate local history, community values, and the guidance of mana whenua. However, when it comes to naming mountains, rivers, settlements, bays, and other significant features, councils and iwi must defer to a national body - even in cases where local expertise, whakapapa, and historical evidence are well established.

This centralised model can create disconnects between official names and the communities that hold whakapapa and lived connection to those places. Consultation occurs, but local knowledge is not determinative, and decisions may not align with regional dialects, historical narratives, or cultural contexts. Councils have highlighted examples where locally supported names or spellings were not adopted, or where national decisions did not fully recognise the depth of local iwi and hapū relationships with place. In the Far North, we refer to the name restoration process for Russell (Kororāreka) which while strongly supported at a local level, failed to receive centralised support.

Returning decision making to local authorities would strengthen the integrity and authenticity of geographic names. It would allow naming processes to better reflect regional narratives, use correct te reo Māori spelling, including macrons and regional forms, and ensure communities have a meaningful role in shaping the identity of the places they belong to. Devolving

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authority would also streamline the process by reducing a layer of central bureaucracy while retaining opportunities for national consistency through guidelines and shared standards.

Further policy development would be required to determine the scope of devolved authority, resourcing implications, and any transitional arrangements. However, councils already handle similar place naming tasks, so they are well suited to take on a broader role if the law is clear and the right guidance and support are provided.

**How does this remit relate to LGNZ's current work programme?**

Briefly describe how the proposed remit aligns with LGNZ's Strategy (new strategy is being finalised) and policy priorities but does not duplicate existing or planned work.

*Approx. 150 words*

This remit aligns strongly with LGNZ's long term goal of "Local decisions matter", and aligns with LGNZ's advocacy for:

- Strengthened local decision making
- Improved Crown-local government-iwi partnerships
- Recognition of local identity and community driven governance

It also enhances LGNZ's ongoing work to promote localism, reduce unnecessary centralisation, and strengthen community wellbeing through place based decision making.

**How will your council help LGNZ to make progress on this remit?**

Briefly describe the steps that your council would be prepared to take to assist LGNZ to progress the remit

*100 – 300 words*

The Far North District Council will support LGNZ's advocacy on this remit by contributing sector leadership and local, practical insights. We have extensive experience working with LINZ on the correction and officiating of Māori place names, including active participation in the "Approving of Unofficial Place Names" workstream. With 1,682 unofficial Māori place names currently progressing through LINZ processes, we hold a strong understanding of the challenges and opportunities within the present system.

This remit is intended to establish a clear advocacy direction for LGNZ rather than prescribe a detailed statutory model. The proposing council supports further engagement with LGNZ, member councils, mana whenua, and central government agencies to refine the scope, safeguards, and implementation of any proposed reforms. FNDC is committed to supporting this remit's progression alongside LGNZ.



### Supporting information and research

Please attach to your email:

- > A copy of this application form.
- > Evidence of support from an LGNZ Zone or Sector Group or five councils. This could be in the form of emails, letters or Zone/Sector Group meeting minutes or resolutions.
- > Any further contextual/background information you'd like to share, combined in a single word or PDF file.

// 6