



Summary

The proposal from a representative of Ngā Muka Development Trust, is to assign Rukuwai as the official name of a mostly channelled stream that flows from springs west of Te Kauwhata into Whangamarino Wetland (a Ramsar¹ wetland). Rukuwai is a contemporary Māori name that describes the 'descending waters' and is also the name of a Ngāti Naho, Ngāti Hine and Ngāti Pou tupuna.

The water course has been a source of agricultural pollutants into the wetland and the area is now scheduled for urban development. The proposers want to restore the mana and mauri of the water course with remedial works and by officially naming it.

Waikato-Tainui and the Department of Conservation have provided letters of support, and support from Te Kauwhata Community Committee is recorded online.

'Travers Stream' or 'Travers Road Stream' are in local use for the water course and appear in Waikato District Council publications, such as for flood management. Should the Board accept the proposal for Rukuwai, there may be local objection in favour of Travers Stream or Travers Road Stream.

¹ <https://www.ramsar.org/ris/443>

Board's decision

At its 15 October 2024 hui the Board made this decision on the proposal:

That the Board **accepts** the proposal to **assign Rukuwai** as the official place name of a small stream that flows into Waimarino Wetland northwest of Te Kauwhata, based on:

- the Board's policies encouraging contemporary Māori place names and noting requirements to have particular regard to the Vision and Strategy for the Waikato River and its catchments under the Waikato-Tainui Raupatu Claims (Waikato River) Settlement Act 2010 and the Minister's Accord for Waikato-Tainui,
- Waikato-Tainui, the Department of Conservation and Te Kauwhata Community Committee supporting the proposal,
- no concerns for identification or emergency services by not including a generic term (ie Stream), noting that the 'wai' in te reo Māori is part of the proposed name,

and will notify as a proposal to **assign** for one month.

Noting a local use name 'Travers Stream' or 'Travers Road Stream' is associated with the road name and appears to have been used for convenience/practicality to identify the water course.

Secretariat assessment

The proposal

The proposer represents Ngā Muka Development Trust, a collective of five local marae established to act on their behalf for RMA² applications, advocacy, cultural matters, etc.

The Trust seeks to assign Rukuwai as the official name of a small stream that flows into Whangamarino Wetland, northwest of Te Kauwhata. Rukuwai is a contemporary Māori name that describes the 'descending waters'. The proposer advises that their research did not reveal an original Māori name for the water course. Rukuwai was also chosen as it is the name of a tūpuna of Ngāti Naho, Ngāti Hine and Ngāti Pou (the local hapū).

While the water course has its source in small springs on the east side of State Highway 1, it is mostly a deeply channelled drain built to increase useable horticultural and viticultural land. The proposer advises that the drain has been a long-term historical source of agricultural pollutants into Whangamarino Wetland. Due to recent land use changes, the area is now scheduled for residential development and the water course would become a stormwater catchment.

The proposer seeks to restore 'te mana me te mauri o te wai' by benching (broadening) the channel and with extensive riparian planting, to:

- support the ecology of the area
- mitigate flood flows and entry of contaminants into Whangamarino Wetland
- improve safety as the current channel is narrow and deep

² Resource Management Act

- improve the aesthetics.

They consider that assigning an official place name would help raise awareness and restore the water course's mana.

While the proposer has been engaging with 'community, developers, landowners, and Waikato District Council' about the naming the water course, it is not clear if there are real commitments yet regarding the restorative plan above. The plan reflects the recommendations previously made in a 2009 Te Kauwhata Catchment Management Plan,³ and the current Waikato District Plan continues to propose restoration along these lines⁴ But whether the development goes ahead or not, the existing water course could still be named.

The proposer notes that the feature is commonly referred to as the 'Travers Road Stream' or 'Travers Stream' and has provided Waikato District Council documents showing these names.

The Te Kauwhata Catchment Management Plan (2009) has several photos of the feature including the culvert where it flows under the North Island Main Trunk railway line.⁵

The minutes of Te Kauwhata Community Committee record their support of the proposal.⁶ Waikato-Tainui and the Department of Conservation have also provided letters of support.

Names shown on plans and maps

No maps or survey plans appear to name the water course.

Location of the feature, generic term, [geographic feature type](#)

The water course flows east-northeast for approximately 2.4km from springs located between Travers Road, Wayside Road and Te Kauwhata Road, passing through a culvert under the North Island Main Trunk railway line, and then north-eastwards to join Whangamarino Wetland. Most of the water course is an open deep drain.

The extent the proposer has provided goes only as far as the culvert at the railway line. Should the Board accept the proposal, the Secretariat recommends including the full continuous extent of the feature. Waikato District Council has confirmed where the feature joins the wetland as on aerial imagery.

The proposal does not include a generic term as encouraged by the Board's *Generic Terms Policy* and 1.4 of the *Standard for New Zealand Place Names*.

The Board has made some stream names official without additional generic terms, but this is relatively uncommon and typically for relatively minor features, eg [Waipaekākā](#), [Toitū](#), [Te Rapu](#). The Board has in some cases opted to include a Māori generic term, eg [Te Awa o Mokotūāraro](#).

³ Beca Infrastructure Ltd (2009), [Te Kauwhata Catchment Management Plan](#) for Waikato District Council, p. 37

⁴ Waikato District Plan: Operative District Plan - Waikato Section / Part 3 Appendices / Oga Te Kauwhata Urban Design Guide Living Zone, Living Zone (new residential) and Living Zone (ecological) / Oga7 Te Kauwhata Environment: <https://eplan.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/?docId=Jg1ICGGRr2Y%3D>

⁵ Beca Infrastructure Ltd (2009), [Te Kauwhata Catchment Management Plan](#) for Waikato District Council, p.90

⁶ [Minutes of Te Kauwhata Community Committee](#) 1 May 2024

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

The water course is not named in the Gazetteer. Rukuwai is duplicated in [Rukuwai](#) (locality) and [Rukuwai Stream](#) east of Whangārei and another [Rukuwai Stream](#) inland from Cape Runaway, in Gisborne District. [Ōrukuwai Point](#) at the end of Te Atatū Peninsula in Auckland partially duplicates the name. These features are too far distant from this proposal to be of concern for confusion.

Research, history and references to the feature

The 1902 survey plan SO 12463, a plan for the Department of Agriculture, still shows wetland extending west of the North Island Main Trunk railway line. By 1911 the drain is constructed and shown on SO 16174, a plan of the Waerenga Fruit Farms. The wetland is labelled 'partly reclaimed swamp, teatree mixed with flax, rough reef, rushes'. NZMS 1 and NZMS 260 topographic maps show the extent of Whangamarino Wetland further contracting over time, due to drainage and development. KiwiRail's GIS⁷ records Ngariohe Stream as the name of associated with the culvert that the proposed Rukuwai passes through.⁸ However, in the Gazetteer [Ngariohe Stream](#) is west of State Highway 1 and flows into Waikato River, and has been recorded as such on maps and plans for many years. There is no physical connection between this stream and the proposed Rukuwai. Therefore, this appears to be an error in KiwiRail's data. The local use names 'Travers Stream' and 'Travers Road Stream' are associated with Travers Road. These names appear to be for Robert Henry Travers, a fruit farmer in the area in the early 20th century.⁹ The name does not appear to be signposted, and it's not clear how long it has been in use for (up to a century).

Consultation with iwi and others

The proposer represents Ngā Muka Development Trust, which was established by the five local marae. Waikato-Tainui and the Department of Conservation provided formal letters of support. Evidence of support from Te Kauwhata Community Committee is available online.

Waikato-Tainui Raupatu Claims (Waikato River) Settlement Act 2010 & Minister's Accords

Section 17 of the Waikato-Tainui Raupatu Claims (Waikato River) Settlement Act 2010 sets out that the Board and Minister for Land Information have a '*duty to have particular regard to the Vision and Strategy*¹⁰' when carrying out functions or exercising powers under the NZGB Act 2008, where it relates to the Waikato River or '*any activities in the catchment that affect the Waikato River*'. The water course is also within the Minister for Land Information's lower Waikato River Co-Management Accord Area A,¹¹ for Waikato-Tainui¹². The principles of the Accord sets out particular expectations of the relationship with Toitū Te Whenua LINZ, also providing for the Board to build relationships with the iwi. The Accord states that the Minister for Land Information will have a particular

⁷ Geographic Information System

⁸ <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/View/index.html?appid=556c4a9c73914fe1983529ddf9ae5099> – last accessed 17 September 2024

⁹ SO 19786 (1919); THE BALLOT *Waikato Times* Volume 89 Issue 13773 21 May 1918 Page 2

¹⁰ Vision and Strategy for the Waikato River, Waikato River Authority: <https://waikatoriver.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Vision-and-Strategy-Reprint-2019web.pdf>

¹¹ Area B, SO 409144

¹² The Accord being provided for by 9.4 of the [Waikato River Deed of Settlement](#) and [Section 94](#) of the Waikato-Tainui Raupatu Claims (Waikato River) Settlement Act 2010

regard for the Vision and Strategy when making final determinations on place names.

Advice on orthography¹³

A Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori licensed translator has confirmed that Rukuwai is the correct orthography, for a meaning of 'descending waters'.

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

A principal function of the Board under section 10(1)(a) is to assign official geographic names. Section 15(2)(b) states that a proposal must meet the requirements specified by the Board.

This proposal meets the Board's minimum requirements.

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

1.1 Acceptable names

(b) The NZGB encourages contemporary Māori place names.

(c) The surname or traditional ancestral Māori name of a person who has been deceased for at least two years, was a notable leader, of good character, and/or contributed to, or had a strong association with the feature, place or area.

Rukuwai is a contemporary Māori name and also the name of a tupuna of local hapū. No information about Rukuwai, the person, has been provided with the proposal.

1.3 Undesirable names and other considerations

(e) Long-term existing names or names that are in common local use may take precedence over new names if they conform to this standard. Some long-term existing names (Māori and non-Māori) will not conform to the standard but are historically embedded.

'Travers Stream' and 'Travers Road Stream' are existing local use names and have been used in documents published by Waikato District Council. There is evidence of local support for Rukuwai, however, the Standard could give some weight to a local use name being recognised over a brand new name. It is not known how widely used Travers Stream is, and whether the proposed Rukuwai would attract significant local objection in favour of Travers Stream.

(h) Minor features or places of low importance or physical significance should not be named.

The water course is a relatively small ~2.4km stream, mostly channelled into a drain for at least 110 years. The water course may have only become a distinct waterway because the drain was dug through the southwest margin of Whangamarino Wetland.

The Board has made the names of several smaller streams official in recent years, although typically to restore original Māori names, for example, [Waipaekākā](#), [Toitū](#), [Koangaumu Creek](#).

Concerns or issues for emergency services

The proposed name does not include a generic term such as 'stream' which might make it easier to identify the feature in an emergency. However, the name includes 'wai' so this indicates that it is a stream or water feature.

¹³ The conventions and rules of how to write a language

Media

Media attention is unlikely.

Supporting information

1. Proposal – 9 July 2024
2. Correspondence with the proposer – 11-12 July 2024
3. Letter of support from Waikato-Tainui – 30 August 2024
4. Letter of support from the Department of Conservation – 11 September 2024
5. Correspondence with Waikato District Council – where exactly does Travers Stream enter Whangamarino Wetland? – 17 & 24 September 2024