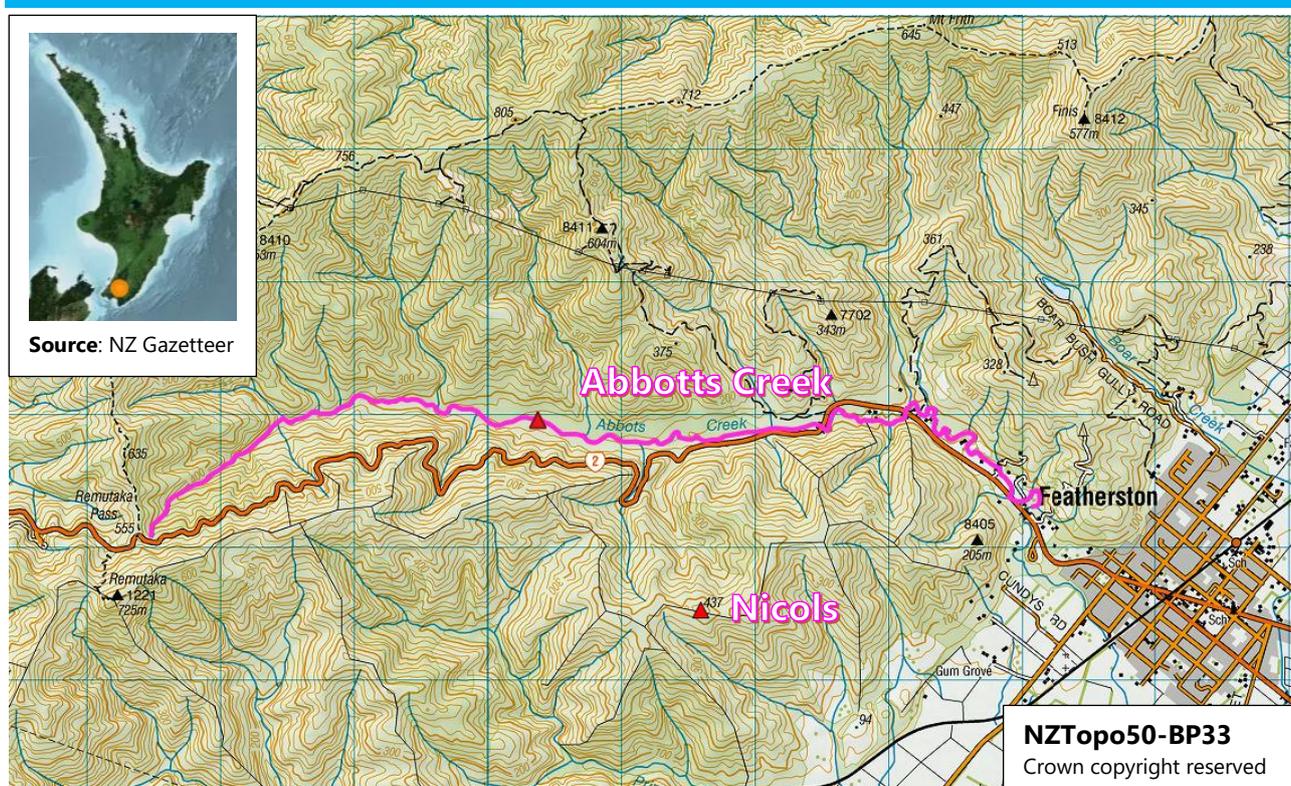


Proposals report considered by the Board on 30 April 2024 with the Board's decisions for:

Abbots Creek [altered from Abbots Creek]

Nicols (hill) [altered from Nicholl]



## Summary

The proposals are to alter the official place name Abbots Creek to Abbots Creek and the unofficial recorded place name Nicholl (hill) to Nicols. Abbots Creek flows east from Remutaka Pass to Featherston, where it joins Otairua Stream. Nicholl is a 437m hill approximately 3km west of Featherston, in Pigeon Bush Reserve.<sup>1</sup>

The proposer advises that Abbots Creek is named for William Abbott (1784-1877) who settled in the Featherston area *ca* 1863, working as a hotel proprietor. They state that Nicholl (hill) is named for William Nicols (1815-1890), a farmer at Gum Grove<sup>2</sup>, just south of Featherston. The spellings 'Abbott' and 'Nicols' are confirmed by several documentary sources.

The proposer wrote to Te Ātiawa, Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust, Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangitira Inc, Muaūpoko, Rangitāne o Wairarapa Inc and Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa Tāmaki nui-a-Rua about the numerous

<sup>1</sup> A Native Forest Restoration Trust reserve, see <https://www.nfrt.org.nz/reserves/pigeon-bush/> - last accessed 8 April 2024.

<sup>2</sup> Not in the Gazetteer as it is a homestead name but is named on modern topographic maps from NZMS1 N161 (1968, 2nd edition) through to the current NZTopo50-BP33 v1-09.

proposals for place names in the Wellington Region, attaching relevant documentation.<sup>3</sup> To date no responses have been received.

## Board's decisions

At its 30 April 2024 hui the Board made these decisions on the proposals:

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**Accept** the proposal to **alter** the official place name Abbots Creek to **Abbotts Creek**, based on:

- a principal function of the Board being to correct the spelling of geographic names,
- evidence that the feature is named for William Abbott, noting his association with the area,
- retaining the possessive form due to long term use and low public value,
- retaining the generic term 'Creek' due to long term use,
- the feature being relatively large and following a well-used portion of SH2, and so warrants being correctly spelled, and
- the proposed alteration not impacting emergency services,

**and**

**Notify** as a proposal to alter for one month.

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**AND**

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**Decline** the proposal to alter the unofficial recorded place name Nicholl to **Nicols** for a hill feature and make it official, based on:

- the name originally being for a trig station on prior topographic maps, which the Board does not have naming jurisdiction over,
- the hill (to which the name Nicholl has subsequently been applied through recording in the Gazetteer) being a relatively minor feature, and
- the cost and resource implications noting the Board's other priority work,

**Noting** that Nicholl (hill) will still be discoverable in the Gazetteer as an unofficial recorded place name, with the History/Origin/Meaning statement clarifying that the feature is named after William Nicols (1815-1890).

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<sup>3</sup> The proposer advised that their October 2023 email to Rangitāne o Wairarapa Inc bounced back and he could not find another email address. The Secretariat subsequently provided a direct contact address for Mike Kawana, Cultural Advisor for Rangitāne o Wairarapa Inc and the proposer has emailed him.

## Secretariat assessment

### The proposals

The proposals are to alter the official place name Abbots Creek to Abbotts Creek and the unofficial recorded place name Nicholl (hill) to Nicols. These two proposals are among a suite of 40 proposals received in 2022. The Board has already considered 15 of these proposals:

- proposals to alter Skerrets Creek to Skerretts Creek and assign Ryan Creek to an unnamed creek on Remutaka Range were approved in 2022, and
- 13 proposals for 'hill' names that did not meet minimum requirements were declined in April 2023.

Nicholl was excluded from the group of 'hill' names the Board considered in April 2023 as the Secretariat noted that the trig was actually at the summit of the hill and considered that the hill was a sufficiently prominent geographic feature to warrant recording the name in the Gazetteer.

The proposer advises that Abbots Creek is named for William Abbott (1784-1877), a Featherston hotel proprietor who settled in the area *ca* 1863. The proposal references several documents which confirm Abbott's association with the Featherston area:

- six online historical images which reference 'Abbott's' /'Abbott's Accommodation House' in Featherston
- Abbott's record on the *Find a Grave* website, noting his burial at Featherston cemetery
- a book on the Abbott family by Dulcie L. Viles titled 'The Abbott Follett story: the story of the lives of William Abbott and Sophia Abbott (nee) Follett of Featherston, New Zealand and their descendants' (1991).

The proposer advises that Nicholl is named for William Nicols (1815 – 1890) who farmed at Gum Grove (homestead) just south of Featherston. The proposal references an article in the *Wairarapa Standard*, 4 April 1878 which confirms Nicols' association with the Featherston area. It also lists other consulted sources which also confirm this association, such as New Zealand Birth, Death and Marriages Indexes and New Zealand Electoral Rolls.

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### Names shown on plans, maps and charts

Abbots Creek is named on:

- early survey plans such as DP 9329 (1929) and DP 10227 (1931) and is spelled with the second [t]. On DP 9329 it includes the possessive [s], ie 'Abbott's Creek', and
- official government maps from the 1<sup>st</sup> edition of the NZMS1 N161 (1943) topographic map through to the current NZTopo50-BP33 v1-09. It is consistently spelled with one [t] and is named with the generic term 'Stream' through until the 1st edition of the NZMS 260 S27 (1980), when the generic term is altered to 'Creek'.

Nicholl is named on:

- early survey plans such as SO 17901 (1923) where it's spelled with the possessive [s] and DP 10227 (1931), and

- official government maps from the NZMS15 Featherston and Wairarapa South (1925) through until the NZMS260 S27 (1998, limited revision). It is shown as the name of a trig station, not a geographic feature, and is consistently spelled as 'Nicholl'.

Location of the feature, generic term, geographic feature type

Abbots Creek is a stream that flows east for approximately 7.5km from Remutaka Pass to Featherston, where it joins Otairua Stream. The generic term 'Creek', which is used in the existing name and would be retained in the proposed name, accurately describes the feature.

Nicholl is a 437m hill approximately 3km west of Featherston, in Pigeon Bush Reserve. It's not considered necessary to add a generic term like 'hill' or 'Mount' to the name. There are numerous hills/peaks/maunga across Aotearoa New Zealand which are officially named without a generic term. Examples in the South Wairarapa District include [Finis](#), [Reeves](#), [Neill](#), [Bawbaw](#) and [Ōrongorongo](#).

[New Zealand Gazetteer](#), associated names and duplication

[Abbots Creek](#) is an official place name approved in 2019 under the region-by-region fast track programme. No comment on the spelling was received from mana whenua or South Wairarapa District Council at the time. Under the programme no research is conducted on the correct spelling of non-Māori names. This proposal gives effect to the proviso that anything approved may still be corrected under the Board's standard process.

There are no associated names in the Gazetteer and there is one duplication of Abbots Creek or Abbotts Creek. [Abbotts Creek](#) (unofficial recorded) is a stream at Fairfield, approximately 10km west of Dunedin, potentially a misspelling noting the adjacent suburb of Abbottsford, named after early surveyor Edward Abbot. This is too far distant from this proposal to cause confusion. There are several other occurrences of the name Abbots/Abbotts with or without the possessive [s]:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Comment</i>
<a href="#">Abbot</a> (hill) (official)	A peak on Liebig Range, Canterbury	One of a series of religious themed names (eg The Acolyte, Monastery Peak, The Abbess, The Nuns Veil) named by English climber Harold Porter
<a href="#">Abbott</a> (hill) (unofficial recorded)	In Battle Hill Farm Forest Park, approximately 8km east of Pimmerton	Presumably named after the Abbott family who settled in the area in 1860 <sup>4</sup>
<a href="#">Abbotts Hill</a> (unofficial recorded)	Approximately 4km northeast of Fairfield, Dunedin	Misspelling; feature named for early surveyor Edward Abbot
<a href="#">Abbott Passage</a>	Approximately 11km east of Halfmoon Bay	Presumably named after a different Abbott

<sup>4</sup> See 'Battle Hill Farm Forest Park:Resource Statement', <https://www.gw.govt.nz/assets/Documents/2009/07/Battle-Hill-resource-statement-2006.pdf> - last accessed 9 April 2024.

/ Oban, Stewart  
Island/Rakiura

[Abbott Peak](#) (official), Antarctica  
[Abbott Spur](#) (official)  
and [Mount Abbott](#)  
(official)

Abbott Peak and Mount Abbott are named after Petty Officer George O. Abbott, RN. Abbot Spur is named after Robin R. Abbott, ASA, Helicopter Field Operations Coordinator at McMurdo Station

The distance of these partially duplicated names from the proposal and differing generic term/lack of generic term mean there will be no confusion.

[Nicholl](#) was recorded in the Gazetteer in 2022, applying the name of the trig (as shown on NZMS 260s, 1s 15 and 13) to the unnamed hill. There are no associated names in the Gazetteer or duplications of Nicholl with or without the possessive [s]. One partial duplication of Nicols is [Nicols Creek](#) (unofficial recorded). This is north of Dunedin so too far distant to cause confusion.

Research, history  
and references to  
the feature

Abbots Creek: numerous newspaper articles on *Papers Past*<sup>5</sup> and several Archives NZ documents confirm that Abbott with two [t]'s is the correct spelling, most notably William Abbott's probate documents which include his signature.<sup>6</sup> An April 2014 article in the *NZ Herald* quotes Carterton resident Jack Abbott (1924-2014) (formerly of Featherston) who states that his family name is commonly misspelled as 'Abbot'.<sup>7</sup> Mr Abbott also states that the creek is named 'after his pioneering grandparents, who had a farm near the creek where they milked cows'. However, historical images from the 1860s and 1870s which reference the creek indicate the creek was likely named after William Abbott (1784-1877) as the proposer asserts, rather than later generations of the Abbott family. A search of *Papers Past* revealed the earliest newspaper reference to 'Abbott's Creek' dates to 1873.<sup>8</sup>

The creek may have originally been known as Torohonga Creek as the description accompanying an 1868 watercolour of 'Torohonga Creek, Rimutaka Road. Nov. 27th, 1868' by Charles Barraud (1822-1897) states: 'The name 'Torohonga Creek is no longer used, but may be Abbot's Stream on the South Wairarapa side of the hill'.<sup>9</sup>

Nicholl: various newspaper articles on *Papers Past* reference William Nicols of Gum Grove, Featherston.<sup>10</sup> The proximity of Gum Grove to Nicholl (hill) supports the proposer's assertion that this feature is named after Nicols. William Nicols of Featherston is also listed in an AJHR<sup>11</sup> report on annual sheep

<sup>5</sup> For example, multiple notices in the *Wairarapa Standard* in 1871 advertising the Featherston Hotel for let and '[Deaths](#)', *Evening Post*, 29 December 1877, p.2.

<sup>6</sup> ABBOTT, William, R22205433, Archives New Zealand, <https://collections.archives.govt.nz/web/arena/search#/entity/aims-archive/R22205433> - last accessed 4 April 2024.

<sup>7</sup> 'Naming a bad sign for Abbots Creek', *NZ Herald*, 28 April 2014, <https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/naming-a-bad-sign-for-abbotts-bridge/JTSQWZMF57CVOPULSOXNOQIGUY/> - last accessed 9 April 2024.

<sup>8</sup> '[Wairarapa](#)', *New Zealand Mail*, 18 January 1873, p.4

<sup>9</sup> Barraud, Charles Decimus 1822-1897: Torohonga Creek, Rimutaka Road. Nov. 27th, 1868, National Library, A-029-064, <https://natlib.govt.nz/records/23079807?search%5Bi%5D%5Bsubject%5D=Abbots+Creek&search%5Bpath%5D=items> - accessed 9 April 2024.

<sup>10</sup> For example, '[Deaths](#)', *New Zealand Mail*, 31 October 1890, p.18; '[Obituary](#)', *Manawatu Times*, 25 November 1931, p.11.

<sup>11</sup> Appendix to the Journal of the House of Representatives.

returns for the year ending 31 May 1882.<sup>12</sup> Archives NZ holds the probate documents of 'Nicols, William' (1890), though this is not available online to check the details including signature.<sup>13</sup> Together, these sources provide sufficient evidence that the correct spelling is Nicols not Nicholl.

An article on the Tararua Tramping Club website references a trip to 'Mt Nicholl', indicating that the tramping community refer to the geographic feature (on which the trig is located) as 'Nicholl'.<sup>14</sup> A South Wairarapa Tramping Club newsletter details a trip on the Thomson Track through Pigeon Bush Reserve, noting the junction with 'the Mt Nicholl track' which leads to the summit of the hill.<sup>15</sup>

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Consultation with iwi and others

To date Te Ātiawa, Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust, Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira Inc, Muaūpoko, Rangitāne Tū Mai Rā Trust and Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa Tāmaki nui-a-Rua have not provided any response to the proposer's email. It's therefore unknown if either feature has an original Māori name, though the creek may have originally been named Torohonga Creek as noted above. If the Board accepts these proposals, these iwi groups will have a further opportunity to provide their views during the notification period.

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Relevant sections from the [NZGB Act 2008](#)

Section 3(e) provides the means for appropriate recognition to be accorded to cultural and heritage values associated with geographic features.

A function of the Board under section 11(1)(b) is to examine cases of doubtful spelling of names and determine the spelling to be adopted on official charts or maps.

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[Standard for New Zealand place names](#) criteria

### 1.3 Undesirable names and other considerations

Section 1.3(g) records that minor features or places of low importance should not be named.

*Nicholls (hill) is a relatively minor feature located in Pigeon Bush Reserve, a 1157ha Native Forest Restoration Trust reserve which borders the south side Remutaka Hill Road and extends to the railway (Wairarapa Line). Whilst there's no current public access to the reserve, there are walking tracks through reserve, including one up to Nicholl, which local tramping groups have visited and referred to, so the area does have some recreational value. Officially naming the feature on maps could therefore assist with location identification in an emergency.*

### 1.5 Orthographic standards

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<sup>12</sup> 'The Annual Sheep Returns for the Year Ended 31st May 1882', *AJHR*, 1883 Session 1, H-19, p.24, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/parliamentary/AJHR1883-I.2.3.2.22> - last accessed 5 April 2024.

<sup>13</sup> NICOLS, William, R22213716, Archives New Zealand, <https://collections.archives.govt.nz/web/arena/search#/entity/aims-archive/R22213716> - last accessed 4 April 2024.

<sup>14</sup> '2011-02-25 Pigeon Bush and Nicholl', *Tararua Tramping Club*, <https://www.ttc.org.nz/TripReports/2011-05-25-PigeonBushAndNicholl> - last accessed 8 April 2024.

<sup>15</sup> 'South Wairarapa Tramping Club Newsletter for February 2019', <https://swtc.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/newsletter-2019.02.pdf> - last accessed 8 April 2024.

(d) The English possessive form should not be used. However, existing names with the possessive [s] that do not have the possessive apostrophe, have been in long-term use and have low public value will not be altered.

*Abbots Creek: while the Standard discourages the possessive [s] the existing creek name with the [s] has been in long term use and the feature is not prominent. Retaining the possessive [s] would be consistent with the Board's 2022 decision to alter Skerrets Creek to Skerretts Creek. While the Board declined the proposal to assign Meyers Pass as an official place name at its June 2023 hui, and accepted a new proposal for Meyer Pass (as well as a proposal to alter Meyers Creek to Meyer Creek), this was based on the Board's policy that the English possessive form should not be used for **new** proposals. The Board's decision also considered consistency with the recorded place name Meyer (hill), and noted that dropping the possessive [s] would clarify that the feature was named for a Meyer (Herbert Meyer) not a Meyers, as different families with both spellings lived in the area.*

### 1.6 Altered names

A name may be altered when it standardises the orthography. Any alteration should balance the cultural and historical significance of the name against long-term use and the practical need for location identification.

*Abbots Creek has been in long term use (more than 90 years); however, a principal function of the Board is to correct the spelling of place names. Correcting the name to Abbots Creek will clarify the connection between the feature and William Abbots. If accepted, the minor alteration is unlikely to impact location identification as both spellings (Abbots vs Abbots) are pronounced the same. Nicholls hasn't been shown on maps since the NZMS260 S27 (1998, limited revision). Altering this recorded name and making it official is therefore unlikely to negatively impact location identification, in fact it could assist with location identification.*

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Concerns or issues for emergency services	As the proposals are for minor spelling alterations and for relatively minor features, there is not likely to be any impact on emergency services.
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Media	Media attention is unlikely.
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## Supporting information

1. Proposal to alter Abbots Creek to Abbots Creek – 2022-07-22
2. Proposal to alter Nicholl to Nicols – 2022-07-21