



Picton Smart & Connected

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**Submission by Picton Smart & Connected
To the Marlborough District Council
Freedom Camping Bylaw Review May
2015**



Submission summary

This submission relates to the creation of and proposed changes to the Freedom Camping Bylaw / Marlborough, New Zealand.

The 2011 Freedom Camping Act clearly states that a local authority (the Marlborough District Council in this instance) cannot absolutely restrict freedom camping in its region (Marlborough) but it's clear that the act supplies the authority with wide-ranging ability to create a Bylaw that fits with its region's needs, insomuch that it supports the regions environmental values, its economic values and strengths and its rate payers and their livelihoods.

The act in essence provides legitimacy to the local authority to impose limitations and by being non-specific in its approach, it supplies legroom for the authority to impose those limitations in a way that best suits their region's needs. There is no place in the act that imposes on the authority, the need to provide freedom camping nor deny it.

We say that if a local authority creates a Bylaw that works against or damages a region's environment, economy or core market value, it is essential that the authority ensures that the Bylaw is changed to suit the region's needs.

We consider the freedoms allowed and promoted by the MDC within Picton to be too broad. We believe it is manifestly unfair on existing Picton accommodation providers, to allow tents, non-self-contained vans and cars to camp for free on sites supplied by the Marlborough District Council.

Picton Smart & Connected believes there is an opportunity for the Marlborough District Council to create a common sense Freedom Camping Bylaw for Marlborough that supports Marlborough business, Marlborough's environment and our regions tourism values using the Freedom Camping Act 2011.

Proposed bylaw changes / the opportunity

1. We recommend that a clear distinction between NZ standard NZ5465/2001 certified fully self-contained campervans (nationally recognised standard for self-contained vans and caravans) and others (cars, vans and tents) without self-contained facilities be distinctly defined for all local authority assigned free camping sites in Marlborough and that all campers without this certification, use only commercial accommodation offerings including campgrounds or allocated D.O.C sites.
2. We say that there is no requirement for the authority (MDC) to supply facilities such as toilets or waste management, providing Freedom Campers are defined as (NZ standard NZ5465/2001) certified fully self-contained campers only.

3. If the authority wishes to create a Bylaw that suits all of Marlborough, then we respectfully suggest that the Bylaw clearly defines Freedom Campers as certified fully self-contained campervans only and that this stance is adopted regionally.
4. We recommend a licence system be implemented, as has been successfully established in Gisborne and well embraced by NZMCA campers.
 - a. The licence would be available for purchase from Marlborough's libraries, at council offices, at petrol stations or online.
 - b. The purchaser would identify the registration number of the vehicle, pledge that the vehicle was certified fully self-contained and pay for the dates required.
 - c. The licence issued would describe areas available for freedom camping, declare that camping in any other areas was forbidden and would supply the ability to clearly describe user rules.
 - d. Licences would be displayed prominently in the front window of the vehicle for the duration of their stay in Marlborough.
 - e. Vehicles that were improperly described or not displaying the appropriate camping dates, shown on the licence, would be asked to move on or penalised.
 - f. We recommend a 3 day, 7 day and 28 day licence fee configuration (example – 3 days \$10, 7 days \$14, 28 days \$35). This minimal fee would ameliorate enforcement costs in Marlborough.
5. We recommend that designated freedom camping sites for fully self-contained campervans be in close proximity to towns in Marlborough, to maximise spend potential in local businesses and services by NZMCA freedom campers.
6. We recommend a maximum of 12 certified fully self-contained freedom camping campervans, be permitted to camp in and around Picton per night with a maximum Picton (single town) stay of 3 nights, on MDC designated free camping sites. We note that the Picton RSA and the Crow Tavern both currently supply private free camp sites to NZMCA certified freedom campers, which would be additional to the above stated nightly allowance.
7. We suggest that Marlborough must be seen, in the eyes of the NZMCA to be a certified freedom camper friendly region. These certified NZMCA campers bring strong economic benefits to towns and regions when they camp in them.

8. We recommend that Freedom Camping signage be erected around Marlborough with the following instructions:

- a. Please Keep Marlborough Clean and take your rubbish with you.
- b. Freedom camping is only available to self-contained vehicles displaying a MDC Freedom Camping Licence.
- c. All non-self-contained vehicles, please use Marlborough's commercial campgrounds, Department of Conservation (DOC) camping sites or other accommodation options.
- d. All vehicles found camping outside of commercial campgrounds and Department of Conservation sites without a licence to freedom camp in designated areas in Marlborough will be liable to pay an enforcement fee of \$200.00.

9. We recommend that more rangers will need to be employed to supply adequate enforcement of the bylaw.

10. We recommend that Waitohi domain be closed down immediately as a free to camp site for freedom campers in Picton as the experience supplied between a factory and a rail yard falls profoundly short of supplying visitors to Marlborough with a quality camping experience.

Critical considerations

1. A well serviced town

Picton has a good number of well equipped, excellent value commercial campsites, backpacker hostels and other budget accommodation options to cater for visitors, who use road vehicles to explore New Zealand. These options have developed over many years, to cater for ferry users and short stay visitors. With Picton's average night stay rate at around 1.2 nights, its accommodation providers rely heavily on summer trade to sustain and grow their businesses in what is a profoundly a seasonal town. We say that there is already sufficient space and capacity within Picton and its surrounding area to accommodate all campers in commercial camping grounds and D.O.C sites, and therefore,

there is no need to provide MDC free camp / sleep-over sites to non- certified non-fully self-contained vehicles.

2. Negative Impact

The negative impact of mass free camping of non-certified users is far reaching in the Picton community. Less campers using commercial sites, D.O.C sites, hostels and bed & breakfasts may have serious consequences for a wide range of businesses and/or staff if these facilities continue to experience financial losses due to the unfair competition created by MDC free to camp / sleep-over sites.

3.

Free camping by non-self-contained vehicles is still occurring in our back streets and in various other areas of Picton throughout summer. Supplying free to camp sites does not stop people choosing quiet spots away from the crowds to camp, enforcement does!

4. Perception

The sites provided by the MDC for free camping as part of the freedom camping bylaw trial have in fact created the perception that Picton is a free to camp / park to sleep, ferry port town. Much of this perception has evolved through various web based platforms including camping apps and websites that advertise the MDC sites as free to camp sites for all users.

5. A Choke Point

a. Picton is by design (Ferry Port) a choke point for thousands of cars, small vans and fully self- contained campervans moving north, or coming off the ferries at all hours, heading south. The provision of free to camp/sleep-over sites for ferry users is taking business directly away from accommodation suppliers in Picton.

b. With simple intelligent planning the thousands of non-self-contained vehicles travelling north and South toward Picton, could easily be directed (signage, web based advertising, marketing, printed media and camping licence outlets) to use local backpacker hostels,

campgrounds and D.O.C sites to support Marlborough in growing its tourism economy.

6. Marlborough as a region must offer quality products and an exceptional tourism experience to all visitors, if it wants to see growth in its tourism economy.

Regionally, Marlborough's campgrounds, D.O.C camping sites and backpacker Hostels have offered excellent camping and hostel experiences to visitors for many years. Nationally, these types of provider have become an iconic Kiwi holiday budget option, for visitors to New Zealand.

Supplying free campsites next to factories (as at Waitohi Park) and state highways (as at Koromiko) does not supply quality accommodation or an exceptional Marlborough experience and it devalues our towns, places and our region in tourism destination terms.

With Marlborough's tourism economy lagging behind many of New Zealand's other regions, we need to do everything we can as a smart & connected region, to sustain and grow tourism here in Marlborough.

7. Regionally we believe that various agencies could easily be positioned to assist in enforcement. The following agencies already carry out security work in and around Picton.

- Port Marlborough Security
- Department of Conservation
- Animal Control
- Council Parking Wardens
- Marlborough Police
- Maori Wardens
- Council Rangers

Specific changes we (Picton Smart & Connected) recommend for the 'Draft Marlborough Freedom Camping Bylaw'

Recommendations:

Schedule 2 - Restricted Areas

1. That Schedule Two globally incorporate the restriction that only NZ standard NZ5465/2001 certified fully self-contained camper vans may freedom camp in designated areas throughout Marlborough.

2. Victoria Domain

Be removed from the draft as a proposed designated camping area for the following reasons:

1. Victoria Domain is a recreational reserve and is not suitable as a camping area.
2. There is not adequate lighting for night time usage and the area will be dangerous for small children due to significant drop off points, cliff areas on both sides of the domain apex.

Victoria Domain

Victoria Domain is a recreational reserve located between Picton and Waikawa. Access to the domain is off Sussex Street.



5. We support the foundation of this initiative, spearheaded by the Tourism Industry Association of New Zealand.

http://www.tianz.org.nz/main/nz-freedom-campingforum/?utm_source=TMail20Newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Great20Adventure20Registrations20TRENZ20Worth20Millions20Facebook20FAQs

The screenshot shows the website for the Tourism Industry Association of New Zealand (TIANZ). The header includes the logo, the tagline "THE VOICE OF THE TOURISM INDUSTRY", a search bar, and a "MEMBER LOG IN" button. Below the header is a navigation menu with options: "About TIA", "Industry Facts", "News & Media", "Events", "Projects", "Tourism Policy", and "Members Only Zone".

The main content area is titled "NZ Responsible Camping Forum". It features a sidebar on the left with a list of categories: "Tourism 2025", "Visiting Driver Safety", "2015 Photo Competition", "Adventure & Outdoors", "NZ Responsible Camping Forum" (selected), "Resources", "About freedom camping", "Forum members", "Other Forum Initiatives", "Keeping visitors safe", "Local Government Campaign", "Environmental Sustainability", "Tourism Energy Efficiency", and "Earlier Projects".

The main text on the "NZ Responsible Camping Forum" page includes:

- Introduction:** The Tourism Industry Association spearheads the Responsible Camping Forum, formed in 2007 to manage community social and environmental issues around freedom camping.
- Success:** Since then the Forum has succeeded in achieving a unified stance on how best to manage freedom camping. It's accepted by everyone that some degree of enforcement will be required, but we can reduce that through education, helping campers to embrace the principle of kaitiakitanga (social and environmental responsibility).
- Forum Composition:** The Forum is made up of about 30 representatives from the tourism industry, rental vehicle operators and central and local government.
- We're making a difference:** Providing travellers with good information about camping in New Zealand is making a real difference to their behaviour. Campers are an important sector of New Zealand's tourism industry, as they travel widely throughout the country, tend to stay a long time and spend money on a wide range of goods and activities. Educational programmes, combined with a new fines regime, has resulted in more campers staying in holiday parks, Department of Conservation campsites and other designated areas.
- Our message to campers:** The Forum's central message to international and Kiwi freedom campers is: Please stay in holiday parks, Department of Conservation (DOC) camping grounds or other designated areas. We proactively encourage campers to assume nothing, and check with I-SITE Visitor Centres, DOC Visitor Centres or holiday parks to find out where they are permitted to freedom camp and to get other local camping information. Some of the ways we do this are through information flyers given to visitors when they pick up their camper van, information on rental vehicle websites, posters and leaflets promoting the responsible camping message and the www.camping.org.nz website.
- Website one stop shop for campers:** The www.camping.org.nz website provides a "one stop shop" for campers. It includes information on eco-wise practices, keeping safe, facilities, regional camping, what to do and where to stay in New Zealand. Rental vehicle companies are linking to the site to actively promote it to visitors during the booking process. www.camping.org.nz is receiving about 60,000 hits a year, and the most viewed pages are those carrying regional information.

There are also images of a "where can I camp?" flyer and a "Camping Our Way" logo.

Summary of submission to Marlborough District Council
Subject: Freedom Camping Bylaw 2012, 2015 Review

Name of writer: The Freedom Camping Work Group, Picton Smart & Connect

Submitted on behalf of: Picton Smart & Connected

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Summary of Introduction

• This section explains the basic principles of the submission. It details the view of Picton Smart & Connected in respect of the ability of the MDC to create a bylaw that suits Marlborough. It outlines the legitimacy supplied to local authorities by the Freedom Camping Act 2011 to impose limitations.

Summary of Proposals (Please read the full submission for expanded recommendations)

Following consultation with the Picton community, Picton Smart & Connected respectfully recommend that;

1. Only NZ standard NZ5465/2001 certified fully self-contained camper vans be permitted to freedom camp in and about Picton and throughout Marlborough, at designated sites.
2. The MDC do not need to supply toilets or waste management at designated sites if freedom campers are (NZ standard NZ5465/2001) certified fully self-contained camper vans only.
3. The Bylaw clearly defines Freedom Campers as (NZ standard NZ5465/2001) certified fully self-contained campervans only and that this stance is adopted regionally.
4. We recommend a licence system be implemented.
5. We recommend that designated freedom camping sites for fully self-contained campervans, be in close proximity to towns (we do not speak on behalf of other towns. We speak for Picton and Marlborough in the broad sense only)
6. We recommend a maximum of 12 certified fully self-contained freedom camping campervans, be permitted to camp in Picton per night at a MDC site with a maximum of three night stay.
7. We suggest that Marlborough must be seen, in the eyes of the NZMCA to be a certified freedom camper friendly region.
8. We recommend that Freedom Camping signage be erected.

9. We recommend that more rangers be employed to enforce the bylaw.
10. We recommend that Waitohi be closed immediately.

Summary of Considerations:

(Please read the full submission for expanded considerations)

1. Picton is already well equipped to accommodate all campers.
2. The negative impact of mass free camping.
3. Continued back street camping.
4. A created perception of Picton as a free to camp ferry port.
5. Picton, a choke point.
6. Marlborough, tourism values and quality experiences.

Some other examples of regions and towns who successfully say yes to certified only freedom camping!

Gisborne Council – Freedom Camping Policy.

<http://www.gdc.govt.nz/summer-camping/>

Queenstown Council – Freedom camping Policy.

<http://www.qldc.govt.nz/leisure-and-culture/freedom-camping/>

Hanmer Springs – Freedom Camping policy

<http://visithanmersprings.co.nz/accommodation/freedom-camping>

Golden Bay / Tasman – Freedom Camping Policy

<http://www.tasman.govt.nz/recreation/camping/freedom-camping/#can>

Waimakariri District – Freedom Camping Policy

<http://www.visitwaimakariri.co.nz/new-zealand/FreedomCamping/>

Southland – Freedom Camping Policy

<http://www.southlanddc.govt.nz/my-southland/freedom-camping/dunsdale/>

