

14 May 2021.

RE: Submission Supporting Sustainable Freedom Camping in Aotearoa.

This written submission is to back up the online survey response submitted via the website.

My general observations of the discussion document are that these proposed changes are impacting the entire industry when the reality is the majority of problems and negative public perception stem from the private sector (privately traded and 'certified' vehicles, often older/cheaper vehicles, and catering to the low value traveller).

The vast majority of rental operators provide functional vehicles to engaged, high value travellers and also take the time to educate and guide them on the best way to explore NZ responsibly. These operators deliver huge value to the economy and are one of the biggest drivers of regional dispersal in the country.

It is my view that the points raised in the discussion document do not accurately address the fundamental issues, which are NOT related to whether a vehicle contains a toilet or not, but more accurately centre around overcrowding; specifically: congestion in popular tourists' destinations, and a lack of disbursement of tourists.

In our experience, those travelling without a self-contained vehicle are looking for 'freedom camping' and not necessarily 'free camping'. They are prepared to pay for the use of toilet and shower facilities - if it is on offer.

Additionally, the average length of motorhome hire is around 10-14 days, so it would be highly unlikely for any travellers, whether in a self-contained van or not, to freedom camp for the entire journey.

I believe the solution is to improve the supply of freedom camping locations (potentially with a pay-to-stay model) and also improve the transfer of information to those that wish to freedom camp. For example, many privately owned 'camper-cars' are bought and sold among the travelling backpacker community. The government has no idea how many vehicles are set up like this, and there is no way for someone purchasing a private car or van which is set up to sleep in, to know where or how to use it responsibly.

In my opinion, the image on page 15 of the discussion document sums up the fundamental issue. This image displays a large number of cheap, privately owned vehicles, which may or may not be self-contained, crammed into a small car parking area in Golden Bay. This is NOT what our customers envisage when they are planning their motorhome experience around New Zealand.

As a motorhome rental company, we have the opportunity to have discussions with our guests on their travel plans when they are collecting their vehicle.

I truly believe that the vast majority of travellers (domestic and international) all do want to do the right thing, they just need the information on what their options are and where they can or cannot camp.

Sincerely-

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Privacy of natural persons