

Council Briefing Agenda

Date: Tuesday, 8 May, 2018

Time: 1:00 pm

Location: Council Chamber
Forum North, Rust Avenue
Whangarei

Elected Members: Her Worship the Mayor Sheryl Mai
(Chairperson)

Cr Stu Bell

Cr Gavin Benney

Cr Crichton Christie

Cr Vince Cocurullo

Cr Tricia Cutforth

Cr Shelley Deeming

Cr Sue Glen

Cr Phil Halse

Cr Cherry Hermon

Cr Greg Innes

Cr Greg Martin

Cr Sharon Morgan

Cr Anna Murphy

For any queries regarding this meeting please contact
the Whangarei District Council on (09) 430-4200.

1. Apologies

2. Reports

2.1 Camping in Public Places 2017-2018 report

1

3. Closure of Meeting

Camping in Public Places: 2017/2018 Report

Meeting: Whangarei District Council
Date of meeting: 8 May 2018
Reporting officer: Rochelle Deane – Bylaws Enforcement Coordinator
 Shireen Munday – Strategic Planner

1 Purpose

Report on the outcomes of the first summer of the Camping in Public Places Bylaw.

2 Executive Summary

1. Council adopted a Camping in Public Places Bylaw in September 2017 after a second round of consultation to include non self-contained camping options. Council approved a monitoring and enforcement programme for summer 2017/2018 that had a strong education component.
2. Council's Bylaw is made under the Freedom Camping Act 2011 and is restricted to developing controls on camping in areas under Council's control, as well as not being able to completely ban freedom camping.
3. Freedom camping is currently a matter of significant interest for many New Zealand local authorities and a national working party has been established to review and address key concerns, including self-containment certification matters.
4. Some freedom campers may in fact be homeless people who live in cars and vans. Homelessness is a much broader social issue and a freedom camping bylaw is not the appropriate mechanism to deal with this topic.
5. A discussion on the provision of facilities and/or infrastructure to support freedom campers is outside the scope of this report.
6. The results of the monitoring programme, combined with a review of complaints to Council, show that generally the Bylaw is addressing the identified problems. Most non-compliance matters were parking outside a designated area. There are five to seven key 'problem sites' within the district that had a high number of non-compliant campers, resulting in a high number of complaints.
7. Complaints to Council regarding signs have significantly reduced since the first weeks of the Bylaw being in place, and complaints about rubbish/sanitary issues are significantly lower than in previous years.
8. Through lessons learnt, significant improvements can be made to next summer's monitoring and enforcement programme. This includes daily enforcement at seven 'focus sites' for the entire summer season (Labour Weekend to Easter).

9. A more stringent enforcement approach, combined with improved officer training and mobile technology is expected to support these improvements, as will a review of signs, brochures and flyers.
10. The budget for the proposed monitoring programme is contained within the current draft Long Term Plan.
11. An ambassador programme, supported by volunteers may have merit, but is outside of the scope of the work programme of the staff involved in this report.
12. There was a high percentage of self-contained vehicles using the designated sites for non self-contained camping options, despite these vehicles being able to park in many other locations in the district. Work can be done to support the dispersal of self-contained vehicles to other areas in the District, with the intent of reducing the pressure experienced by some of the more popular designated sites in the District.
13. Options to make changes to the location and size of five of the 'focus sites', intended to address concerns raised by complainants, are provided.

3 Overview

3.1 History of Bylaw

Council began discussions on a 'Freedom Camping Bylaw' in early 2015. A Statement of Proposal that limited freedom camping to self-contained vehicles only was adopted for consultation in March 2016. Submissions were received and a hearing was held. On 30 August 2016 Council determined to:

'stop the current process and develop a new Statement of Proposal that includes a third schedule identifying non-self-contained freedom camping areas'.

In June 2017 Council adopted a Statement of Proposal that reflected the direction received in August 2016 and subsequently adopted the Camping in Public Places Bylaw (the Bylaw) in September 2017. The Bylaw came into force on Labour Weekend 2017.

In October 2017, Council confirmed a monitoring and enforcement approach for the 2017/2018 summer to support the implementation of the Bylaw.

3.2 Monitoring and enforcement - summer 2017/18

Council endorsed a monitoring and enforcement programme for the 2017/2018 summer that included a strong educational component. Staff were directed to educate freedom campers in the first instance and use the infringement provisions of the legislation only in situations where warranted, such as repeat offending.

The monitoring programme included daily site visits to 33 key sites during the peak summer period; 20 December to 6 February, with regular visits (at least once every 48 hours) to these sites during the shoulder periods. During the peak period, complaints were responded to as a priority 1 investigation. Attachment 1 contains the report to Council in October that details the approved monitoring programme.

3.3 Freedom Camping Act

The Bylaw is made under the Freedom Camping Act 2011 (the Act). This legislation provides the framework within which Council can consider restricting or prohibited freedom camping.

Under the Act, Council is not able to completely ban freedom camping in the District. Council can prohibit or restrict freedom camping in identified areas where there are concerns to protect:

- access (to the area)
- public health and safety
- the area (i.e. environmental concerns)

Matters Council cannot consider include any impacts on commercial camping operations or the amenity values of residents. The Act also does not provide any limitation on vehicles that are used for overnight camping to use and/or access any public carparking area during the day for daytime activities or visits.

Jurisdiction

The Act also restricts any local authority freedom camping bylaw to land that is owned or managed/controlled by Council. The Department of Conservation (DOC) is also empowered under the Act to restrict freedom camping activities. To date DOC has identified three locations in Northland where freedom camping is prohibited.

Staff have an established relationship with DOC staff on a range of bylaw and regulatory issues, including freedom camping. A specific issue raised relates to a small reserve area at Sandy Bay that is under DOC control but where some residents wish to see more stringent freedom camping controls in place. Staff from both organisations are working on solutions to this.

3.4 National situation

Freedom camping has received significant attention over the 2017/2018 summer, with many councils struggling to manage freedom campers to their communities' satisfaction. New Zealand has experienced a significant increase in freedom campers in recent years. Between 2005 and 2015 there was moderate growth from 20,000 to 60,000 visitors, but this has now nearly doubled to 110,000 in the year ending 2017.

The extent of this problem was recognised by the Minister of Tourism, who convened a meeting with 32 Mayors and other local government elected members in March 2018. This has resulted in a working party being established to address the key issues discussed at the meeting (Attachment 2).

3.5 Self-containment issues

Certification of self-containment is controlled through a New Zealand Standard (NZS5465). A certificate can be provided by a range of agencies, including The New Zealand Motor Caravan Association. This standard was amended in May 2017 to improve the minimum requirements for toilets. In effect, what this means is that toilets need to be able to be accessible always in a vehicle, rather than being stowed away under a bed or similar.

While this is a commendable improvement, there are also transitional provisions in place for existing certified vehicles. This means that some vehicles that will not be able to receive a certificate in the future, are currently still completely valid holders of a self-containment certificate. These numbers will be significantly dropping over the next few summers, however there will still be a small number in circulation until 2021.

A proportion of complaints to Council relate to whether a vehicle is legally self-contained or not and request Council to take enforcement action accordingly. In most instances, it is likely that the vehicle is genuinely certified and therefore able to park in any area available to self-contained vehicles under the Bylaw.

The working party mentioned in section 3.4 also has the issue of self-containment certification on its agenda.

3.6 Homelessness

There has been some discussion locally, but mostly in the national media, regarding homeless people being (potentially) targeted through a freedom camping bylaw infringement regime.

Nelson City Council considers the issue of homelessness is a broader social problem that requires a multi-agency approach to find solutions. Nelson has confirmed that any enforcement policy for their Freedom Camping Bylaw would include a provision that ensures where a homeless person is found sleeping in a prohibited or restricted area, other solutions as a first response would be sought, rather than infringing under the Bylaw.

Council may wish to consider providing a similar policy direction.

3.7 Possible provision of facilities for freedom campers

Often a discussion on freedom camping will also include providing additional or improved facilities to support freedom campers or address concerns of communities, such as campers doing their dishes in public toilets or the lack of potable water.

The purpose of this report is to provide feedback on the first summer of the Camping in Public Places Bylaw. The report focuses on the monitoring and enforcement programme undertaken and associated areas for improvement for next summer. It also discusses whether the Bylaw is addressing the identified problem that triggered the Bylaw development.

Any approach for the provision of facilities or other options would require consideration within a wider context. For example, it would need to review any impacts on commercial campground operators and any broader vision or strategy that may exist for any identified location. The capital costs of any improvements would also require consideration. It is recognised that there may be alternative funding solutions through mechanisms such as the Tourism Infrastructure Fund.

4 Discussion

Council received an interim report on this matter on 22 February 2018. This report builds on and completes that report to the period ending Easter Weekend, and includes commentary on several matters requested by Councillors during that meeting.

4.1 Enforcement and monitoring

Monitoring and enforcement programme

During the key summer season, 33 key sites were identified to have daily monitoring visits, with daytime education, as well as late evening and early morning enforcement. CRMs raised for all sites were also responded to by officers.

It was identified early in January that in popular locations, the enforcement and monitoring program would have more of an impact with continuous early morning and late evening visits to focus on compliance rather than education.

Staff undertook an interim review in February and reduced the sites to 19, based on a review of complaints and other feedback at that time. This reduced travelling time so enforcement officers could spend longer at problem sites and ensure the consistent early morning and late evening visits.

Enforcement staff were supported in spreading the message to campers with a brochure and a single page flyer. The purpose of the flyer was to highlight to visitors the financial risk they take if they do not comply with the rules in place. Just over 2500 brochures and 1000 flyers were distributed during the season by the enforcement team. These items were attached to the previous monitoring report.

One objective of this first programme was to provide information on which a longer-term programme can be tailored.

During site visits, enforcement officers would record the time and date at site, the type of vehicle, and whether they were compliant. Compliancy documented included:

- were the campers in the designated site
- was the type of vehicle correct for the site
- had the campers complied with the maximum night stay rule
- had the campers complied with the 28 day between sites rule.

If non-compliant, the enforcement officer would request the camper move from the site immediately and provide education of the rules and the sites available to them.

Results

The enforcement contract included logging and collating data on the monitoring and enforcement activities over the summer period. Unfortunately, this data was not provided to the expected detail.

However, the data received does give a good overview and snapshot of some key issues that can inform future monitoring programmes as well as other relevant matters.

This summary analysis is based on the 19 key monitoring sites between Labour Weekend and Easter.

Total number of vehicles recorded:	4955
Compliance vs non-compliance:	87% of monitored vehicles were compliant (this included vehicles stated as being 'day visitors').
Self-contained vs non self-contained:	Of the 18 sites that allowed for both self-contained and non self-contained vehicles, just over 48% of vehicles were self-contained.
Reason for non-compliance:	
parking outside designated site	84%
non self-contained in a self-contained only site	2%
exceeded maximum night	14%

Locations with highest number of non-compliance:

- Bascule carpark – Port Road
- Matapouri, Wehiwehi Road carpark
- Tamaterau
- Ruakaka Beach Reserve
- Kowharewa Bay

This snapshot of data indicates that there are both high levels of compliance as well as a high level of usage of non self-contained sites by self-contained vehicles. By far the biggest non-compliance issue is parking outside the designated site.

Infringements

If the camper had proven to be a recidivist offender an infringement could be issued.

A total of 21 infringements have been issued since the start of monitoring to 3 April 2018 (Easter Monday). Nine of these infringements have been cancelled due to the acceptance of the camper's explanation for non-compliance (7) and officer error (2).

Site	Offence
Finlayson Street/Reyburn House Lane carpark	Section 20(1)(a) - Not Self-Contained in A Self-Contained Only Site Section 20(1)(a) – Parked outside designated area
Bascule carpark – Port Road	Section 20(1)(a) – Parked outside designated area X2
Tamaterau	Section 20(1)(a) – Parked outside designated area
Pataua South	Section 20(1)(a) – Parked in Prohibited area.
Whangarei Falls	Section 20(1)(a) - Not Self Contained in a Self-Contained Only Site X4 Section 20(1)(a) – Parked outside designated area X5
Kowharewa Bay	Section 20(1)(a) – Parked outside designated area X2
Ruakaka Beach Reserve	Section 20(1)(a) - Not Self-Contained in A Self-Contained Only Site
Wehiwehi Road	Section 20(1)(a) – Parked outside designated area X3

Challenges experienced

As this was the first summer of the Bylaw, it was expected that there would be some issues and problems for the monitoring programme that were unanticipated or that would provide additional challenges. These included:

- the limitations of the Freedom Camping Act 2001, including the lack of a definition to what 'overnight camping' is and between what hours this applies
- the priority sites being spread over a considerable distance which affected the ability for early morning and late night visits to all sites
- the continuity of having the same enforcement officer over a seven-day period to identify recidivist offenders (or appropriate systems in place to mitigate this issue)
- Any site visit was essentially a 'snap shot' in time, and could change once an enforcement officer left the site
- public expectations of what an enforcement officer could or could not address, such as the use of toilets for washing dishes or enforcing the Bylaw on land not under the control of Council (primarily DOC land).
- signage being removed/adapted/graffitied.

4.2 Complaints and other feedback

CRMs

A full overview of all CRMs received is provided in Attachment 3. This section provides a summary of the complaints received.

Summary of complaints (21 October – 2 April)

All complaints	119
Unlawful camping	105
General complaints (including Bylaw)	9
Rubbish/sanitary	6

Complaints by area

number of areas complaints received	37 areas
1 complaint received	20 areas
2-3 complaints	11 areas
4 or more complaints	6 areas

Complaints by designated site (22 sites)

AH Reed Memorial Park – Whareora Road carpark	0
Ocean Beach carpark	0
Onerahi - Beach Road Reserve	0
Reotahi	0
Waipu Caves	0
Wellingtons Bay – main reserve (Whangaumu Reserve)	0
Whangarei Falls Scenic Reserve	0
Ngunguru Library	0
Marsden Bay Reserve	1
Parua Bay	1
Finlayson Street/Reyburn House Lane carpark	1
Tarewa I-site	1
Kowharewa Bay	2
Mt Manaia	2
One Tree Point Reserve	2
Whananaki North	2
Sandy Bay	5
Wehiwehi Road, Matapouri	5
Bascule carpark – Port Road	6
Woolleys Bay	7
Tamaterau	11
Ruakaka Beach Reserve	22

Solutions to address the issues raised at the six sites with the largest number of complaints are discussed in sections 4.3 and 5.2 of this report.

Non-CRM complaints/enquiries

Customers were encouraged to lodge any concerns with either our 24/7 phone numbers or our mailroom email address to ensure the issue was dealt with in a timely fashion and by the correct staff, depending on the matter at hand.

Several complainants chose not to formally raise issues through CRMs and emailed or phoned Council employees directly, sometimes in addition to CRMs they had called or emailed in.

All such complaints were acknowledged and responded to, however often issues raised were historical as 'offending' campers had long since left the area.

There was a total of 29 non-CRM complaints received since the Bylaw came into force. These generally focussed on:

- dislike that a designated site was within their community
- etiquette issues associated with overnight camping such as rubbish, use of toilets, alcohol consumption and washing dishes or clothes.
- the dislike of freedom campers in general, their lack of adding to the economy and/or their impact on local paid campgrounds
- the lack of enforcement
- photos provided of deemed non-compliance with the Bylaw
- complaints about freedom camping activities on DOC land where Council has no jurisdiction
- questioning whether vehicles displaying certificates of self-containment were genuinely certified.

Non – CRM complaints received	Area concerned
perceived unlawful camping - land under DOC control	Sandy Bay - McAuslin Road (7)
rubbish camper etiquette sign damage/removal unlawful camping lack of enforcement dune erosion	Wehiwehi Road (6)
unlawful camping lack of enforcement questioning self-containment	Ruakaka Beach Reserve (4)
dissatisfaction with designated site, dislike of freedom campers camper etiquette toilets not adequate	Whananaki North (3)
site is not suitable camper etiquette rubbish	Tamaterau (2)
opposed to prohibition support of prohibition	Urquharts Bay (1) Urquharts Bay (4)
Bylaw too restrictive dislike of Bylaw general questions on Bylaw	District-wide (4)
camping in prohibited area	Marsden Bay Reserve (1)
dislike of campers/Bylaw camper etiquette	Woolleys (1)
signage not adequate	Whangarei Falls (1)
request for camping for tents for Te Araroa track walkers	Reotahi (1)
request to allow freedom camping	Onerahi Bowling Club(1)

Improvements to address concerns raised are outlined for five of the above 12 areas elsewhere in this report.

Positive feedback received

In addition to several positive CRMs received, Council received a further four items of positive feedback on the Bylaw through emails or feedback to visitor centre staff. This included:

- campers impressed with the Bylaw in general and the website including the maps
- on- site signage is great
- Council was visibly active in monitoring the usage and moving unauthorised users on
- the sites were appropriate, had options and plentiful
- the rules adequate for self-contained
- the brochure was helpful
- the I-SITE showers were good.

Signs

Since the report to Council only two further complaints have been received, both relating to vandalised or missing signs.

Rubbish/toilets

The 22 February report outlined that there had been a significant decrease in complaints regarding rubbish/sanitary issues from the previous summer. No further CRMs have been received on these topics, however several non-CRM complaints include concerns about rubbish/sanitary matters as well as the other issues document.

The Field Officer – Waste and Drainage was asked to review the 22 designated sites for any associated concerns or issues as well as obtaining feedback from the cleaning contractor. This feedback is provided in Attachment 4. Generally, the feedback indicates that there have been no significant impacts or changes at the designated sites because of the Bylaw.

As noted in the 22 February report, it cannot be conclusively stated that increases in littering and other anti-social behaviours can be solely attributed to freedom campers.

4.3 Lessons learnt and areas for improvement

The Bylaws Enforcement Coordinator considers the Bylaw is enforceable in its current format and this is supported by the feedback received by the enforcement contractor (Attachment 5). The changes and improvements outlined below, will more effectively address the key problems the bylaw is seeking to resolve.

The analysis of complaints raised in this, and previous reports, clearly shows that while the Bylaw is largely achieving the desired outcomes, there are four or five 'problem' sites that need specific consideration.

2018/2019 summer enforcement programme

Staff have reviewed the outcomes detailed in this report to recommend a proposed summer 2018/19 summer monitoring programme. This retains the 19 sites identified in February this year, with a significant emphasis on seven 'focus' sites, currently Bascule carpark, Ruakaka, Tamaterau, Matapouri, Kowharewa and Woolleys and Sandy Bays. This programme is recommended in conjunction with the other recommendations contained in section 5.3 of this report.

For Ruakaka Beach Reserve, staff have also discussed the option of locking the gates to the main reserve area overnight during the peak season with Parks Officers and they are supportive of this approach. Associated signs and processes will be required to support this and these will be developed over winter.

It is proposed to take a more enforcement focussed approach for next summer, with all monitoring visits timed between 6-10pm or 6-10am. While an educational approach can still be taken if appropriate, this timing will ensure officers can take a more stringent approach for breaches of the bylaw and can ask people to move on immediately and/or take enforcement action for non-compliance as required. This approach would be expected to considerably reduce the number of vehicles parking outside a designated area, which was the overarching issue of non-compliance for the previous summer.

Next summer, enforcement officers will have mobile technology (tablets) to input and review monitoring data in real time into an active spreadsheet. This will provide up to date data to all officers. This enable clear identification of recidivist offenders at the time of the monitoring visit to support appropriate enforcement action, and eliminate the problem of having multiple officer visiting sites.

Further training of enforcement officers over winter, together with a 'lead-up' programme prior to the summer season will also improve enforcements officers' understanding and skillsets. This will be supported by the development of a more detailed Standard Operating Procedure and associated policies on issuing infringements and other matters as required.

The total cost for the monitoring programme up to Easter 2018 was \$115,950. A budget of \$150,000 per annum for future programmes has been included in the draft Long Term Plan. This budget covers the monitoring programme but also the cost of brochures and upgrades to signs.

The full suite of recommended sites, monitoring options and the different seasons for application of those options are detailed in Attachment 6.

Summarised here is the staff recommended monitoring programme.

Season	Option	Cost
Spring Shoulder (Labour weekend – 19 Dec)	Daily monitoring of 7 focus sites, 13 sites visited every second day. Complaints responded to as a priority one.	\$42,200
Summer (20 Dec-7 Feb)	Daily monitoring of 19 sites. Complaints responded to as a priority one.	\$52,800
Autumn Shoulder (7 Feb-Easter)	Daily monitoring of 7 focus sites, 13 sites visited every second day. Complaints responded to as a priority one.	\$52,000
Winter (Easter-Labour weekend)	Complaint only monitoring as priority 3 or 4	\$0 (part of overall contract)

Total cost for 2018/2019 year:

\$147,000

Signs/brochures/flyers

Some of the positive feedback received included comments on the brochure and information provided. The enforcement team has confirmed that the flyers were a valuable tool in supporting the monitoring programme.

Councillors have made some suggestions on the content of the brochure. Space constraints may preclude the inclusion of paid campgrounds and other new information; however, staff will review the brochure and flyer over winter to determine what improvements can be made.

Signs will also be reviewed over winter for potential improvements. Additional signs on toilet buildings that outline camping 'etiquette' and where portaloos can be emptied are planned.

Potential ambassador programme

Councillors and community members have previously raised the possibility of a 'freedom camping ambassador' programme, to support education of campers and encourage compliance. Discussions have been held with the Community Development, Health and Bylaws and Strategy Departments on this. The feedback from the Community Development Department is that such volunteer programmes require significant resources to set up, administer and manage. In some cases, the Summer Safe carpark programme struggles to find sufficient numbers of volunteers which also impacts on the feasibility of the programme. Due to the 2018 committed work programmes, there is no capacity within any of the three departments to develop and implement such a programme for next summer.

5 Bylaw

5.1 Does the Bylaw address the identified problem?

Generally, the Bylaw is addressing the identified problem. In analysing the complaints received and other feedback, there are very few issues at the 38 prohibited sites, as well as the wider District (subject to the self-contained/3-day max rule). As mentioned elsewhere, there has been a significant reduction in complaints about rubbish and/or sanitary issues compared to last year. Of the 22 restricted sites, no complaints have been received for eight of these sites, and a further eight sites received one or two complaints over the monitoring period.

Most complaints received were about breaches of the bylaw, either parking outside a designated site or staying more than the maximum nights permitted.

The sites with the highest numbers of complaints (CRMs and direct enquiries) were:

- Sandy Bay
- Wehiwehi Road, Matapouri
- Bascule carpark – Port Road
- Tamaterau
- Whananaki North
- Woolleys Bay
- Ruakaka Beach Reserve

At these sites, the complaints were usually more complex and often included more than one complaint from an individual complainant about the same issue. Most of these sites generated both CRM and direct enquiries. In some instances, these were passed on to staff by elected members.

Staff had phone contact with a large proportion of these complainants. This allowed a more detailed discussion on what the perceived problem was and potential solutions. The more targeted enforcement programme detailed in section 4.2 and the other options outlined in section 5.2 are proposed largely due to these discussions, and it is expected that they will contribute significantly to addressing the issues raised.

The monitoring data also shows that many self-contained vehicles are using the 18 designated sites that allow for non self-contained camping options. This is despite those vehicles being able to park in many other locations in the district, often within a very short distance of the designated site. This outcome was not expected by staff. Staff consider this usage has significantly contributed to reported congestion issues and the associated complaints about camping outside designated areas at the most popular designated sites.

The next section outlines options to address these issues that will further support the proposed monitoring and enforcement approach outlined in section 4.2 of this report.

5.2 Areas for improvement

Self-contained vehicle dispersal and ‘apps’

Staff have discussed the high level of designated site usage by self-contained vehicles with the New Zealand Motor Caravan Association (NZMCA). NZMCA staff have confirmed that their members are anxious about breaching bylaw rules but also may not do any detailed research on the Whangarei District rules. When visiting they therefore just use the information available (their Directory and App) to determine where to stay, which focusses on the designated sites. Enquiries from some NZMCA members to Council staff confirm this.

Staff have reported previously to Council on the various apps campers use to find sites and the challenge in letting self-contained users know that they have many additional options available outside of the designated sites.

The feedback from NZMCA staff is that the Bylaw is new and it will take some time for members to understand its provisions and the opportunities these provide. NZMCA are very supportive of any educational tools Council can provide to support increasing understanding and this includes an offer a feature article in their bi-monthly magazine and making some adjustments to their members only app.

A further option is trialling several sites in the District that are available to self-contained vehicles for a 3-day maximum on the NZMCA members only app. Council and NZMCA staff agree that at least 10 to 15 sites should be provided to support further dispersal throughout the District. Examples of such sites could be the road reserve parking area just before the Tamaterau Hall designated site and the recently upgrade reserve at Scow Landing on the Ngunguru Road.

It is also noted that the issue of apps ‘pushing’ people to specific locations was raised in the March meeting convened by the Minister of Tourism and that the resulting working group actions include working with app developers. Staff welcome this and consider any changes will support all self-contained vehicle users’ understanding, including international visitors who both rent or buy self-contained vehicles.

Staff will continue to work with app operators over winter to improve the information provided to campers.

Key sites

Staff have reviewed the concerns raised for key sites and have consulted with Parks Officers on options to address these. Parks Officers have confirmed that they have no significant concerns with the existing areas and designated sites, but support the proposals below.

Under the provisions of the Bylaw, Council can make changes to the location of a designated site at an area by resolution, rather than having to amend the Bylaw. This then allows for some minor changes to some areas to address some of the problems experienced.

The options developed focus both on physical works to further control camping activities as well as changes to the locations of the designated sites. Where appropriate, Attachment 7 provides maps with the proposed changes indicated.

Basculer carpark – Port Road

While this location received a comparatively high number of complaints, most of these related to a single individual mobile home owner who is 'resident' in Whangarei. Enforcement staff are working on options to achieve on-going compliance by this individual.

There are no specific changes to the layout or location of the designated site based on the analysis for this report, however the planned upgrades to the carpark may result in changes to the location and/or layout of the designated site and this will be reported back to Council for resolution at that time. This work is planned for completion prior to next summer.

Ruakaka

As mentioned, the monitoring and enforcement programme for this site includes locking the gates overnight and installing associated signs, as well as the site being a 'focus site' of the programme.

A further option would be to make changes to the designated site. This could be either by removing the designated area on the motel side of the driveway, or alternatively moving the designated site to an area opposite the main entrance.

Matapouri – Wehiwehi road

The Parks Department is planning a considerable upgrade to this carpark area, including sealing and marking individual carparks. This work is planned to be completed prior to next summer. This would allow a more clearly defined number of spaces available for overnight camping and associated improvements to signs.

An option for consideration is to move the designated site to the landward side of the carpark. One complainant said camping vehicles were pushing into the dunes. While this area is fenced and it is therefore not possible to move a vehicle onto the dune area, moving the location of the designated site should address this concern.

Tarewa - Whangarei I-site carpark

While Council has not received any complaints from the public on this site, the I-site staff have reported that the current location of the designated site is impacting on other I-site and café visitors accessing the carpark and using the facilities and they have requested the site is relocated.

Staff have consulted with I-site staff and propose that the designated site be moved to the Tarewa Road side of the carparking area. This approach would also reduce the current usage of the picnic tables and the reserve area during the day, which has been raised as a concern by Councillors. While this is not directly an overnight camping issue, it is a linked activity. It is anticipated that campers using the relocated site are more likely to move on in the morning and disperse to find somewhere to spend the day and cook breakfast etc. rather than remaining in the carpark.

Whananaki North

Initial complaints received for this location focussed on the signs installed and the associated blocking of resident's views. Further complaints were received as people were under the impression there was a maximum number of vehicles for the site (six) and that that number was being exceeded. It is unclear why complainants thought this was the case. Some residents spoken to are opposed to the area as a designated site as they consider there are four other commercial operators in the vicinity.

The site was well used over summer, by self-contained as well as non self-contained vehicles and tents.

Staff recommend reducing the site by approximately 1/3rd in the area in front of the toilet block. This will ensure access to the toilet block for other users and reduce the overall area available for camping. This, in conjunction with the programme to promote other locations for self-contained vehicles, is anticipated to have a positive outcome for the site.

Tamaterau

The Parks Department would like to see this site receive a full upgrade including kerb and channel and sealed parking area. This project would provide more suitable options for overnight camping. However, this project is currently not budgeted for and would not be achieved for next summer.

Staff recommend a temporary solution that relocates and reduces the existing designated site for next summer. Depending on whether the proposed project proceeds in 2019, staff will report back on more permanent possible solutions for this site next year.

Temporary closures

The bylaw contains provisions for sites to be closed for up to two weeks if there are concerns regarding the site. While these provisions were not taken into consideration for the 2017/2018 summer, staff can work with the parks department to develop guidelines so that sites could be closed over the summer period if required. This would require working with app providers to ensure they could adjust their applications for the two-week period as required plus signage considerations, but can be used as a tool if required.

6 Next steps

6.1 2018/2019 Enforcement programme

Staff are seeking direction on the preferred enforcement approach for the 2018/2019 summer. The approach is outlined in section 4.3 is considered by staff the most appropriate programme in terms of timing, and through concentrating on the identified seven 'focus sites', is anticipated to achieve considerably improved outcomes. This is achievable within the budget provided for within the draft Long Term Plan. Should direction be received for an alternative approach that exceeds the current budgeted amount, then this will be reported through to the final LTP development process for council consideration and a final decision.

6.2 Resolutions to change designated sites

Staff have outlined options for changes to the locations of some of the designated sites that would support better outcomes for next summer. Staff are seeking direction on reporting back to Council for formal resolution for the recommended changes to these designated sites.

6.3 National working party

Any outcomes of the national working party that will impact on the current framework and/or the Bylaw will be reported back to Council as and if/when they occur.

6.4 Future reporting

The Bylaws Enforcement Co-ordinator will continue to work with the enforcement contractor to ensure appropriate and timely data is available to report on future summer seasons.

Infrastructure upgrades

Any of the future infrastructure upgrades noted in this report will be reported through to the Infrastructure Committee. Should there be an associated requirement to make changes to the location of the designated site, this will be reported to Council for resolution.

7 Attachments

- 1 – Copy of 19 October 2017 report to Council on enforcement options
- 2 – National working group key issues
- 3 – Overview of CRMs
- 4 – Feedback report from Waste and Drainage Officer
- 5 – Feedback report from enforcement contractor
- 6 – Monitoring options
- 7 – Maps of possible changes to designated sites

2.1 Camping in Public Places Bylaw – summer 2017/2018 monitoring and options

Meeting: Whangarei District Council
Date of meeting: 19 October 2017
Reporting officer: Reiner Mussle, Acting Health and Bylaws Manager
 Shireen Munday, Strategic Planner

1 Purpose

To present a range of options for monitoring and enforcing the Camping in Public Places Bylaw for the 2017/2018 financial year together with associated costs.

2 Background

An information report on enforcement options for the Camping in Public Places Bylaw was provided at the 28 September Council meeting.

At that meeting, Council requested a briefing to more fully discuss the various enforcement options presented.

3 Discussion

Staff have revisited the item presented at the 28 September 2017 meeting and have further analysed the enforcement requirements, as well as reviewing the budgets for the 2017/2018 year.

The key factors for consideration for a camping bylaw enforcement regime are:

- Daily or regular monitoring of either all or selected sites in the District. This allows for both educational and enforcement activities during the monitoring visits
- responding to complaints as a Priority 1 (site visit within a max of 2 hours of receipt depending on location) and taking enforcement action as required
- responding to complaints as Priority 3 or 4 within the general prioritisation for all other enforcement activities (site visits within up to 48/72 hours) and taking enforcement action if possible.

In determining the daily or regular monitoring option, 33 key sites were identified as being suitable for such a regime, the remaining 27 sites of the schedules of the Bylaw are not considered high risk sites, nor is the remainder of the District where self-contained camping can occur. However, changes to the regime are possible with some sites being added/removed as required. The following options are based on these 33 key sites.

3.1 Options

Options	What	Approach	Cost
Option 1	Daily monitoring of sites	Daytime/evening/morning as appropriate. Enforcement and education activities undertaken during monitoring as required. Complaints responded to as Priority 1 24/7.	\$930 per day
Option 2	Regular monitoring of sites, at least every 2 nd day, some key sites (<10) daily	Daytime/evening/morning as appropriate. Enforcement and education activities undertaken during monitoring as required. Complaints responded to outside of monitoring timeframes as Priority 3 or 4.	\$612 per day
Option 3	Regular (every 2/3 day) monitoring of sites for enforcement purposes, some key sites (< 10) daily.	Focus on enforcement activities during night time periods. Minimal educational activities. Complaints responded to as Priority 1 24/7	\$425 per day
Option 4	Complaints response only – Priority 1	Complaints responded to as Priority 1, nighttime focus.	\$265 per day
Option 5	Complaints response only – Priority 3/4	Complaints acted on within existing contract and prioritised against other complaints received (e.g. dogs, noise etc.)	\$0 *

* Note: this is based on complaints remaining relatively static compared to previous years and the cost being accommodated within the existing contract provisions. Should there be a significant increase in complaints received, a review of the contract will be required.

3.2 Summer/winter issues

Due to the nature of the activity there is a clear difference in monitoring and enforcement requirements depending on the time of year.

Staff have further analysed the expected enforcement requirements for the summer, shoulder and winter periods. A 'complaints only' option for the winter period (Option 5 above) was not provided for in the original item but is considered feasible by staff.

The 28 September items discussed a longer and a shorter summer season, the seasons have been split into the following table based on this:

Spring Shoulder	Labour Weekend to 19 December	60 days
Summer	20 December to Waitangi	49 days
Autumn Shoulder	Day after Waitangi to Easter Monday	55 days
Winter	Tuesday after Easter to Friday before Labour Weekend.	201 days

All the Options and associated costs provided under 3.1 of this report can be applied to the seasons as required/preferred.

3.3 Budget

The Acting Health and Bylaws Manager has undertaken a further review of the 2017/2018 enforcement budgets. This review shows that a budget of \$120,000 has been allocated to summer monitoring and enforcement activities and this funding is available to support a monitoring/enforcement regime for the Camping in Public Places Bylaw.

The budgeting activities for the Long-Term Plan will include a review of the enforcement programme after the summer period, to make a recommendation as part of that process for future years.

3.4 Recommendation

The Acting Health and Bylaws Manager has discussed an appropriate monitoring and enforcement programme with the contractor as well as the Parks and Recreation Department. The following programme is considered feasible and can be met within existing budgets.

Season	Option	Cost
Spring Shoulder	Option 2	60 days x \$612 = \$36,720
Summer	Option 1	49 days x \$930 = \$45,570
Autumn Shoulder	Option 2	55 days x \$612 = 33,660
Winter	Option 5	201 days x \$0 = \$0

Total cost for remaining 2017/2018 year: \$115,950.

An alternative option would be to increase the monitoring regime to Option 1 for the Autumn Shoulder, which is considered the busier of the two shoulder seasons. This would increase the overall budgeted cost to \$133,440. This would be achievable within existing operational budgets of the Health and Bylaws Department, or the number of days could be extended to meet the available budget of \$120,000.

3.5 Next steps

Based on the discussion of Council at this meeting, staff can bring a supplementary item to the 26 October Council meeting for a resolution to confirm the preferred approach.



Freedom camping meeting – 8 March 2018

Attendees

- Hon Kelvin Davis, Minister of Tourism
- Dave Cull, Mayor, Dunedin City and President, Local Government New Zealand
- Garry Howard, Mayor, Buller District
- Tim Cadogan, Mayor, Central Otago District
- Andrew Turner, Deputy Mayor, Christchurch City
- Bryan Cadogan, Mayor, Clutha District
- Hon John Carter, Mayor, Far North District
- Meng Foon, Mayor, Gisborne District
- Tony Kokshoorn, Mayor, Grey District
- John Tregidga, Mayor, Hauraki District
- Winton Dalley, Mayor, Hurunui District
- Winston Gray, Mayor, Kaikōura District
- Graham Smith, Mayor, Mackenzie District
- Terry Sloan, Deputy Mayor, Marlborough District
- Bill Dalton, Mayor, Napier City
- Ian Barker, Councillor, Nelson City
- Richard Jordan, Deputy Mayor, New Plymouth District
- Jim Boulton, Mayor, Queenstown Lakes District
- Steve Chadwick, Mayor, Rotorua Lakes District
- Don Cameron, Mayor, Ruapehu District
- Sam Broughton, Mayor, Selwyn District
- Gary Tong, Mayor, Southland District
- Richard Kempthorne, Mayor, Tasman District
- Rosie Harvey, Deputy Mayor, Taupō District
- Damon Odey, Mayor, Timaru District
- Craig Little, Mayor, Wairoa District
- Gary Kircher, Mayor, Waitaki District
- Brian Hanna, Mayor, Waitomo District
- Justin Lester, Mayor, Wellington City
- Garry Webber, Mayor, Western Bay of Plenty District
- Tony Bonne, Mayor, Whakatāne District
- Hamish McDouall, Mayor, Whanganui District
- Sheryl Mai, Mayor, Whangarei District

In attendance

- Paul Eagle, Member of Parliament for Rongotai
- Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment – Iain Cossar
(iain.cossar@mbie.govt.nz)
- Department of Internal Affairs
- Department of Conservation
- Local Government New Zealand – Malcolm Alexander, Helen Mexted, Clare Wooding



KEY THEMES

- We welcome responsible campers, and if managed well freedom camping can contribute to the local economy, society and culture. Freedom camping is also part of New Zealand culture
- The two main problems
 - the small number of people who are exhibiting poor behaviour
 - the volume in some locations, including where the increase in volume this season was unexpected
- Freedom campers are both domestic and international visitors. Both can behave well or behave poorly. It is also not clear if poor behaviour is always freedom campers – it can be day-trippers and other visitors
- With the growth in the number of visitors freedom camping, whether we need to consider the place of freedom camping in New Zealand
- Strong support for a working party, as a collaboration of local government, central government and the tourism industry
- Acknowledgement of the work done so far by councils, the New Zealand Motor Caravan Association (NZMCA), and the Responsible Camping Forum (lead by Tourism Industry Aotearoa)
- The Freedom Camping Act is not working well enough everywhere, and there was strong but not unanimous support for reversing the underlying principles of the act. It is important to recognise different councils have different issues – some welcome freedom camping and some struggle to manage.
- Non-self-contained vehicles are causing a lot of issues in some places, including the fact there is no body that over-sees the certification of self-contained vehicles. There was a view that self-contained should mean a flushable toilet
- Enforcement is a significant issue for councils, with the cost of enforcement not being met by infringements issued, and many infringements not being paid. Levels of enforcement vary across councils
- As much consistency as possible is desired, but there is a need for local variations to occur.
- A view that attention needs to be given to how freedom camping happens on other public land (LINZ, DOC, NZTA), and that this is another area of inconsistency to address. The flow on effects (to this land, and to other districts) also need to be considered
- Technology is both an enabler of behaviour, and a challenge. It can push people to certain sites quite quickly, so working with app providers is desired
- Local government wants more investment in infrastructure to support camping. It is a struggle to both build (funding, and provision in remote locations), and to fund the operation of this infrastructure. Ratepayers can struggle to meet the costs of infrastructure in some communities and question why it is their role to do so
- Acknowledgement that there is no one simple answer
- Unclear what freedom camping means – camping is not defined in the FCA, and 'freedom' camping is not a useful term
- Data, insights and evidence into freedom camping are limited, and more information is desired



WORKING GROUP

- Support for an approach that has local government and central government working together with the tourism industry to manage freedom camping issues
- Strong support for a working group/party
- Need for a working group to look at what we can do by next season, but also need to look into the deeper issues that take longer to fix (such as whether the legislation is fit for purpose)
- Actions the working group could look at ahead of next season:
 - Gathering evidence and insights into the scale of the issue
 - Consistent signage
 - Working with app developers
 - Sharing information via tourism operators and van hire
 - More public toilets
 - Affordability for low-ratepayer bases (policing and infrastructure)
 - Looking at cross-border regional planning approaches beyond TA boundaries
- Some things for the working group to consider in the longer term:
 - Self-containment standard, identification of vehicles, oversight of the regime
 - Whether the legislation is fit for purpose (including the Freedom Camping Act and the Camping Grounds Regulations)
 - An improved infringement/enforcement regime (including the costs of enforcing and collecting infringements), and understanding the barriers to ensuring infringements are paid
 - Information provided to campers (including while in New Zealand and marketing before they arrive)
 - How councils, DOC, LINZ and other public land administrators can work together
 - How we can get better consistency, and where we would like consistency. Eg signage, information, self-containment standards, technology (apps),
 - Defining what we mean by freedom camping
 - What opportunities there are with freedom camping

ACTIONS

- Minister of Tourism to set up a working group of local government, central government, tourism industry
 - MBIE to develop terms of reference, in conjunction with other agencies
 - LGNZ to nominate local government representatives (Mayoral and LGNZ)
- MBIE to look at the TIF criteria
- MBIE and LGNZ to consider how best to use the symposium being organised for April

Attachment 3 – Overview of CRMs

Overview of Customer Relationship Management logged on freedom camping issues

These are the complaints logged via Council's Customer Relationship Management (CRMs). Staff have also dealt with several direct enquiries from members of the public as well as elected members over the period, these are discussed elsewhere in the main report.

The CRMs were classified into the following four categories:

1. Complaints
2. Enquiries
3. Signs
4. Bouquets/other

1. Complaints

No analysis has been undertaken regarding the validity of each of the complaints. Anecdotal feedback from enforcement officers, together with the work undertaken for the review, indicates that in some cases the complaint was for a matter that is permitted under the bylaw or is not entirely a Camping in Public Places Bylaw related matter (for example alcohol consumption in public places).

Complaints relating specifically to rubbish and associated issues were researched and these are addressed separately.

Complaints on camping activities on land that is not under Council's control were also received. Where this was clearly the case, these have been omitted from the analysis. However, there are a few logs where the exact location is unclear and these have been retained in the analysis for completeness.

The complaints received have been split into three time periods to align with the monitoring programme dates:

- 21 October – 19 December
- 20 December 2017 to 6 February 2018
- 7 February to 2 April (Easter Monday)

The complaints are summarised in the following tables.

Attachment 3 – Overview of CRMs

Table 1: 21 October – 19 December

Complaint type	Description	#	Location
Unlawful camping - prohibited area	Any camping activity in a prohibited area	6	Princes Street, Ruakaka (1) Beach Road Onerahi (2) William Fraser Park on Pohe Island (2) Tikipunga Sports Park (1)
Unlawful camping – restricted area	Parking/camping outside the designated area, type of camping not permitted in the designated area or non-compliance with 1 or 3-day rule	23	Bascule Bridge Carpark (1) Ruakaka Beach Reserve (8) Mt Manaia (2) Tamaterau (5) Kowharewa Bay (1) Whananaki North (1) Woolleys Bay (2) Wehiwehi Road, Matapouri (2) Sandy Bay (1)
Unlawful camping – rest of District	Camping in an area that is only available to SCV for a 3-day max	3	Te Kamo St, Ruakaka (1) Ngaio Street, Onerahi (1) Oakura (1)
General complaint	Complaint is about a range of things relating to camping activities, either location specific or generally about the bylaw	3	Ruakaka Beach Reserve (1) Wehiwehi Road, Matapouri (1) Tarewa I-site (1)
Rubbish/sanitary	Concerns regarding rubbish and/or doing dishes in toilets etc.	3	Whananaki North (1) Woolleys Bay (1) Wehiwehi Road, Matapouri (1)

Table 2: 20 December 2017 – 6 February 2018

Complaint type	Description	#	Location
Unlawful camping - prohibited area	Any camping activity in a prohibited area	9	Morrison Road, Matapouri (1) Ngunguru Reserve (1) Marsden Bay Reserve (1) Beach Road Onerahi (1) Pataua South (1) Tikipunga Sports Field (2) Kensington Park (1) Elliott Reserve (1)
Unlawful camping – restricted area	Parking/camping outside the designated area, type of camping not permitted in the designated area or non-compliance with 1 or 3-day rule	19	Ruakaka Beach Reserve (7) One Tree Point Reserve (2) Sandy Bay (4) Wehiwehi Road, Matapouri (2) Marsden Bay Reserve (1) Tamaterau (4) Woolleys Bay (4) Whananaki North (1)
Unlawful camping – rest of District/unclear	Camping in an area that is only available to SCV for a 3-day max or where the area referred to is unclear	13	Matapouri (2) Ruakaka Village (4) Whangarei Heads Road (1) Onerahi Village (1) Unclear (5)

Attachment 3 – Overview of CRMs

General complaint	Complaint is about a range of things relating to camping activities, either location specific or generally about the bylaw	2	General complaint about bylaw (1) Whangarei Falls (1)
Rubbish/sanitary	Concerns regarding rubbish and/or doing dishes in toilets etc.	3	Wehiwehi Road, Matapouri (1) Bascule Bridge Carpark (1) Tamaterau (1)

Table 3: 7 February – 2 April 2018 (Easter Monday)

Complaint type	Description	#	Location
Unlawful camping - prohibited area	Any camping activity in a prohibited area	3	William Fraser Park on Pohe Island (2) Pataua South (1)
Unlawful camping – restricted area	Parking/camping outside the designated area, type of camping not permitted in the designated area or non-compliance with 1 or 3-day rule	20	Bascule Bridge Carpar(5) Kowharewa Bay (1) Wehiwehi Road, Matapouri (1) Parua Bay (1) Reyburn House Lane carpark (1) Ruakaka Beach Reserve (7) Tamaterau (2) Tarewa I-site (1) Woolleys Bay (1)
Unlawful camping – rest of District/unclear	Camping in an area that is only available to SCV for a 3-day max or where the area referred to is unclear	8	Ruakaka Village (1) Langs Beach (1) Ngunguru Road (1) Waikaraka (1) Reotahi Road (1) Deveron Street (1) Wharf Road (1) Hodges Park, Kamo (1)
General complaint	Complaint is about a range of things relating to camping activities, either location specific or generally about the bylaw	4	Wehiwehi Road, Matapouri (1) Tarewa I-site (1) Woolleys and Sandy Bay (1) District-wide (1)

Summary of CRMS – unlawful camping/general complaints

All complaints (21 October – 2 April)	119
Unlawful camping	105
General complaints (including bylaw)	9
Rubbish/sanitary	6

Comparison between 2016/17 and 2017/18 summers

Staff reported on 105 complaints received between Labour Weekend and Easter for the 2016/17 summer, compared to the 2017/2018 total of 119.

Attachment 3 – Overview of CRMs

There is a significant change in the pattern of complaints between the two summers. For the 2017/18 summer, most complaints related to unlawful camping in areas with designated sites. Complaints relating to the District outside prohibited or designated site areas is low (24) with most sites receiving only one complaint. In the previous summer, a significant proportion of complaints were about rubbish/sanitary issues. For this last summer, six complaints that only discussed rubbish/sanitary matters were received.

Summary of complaints (21 October – 2 April)

All complaints	119
Unlawful camping	105
General complaints (including Bylaw)	9
Rubbish/sanitary	6

Complaints by area

number of areas complaints received	37 areas
1 complaint received	20 areas
2-3 complaints	11 areas
4 or more complaints	6 areas

4 + complaints	number of complaints
William Fraser Park on Pohe Island	4
Ruakaka Village	7
Wehiwehi Road, Matapouri	9
Woolleys Bay	9
Tamaterau	12
Ruakaka Beach Reserve	23

Of the six areas with four or more complaints, the complaints for various locations in the Ruakaka Village area are the only surprise. Issues at Tamaterau, Woolleys Bay, Wehiwehi Road, and Ruakaka Beach Reserve have been documented in previous reports to Council and these are further discussed in the main report. William Fraser Park on Pohe Island is already a prohibited area.

Attachment 3 – Overview of CRMs

Complaints by designated site (22 sites)

AH Reed Memorial Park – Whareora Road carpark	0
Ocean Beach carpark	0
Onerahi - Beach Road Reserve	0
Reotahi	0
Waipu Caves	0
Wellingtons Bay – main reserve (Whangaumu Reserve)	0
Whangarei Falls Scenic Reserve	0
Ngunguru Library	0
Marsden Bay Reserve	1
Parua Bay	1
Finlayson Street/Reyburn House Lane carpark	1
Tarewa I-site	1
Kowharewa Bay	2
Mt Manaia	2
One Tree Point Reserve	2
Whananaki North	2
Sandy Bay	5
Wehiwehi Road, Matapouri	5
Bascule carpark – Port Road	6
Woolleys Bay	7
Tamaterau	11
Ruakaka Beach Reserve	22

The six locations with the largest number of complaints received are further discussed in the main body of the report.

A high-level review of the complaints received for the eight other areas, shows that these were often logged before the main summer monitoring season started on 20 December and no further complaints were received after that date.

Staff have been also dealing with direct communications to staff via email and phone. These have not been logged as complaints in Council's CRM system, however some of the complainants have contacted staff directly as well as raising their concerns via the CRM system. Therefore, some of the complaints between the two mechanisms are duplicated. The issues raised in these communications is outlined in the main report.

2. Enquiries

Enquiries ranged from campers wanting to know where they can stay to questions on the infringement regime under the bylaw. Since the interim report to Council on 22 February, only two further enquiries have been received.

3. Signs

Council received several enquiries and complaints about bylaw related signage, largely concentrated across four locations in the District. Some issues were complaints about the signs themselves in other cases advisories of signs having been vandalised or removed. Council has received two more CRMs on signs (Woolleys Bay and Oakura) since the last report.

Attachment 3 – Overview of CRMs

4. Bouquets/other

Council has received several items of positive feedback, including on the bylaw itself, the information provided to visitors, and the positive and calm approach of enforcement officers.

In addition to the request relating to Onerahi Sports Park noted in the 22 February report, Council has received other feedback asking for restrictions to be removed or changed. These are for Urquharts Bay, Woolleys Bay and Reotahi as well the general restrictions across the District. These enquiries are discussed in the 'direct enquiries' section of the main report as most enquiries were received in this manner.

WDC designated camping sites impact on public toilets and litter control – summer 2017/18



This report discusses the 18 designated sites within the District that permit non self-contained overnight camping and the outcomes for the 2017/2018 summer.

The information incorporates feedback received from the toilet cleaning contractors, Professional Property Cleaning Services (PPCS) and the public. A summary is provided, followed by a brief commentary for each site.

Summary

The allocated designations for freedom camping in our District has not had a major negative impact on Council's infrastructure and environment.

PPCS have informed me that most campers are abiding by the rules and moving on to another area after staying the permitted timeframe. PPCS main problem with freedom campers is that at some sites it slows down their cleaning schedule, as they must wait for people cleaning their teeth, dishes etc. in the hand basins before they can commence work.

The main point of concern with freedom campers for the Waste & Drainage Department is the emptying of the chemical effluent tanks in to the coastal toilet blocks as it will be affecting the stand-alone septic systems. This is also occurring at non-designated sites as well.

Littering has not increased dramatically at any of the sites and it would be unfair as well as not justified to accuse freedom campers of being the sole cause of the litter problem at these locations.

Designated sites

AH Reed Memorial Park – No noticeable increase in water meter readings. Car park litter bins are emptied daily and PPCS have commented that the amount of litter left behind by visitors has increased due to freedom campers. The toilet block is connected to the WDC water & wastewater network.

Bascule Park – This location is very popular with freedom campers and the public using the loop walkway. Although the water consumption has increased, it cannot be solely attributed to freedom campers as a drinking fountain has also been installed there, that is used regularly by all visitors to that area. The bins are emptied twice daily and although litter has increased, so has the popularity of that site. This toilet block is also connected to the WDC water & wastewater network.

Kowharewa Bay – Water usage has remained steady there and still within the NRC resource consent water intake limit. There are no rubbish bins at this location and generally the area is kept clean by the locals and PPCS. The septic system copes well with the current use of the toilet block.

Mt Manaia Carpark – Water consumption for the toilet block has not increased dramatically due to the site being designated for freedom camping. The litter bin there is constantly full. WDC are considering the removal of it, as it's being abused by people dumping household rubbish in it. The toilet block handles the usage easily as it is connected to the WDC water and wastewater network.

Marsden Bay Reserve – This location is also connected to the WDC water & wastewater network. PPCS have commented that the area is left reasonably clean most of the time. The litter bins in the Bream Bay coastal carparks were removed in 2013. Water meter readings are consistent with previous years consumption.

Matapouri – this site is popular with freedom campers and the public. Litter use to be a major problem here, until the removal of the litter bins. There is still litter left around by the freedom campers and daily beachgoers as well. Unfortunately, a lot of the beachgoers are now using the sanitary bins in the toilets to dispose of their rubbish. PPCS have also commented that the self-contained motorhomes are using the toilet block for emptying their chemical effluent tanks.

Ngunguru Library – not a lot of freedom camping reported at this location. The site is usually clean and well respected. Water is supplied from a rain water tank that is filled from the water runoff from the roof of the adjacent library. The toilet block is connected to the Ngunguru wastewater network.

Ocean Beach – a popular site for freedom campers. Prior to the toilet block being burnt to the ground at the start of the year, it was handling the usage relatively well. There are two sources of water for this location (creek & bore) and the septic system has not been problematic for quite a few years. Passionate locals & PPCS keep the loose litter issue at this site under control.

One Tree Point – this location opposite the boat ramp is possibly one of the best for the freedom campers, as it is quite a spacious car park with the public toilet block situated in the middle. The toilet block does not have a problem handling the demand at peak times, as it is connected to the Ruakaka water and wastewater network. Water meter readings are similar to previous year totals.

Parua Bay – this site would also be one of the best as it covers all bases i.e. parking spaces, litter control, public toilets and scenery. Litter at this site is not a problem as the local transfer station is also located nearby. The public toilet block is also connected to the WDC water and wastewater network. There is also a drinking fountain situated in front of the toilet block.

Reotahi – operates well as it is also connected to the WDC water and wastewater network. Problems with this toilet block have been very minor over the years. The water meter readings indicate that there has been no major increase in usage due to freedom camping. PPCS commented that there has also been no increase in litter left behind since it became a designated freedom camping site.

Attachment 4

Sandy Bay – another popular site for freedom campers and visitors due to the scenery and having one of Whangarei recognized surfing breaks. PPCS commented that there are quite often people camping outside the designated area. Self-contained motor home owners have also been seen using the toilet block to empty their effluent tanks. This is of a concern as the chemicals in these tanks will be affecting the septic system at this site. PPCS commented that litter at this site can be a problem but the daily beachgoers also contribute to that issue. The daily water intake has increased slightly, but still falls within the NRC resource consent water intake limit.

Tamatarua – this toilet block is also connected to the WDC water and wastewater network. The toilet block has handled the peak period well and only minor plumbing problems were reported. Water usage is hard to gauge due to there being a water leak on the inlet line. The main problem at this location was the designated spot for freedom campers being in close vicinity to the pumping station. This is being addressed by WDC staff. Litter at this site has not increased dramatically due to freedom campers.

Tarewa I-Site – this toilet block is the most used by visitors to our district. It is also appealing to freedom campers as it is the only one with a hot water shower available. Litter at this location has been a problem for quite a few years. The extra bins installed there recently has helped to reduce the problem. It is not just the visitors generating the rubbish though, as locals have been seen using the bins to dispose of household rubbish. I-Site staff have commented that a problem they have noticed with some freedom campers is they take up two of the allocated car parks, one for the van the other to set up chairs and tables. There have also been incidents of washing hung out to dry on string tied to the trees. Which is not a good look for that location.

Waipu Caves – this location has been very popular for camping with locals and visitors for a long time. Water intake is close to NRC consent limit. This toilet block has a cold shower on the external wall for people to wash down after exploring the caves, which adds considerably to the water usage. WDC staff are reviewing other options for a water source. PPCS commented that their biggest problem is the time it takes to clean, due to mud getting walked in and campers cleaning dishes etc. in the toilet hand basins. Litter can be a problem at this location, but for the number of people visiting the caves it is on par with the other allocated sites.

Whananaki North – PPCS commented that the toilet block handles the usage adequately. Litter does not appear to be much of a problem as it is at other coastal locations. The main problem there is campers parking on the drainage field for the septic system. Bollards will be installed to mitigate this problem. Water usage is still well within the NRC resource consent water intake limit.

Wellington Bay – another coastal gem, popular with locals and visitors. Water meter readings indicate that the toilet block usage is on par with the previous year. This usage is well within the NRC resource consent water intake limit. Litter was also a big problem here until the removal of the litter bins. Locals and PPCS are keeping on top of the litter issue there now.

Woolleys Bay – is also very popular with campers. PPCS have commented that this toilet block is also being used by some campers to empty their effluent tanks. As previously highlighted this practice is detrimental to the septic system for the toilet blocks. Water meter readings indicate that the water usage has increased slightly, however it is still within the NRC resource consent water intake limit. Litter at this site is controlled by PPCS and locals. Litter was more of a problem when bins were at this location.

To; Health and Bylaw
Department.

For WDC Freedom Camping



Freedom Camping Observations by Armourguard

Background;

Whangarei District Council introduced a new Bylaw regarding Camping in Public Places on 20th October 2017. Armourguard was assigned with the monitoring, enforcing and educating of the users of this Bylaw over the shoulder and summer season with the guidance from the Council Health and Bylaws Department.

The scope of work consisted of;

- Daily or regular monitoring of selected sites in the District. This allowed for both educational and enforcement activities during the monitoring visits.
- Responding to complaints as a Priority 1 (site visit within a max of 2 hours of receipt depending on location during the peak season) and taking enforcement action as required.
- Responding to complaints as Priority 3 or 4 within the general prioritisation for all other enforcement activities (site visits within up to 48/72 hours, outside of the peak season) and taking enforcement action where possible.

Observations;

- The bylaw is enforceable the way it is, providing patrols are maintained to ensure compliance.
- Brochures and education from Officers was generally well received with the addition of the "Do you know the rules? Don't get fined" flyers introduced prior to Christmas. Some 2500 Brochures were distributed by our Officers.
- Talking to campers at sites showed there was a significant number that were aware of the freedom camping options but did not have knowledge of all the sites available - so were grateful for a brochure. There were many campers who are using the app to help them move around the area.
- Most issues raised on site by community members with Enforcement Officers were about smaller, and often non self-contained vans. This is regarding the perception these small van campers are not using proper facilities to perform personal & household actions like washing, bathroom or rubbish disposal. A focus on the enforcement at sites where non self-contained camping is allowed would be beneficial.



CUSTOMER FOCUS



PERFORMANCE



INNOVATION



RESPONSIBILITY

- The biggest issue was designated sites being full and other campers parking outside the designated area.
- Campers spread across the district sites well, with an average of 28 spoken to each day during February. The main and popular sites were Bascule, Finlayson, Matapouri, Onerahi, Waipu caves, Sandy Bay and Parua Bay.
- Local Campers have proved to be the most non-compliant, and have issue with the rules.
- Campers breaching the 28-night return policy, require considerable resource to monitor effectively for a prosecution process. (if taken).
- Signage is generally good. Some sites may benefit from a review of the size and location of the designated area.
- Night monitoring and enforcement patrols between 1800hrs and 0200hrs would be most effective going forward.
- Regular (Action Plan) monitoring and patrols, maintains our enforcement officer skill set and focus in line with council's vision and preferred outcomes. The more the officers perform this duty, the better their skillset and outcome.

Completed by
Warwick Taylor
Regional Manager
Armourguard



CUSTOMER FOCUS



PERFORMANCE



INNOVATION



RESPONSIBILITY

Attachment 6 – Monitoring options

1 Overview

Staff have reviewed the information from the first year of monitoring and enforcement and can recommend a proposed summer 2018/2019 programme.

The recommended programme will retain the 19 sites for daily site visits, with an emphasis on seven sites; Bascule carpark, Ruakaka, Tamaterau, Kowharewa, Matapouri, Woolleys and Sandy Bays.

It is proposed to take a more enforcement focussed approach, with all monitoring visits timed between 6-10pm or 6-10am. This timing will ensure officers can take a more stringent approach for breaches of the Bylaw and can ask people to move on immediately and/or take enforcement action for non-compliance as required.

Outside of the site visits it is recommended to extend the period that Officers respond to complaints for all areas as a Priority 1 from Labour Weekend to Easter Weekend (site visit within a max of 2 hours of receipt depending on location) and taking enforcement action as required.

In 2019 Easter Monday is on 22 April, therefore this will increase the autumn monitoring period by a further 19 days than in 2018.

1.1 2018/2019 Options

Options	What	Approach	Cost
Option 1	Daily monitoring of 19 sites	Daily site visits to 19 sites between 6-10am or 6-10pm including recording and reporting. Complaints responded to as Priority 1 24/7.	\$1077 per day
Option 2	Daily monitoring of seven key sites.	Daily site visits to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bascule carpark – Port Road • Ruakaka • Tamaterau • Kowharewa • Matapouri (Wehiwehi Road) • Woolleys Bay • Sandy Bay Monitoring and patrolling of 12 remaining sites every other day (6-10am/6-10pm) and recording and reporting. Complaints responded to as Priority 3/4.	\$703 per day
Option 3	Every other day monitoring of 19 sites	Monitoring and patrolling of 19 sites every other day (6-10am/6-10pm) and recording and reporting. Complaints responded to as Priority 3/4.	\$317 per day
Option 4	Complaints response only – Priority 1	Complaints responded to as Priority 1, nighttime focus.	\$265 per day
Option 5	Complaints response only – Priority 3/4	Complaints acted on within existing contract and prioritised against other complaints received (e.g. dogs, noise etc.)	\$0 *

Attachment 6 – Monitoring options

* Note: this is based on complaints remaining relatively static compared to previous years and the cost being accommodated within the existing contract provisions. Should there be a significant increase in complaints received, a review of the contract will be required.

1.2 Seasonal issues

Freedom Camping is a seasonal activity which results in different monitoring and enforcement requirements depending on the time of year.

The 2018/2019 seasons have been split into the following table based on this:

Spring Shoulder	Labour Weekend to 19 December	60 days
Summer	20 December to Waitangi	49 days
Autumn Shoulder	Day after Waitangi to Easter Monday	74 days
Winter	Tuesday after Easter to Friday before Labour Weekend	182 days

All the Options and associated costs provided under 3.1 of this report can be applied to the seasons as required/preferred.

1.3 Budget

A budget of \$150,000 per annum for future programmes has been included in the draft Long Term Plan. This budget covers the monitoring programme, but also the cost of brochures and upgrades to signs.

1.4 Recommendation

Summarised here is the staff recommended monitoring programme for the 2018/2019 summer.

Season	Option	Cost
Spring Shoulder (Labour weekend – 19 Dec)	Daily monitoring of seven focus sites, 12 sites visited every second day. Complaints responded to as a priority 3/4.	\$42180 (\$703 per day)
Summer (20 Dec-7 Feb)	Daily monitoring of 19 sites. Complaints responded to as a priority 1.	\$52,800 (\$1,077 per day)
Autumn Shoulder (7 Feb-Easter)	Daily monitoring of seven focus sites, 12 sites visited every second day. Complaints responded to as a priority 3/4.	\$52,000 (\$703)
Winter (Easter-Labour weekend)	Complaint only monitoring as priority 3 or 4	\$0 (part of overall contract)

Total cost for 2018/2019 year:

\$147,000

Attachment 7 – possible changes to designated sites³⁹

1. Ruakaka Beach Reserve

Option 1 – reduce size of site.



Option 2 – reduce site size and relocate site to opposite main entranceway.



Attachment 7 – possible changes to designated sites⁴⁰

2. Tamaterau

Temporarily relocate site until site improvements are completed. Low fence and signs to clearly indicate boundary of camping site. Space to allow for approximately four vehicles/tents maximum.



3. Matapouri – Wehiwehi Road

Relocate site to western side of carpark as part of upgrade to carpark area.



Attachment 7 – possible changes to designated sites⁴¹

4. Whananaki North

Reduce site size.



5. I-site – Tarewa Road

Relocate site to Tarewa Road side of carpark and reduce carpark spaces to six.

