



**Petition of David Chester:  
Change the name of the country  
to Aotearoa – New Zealand and  
Petition of Danny Tahau Jobe:  
Referendum to include Aotearoa  
in the official name of New  
Zealand**

Report of the Governance and Administration  
Committee

May 2019

---

**Contents**

Recommendation.....	2
Requests to change the name of New Zealand.....	2
Our response to the petitions .....	3
Appendix.....	4

Brett Hudson  
Chairperson

## **Petition of David Chester: Change the name of the country to Aotearoa – New Zealand and Petition of Danny Tahau Jobe: Referendum to include Aotearoa in the official name of New Zealand**

### **Recommendation**

The Governance and Administration Committee has considered the petition of David Chester—Change the name of the country to Aotearoa – New Zealand—and the petition of Danny Tahau Jobe—Referendum to include Aotearoa in the official name of New Zealand—and recommends that the House take note of its report.

### **Requests to change the name of New Zealand**

The petition of David Chester was presented to the House on 13 April 2018. It requests:

That the House of Representatives pass legislation to change the name of New Zealand so that the full name of the country becomes Aotearoa – New Zealand, and that both parts of the name be of equal status and may be used alternatively or together fully representing our country's name.

The petition of Danny Tahau Jobe was presented to the House on 1 May 2019. It requests:

That the House of Representatives pass legislation requiring a referendum, to be held during the term of the current Government, on whether the official name of New Zealand should change to include the name Aotearoa.

We have considered these petitions together, as their goal of adding “Aotearoa” to the country's name aligns.

### **Background to David Chester's request**

The petitioner is concerned that the term “Aotearoa” is commonly used to refer to New Zealand, but it does not appear to have any legal status or legislative entitlement. The petitioner has requested that “Aotearoa” be added to the country's official legal name to acknowledge New Zealand's historical and ongoing diversity.

Since the petition was presented, the petitioner has asked that the hyphen in his original request be removed, so that the official name of New Zealand would become Aotearoa New Zealand. However, the second part of his request would still apply—that the two parts of the name be of equal status and used interchangeably.

### **Background to Danny Tahau Jobe's request**

The petitioner told us that including “Aotearoa” in New Zealand's official name would enhance nationhood and New Zealand's unique identity. He stated that the change would also recognise that te reo Māori is an official language of New Zealand. This petitioner noted

that official documents, for example, passports and bank notes, already have the words “Aotearoa” and “New Zealand” together.

## **Our response to the petitions**

We acknowledge the significance of the name “Aotearoa”, and note that it is increasingly being used as an alternative way to refer to New Zealand. We also note that there are references throughout legislation to both “Aotearoa” and “New Zealand”. While not legislated, the use of bilingual titles throughout Parliament and government agencies is common. We thank the petitioners for bringing this matter to our attention. However, at present we do not consider that a legal name change, or a referendum on the same change, is needed.

## Appendix

### Committee procedure

The petition of David Chester was referred to us on 13 April 2018. We met between 2 May 2018 and 29 May 2019 to consider it.

The petition of Danny Tahau Jobe was referred to us on 1 May 2019. We met between 8 and 29 May 2019 to consider it.

We received written submissions from both petitioners, which are available on the Parliament website, [www.parliament.nz](http://www.parliament.nz).

### Committee members

Brett Hudson (Chairperson)

Ginny Andersen

Kanwaljit Singh Bakshi

Hon Jacqui Dean

Paul Eagle

Hon Peeni Henare

Jamie Strange

Dr Jian Yang