



Supporting Sustainable Freedom Camping in Aotearoa New Zealand – Submission Form

How to provide us with feedback

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) is collecting written submissions to gather a range of views on the Government's proposals to improve the management of freedom camping in New Zealand.

This submission form brings together all the questions asked throughout the discussion document *Supporting Sustainable Freedom Camping in Aotearoa New Zealand – Proposed changes to support effective management of freedom camping in New Zealand*.

Please feel free to answer as many or as few of these questions as you wish.

For more information and discussion about these topics please refer to the discussion document available at <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/have-your-say/supporting-sustainable-freedom-camping-in-aotearoa-new-zealand>.

Your submission can be returned by email to responsiblecamping@mbie.govt.nz. Submissions are due by midnight on Sunday 16 May.

Use and release of information

After the consultation period has closed, MBIE will publish a summary of submissions on our website at www.mbie.govt.nz.

We will not be publishing any individual submissions or names of individuals who made a submission. We may wish to include part of your submission in the summary of submissions; in that case, MBIE will first ensure we have your permission to do so.

If you are submitting on behalf of a business or organisation, MBIE will consider that you have consented to the content being included in the summary of submissions unless you clearly state otherwise. If your submission contains any information that is confidential or that you do not want published, you can say this in your submission.

The Privacy Act 2020 applies to your submission. Any personal information you supply to MBIE through your submission will only be used by MBIE for the purpose of producing a summary of submissions. The summary will present themes and no personally identifiable information will be included. The summary will be reported to the Minister of Tourism and be published online.

Submissions may be subject to requests for information under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA). If your submission, or part of it, comes within the scope of an OIA request, MBIE would normally release it (excluding any personal information) to the person who asks for it. If you consider there are reasons for MBIE to withhold any of the information you are providing, please indicate these reasons in your submission.

Your details

What is the name of the person making this submission?

Steve Hill (Chief Executive Officer)

If you are submitting on behalf of an organisation, what is the name of that organisation?

Clutha District Council (CDC)

Is it okay for your organisation's details to be published if we publish which organisations made a submission, or include part of your submission in the summary of submissions?

- Yes, you can publish my organisation's details with information from my submission.
 No, keep my organisation's details confidential.

Can we use information in your submission as a case study in the summary of submissions?

- Yes, you can include information from my submission as a case study in the summary of submissions.
 No, keep my information confidential.

Please provide us with your email address in case we need to contact you about your submission.

Email

Steve.hill@cluthadc.govt.nz

What sector(s) does your submission most closely relate to, if applicable?

For example, the sector in which you may work or operate, or which you represent.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accommodation provider | <input type="checkbox"/> Other tourism business |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rental vehicle business | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-tourism business |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Iwi, hapū or Māori organisation | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local Government |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual or camper | <input type="checkbox"/> Club or club representative (eg camping club) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | (please specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> N/A | |

Context to Supporting Sustainable Freedom Camping in Aotearoa New Zealand

1.1 How much do you agree that certain types of vehicle-based freedom camping is a problem? Please write a (Y) next to the option which applies to you				
Strongly agree	Agree Y	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<p>1.2 What are your views on freedom camping in vehicles?</p> <p>When answering this question you may like to think about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is vehicle-based freedom camping an issue in your area? • Have you observed any specific issues? • Are there specific behaviours which impact on your use of local amenities/infrastructure? • What benefits does vehicle-based freedom camping provide for your region? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Is vehicle-based freedom camping an issue?</i> Community consultation in the Clutha District indicates that freedom camping is seen by many residents as a major issue. The Catlins area on the south coast is an area that attracts domestic and international visitors due to its wildlife and pristine natural environment. It also has remote/scenic locations that many see as a great spot to camp overnight. Council engages with residents and crib-owners in The Catlins on a regular basis, and we have heard loud and clear from this community that they want stronger leadership and better management of freedom camping. They see it as a key issue. Other parts of the district do not experience the same number of visitors, and views on freedom camping can be more diverse. However, consultation shows that many other residents also view freedom camping as a major issue. • <i>Have you observed any specific issues?</i> In The Catlins, a key issue identified by the community is the vulnerability of the natural environment and wildlife to the impacts of irresponsible freedom camping. The elements which attract visitors to this area in the first place also make it especially vulnerable to effects such as excessive noise, vehicles, and waste (including human waste). Concerns have been raised about campers damaging the natural environment, as well as negative effects on residents. An example is ‘inconsiderate parking’ where a vehicle will pull into a gateway on a remote gravel road, and impede access for farmers wanting to move stock, and leave behind human waste and rubbish. Locals have complained they are unable to access local attractions in their own backyard, due to freedom campers taking up parking spaces for extended periods and showing “little respect” for residents or the natural environment. Issues noted by Council’s camping rangers over the 2020/21 season include dumping of waste, removing signs and bollards, vehicles and dogs disturbing wildlife on beaches, and excessive drinking. • <i>Specific behaviours...</i> See previous section. • <i>What benefits does vehicle-based freedom camping provide for your region?</i> Despite all the above, vehicle-based freedom camping does provide benefit to the Clutha District. This activity allows people to visit areas in Clutha where there are no large-scale, or top of the range accommodation options (hotels etc). This particularly applies to The Catlins, but also to other locations across the district. Visitors can stay in their own modern, comfortable space, and spend more time in 				

Clutha than might be the case if they had to stay overnight in several small towns, where accommodation options may be limited. Although most are not 'free', it is noted that there are at least 20 holiday parks, campgrounds & designated freedom camping [sites](#) in the district, as well as sites available to NZMCA members. Many of these are located in attractive, natural surroundings, and in several cases right on the coast.

Although vehicle-based freedom campers are not known as big spenders, they do spend some money as they pass through the district. This includes on groceries, coffee, fuel. However, they will often stock up on supplies in larger towns outside of the district.

How much do you support the proposal to make it mandatory for vehicle-based freedom campers to use a certified self-contained vehicle?

2.1

Please write a (Y) next to the option which applies to you

Strongly agree Y	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
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Do you support this proposal?

When answering this question you may like to think about:

2.2

- Do you consider this option will improve camper behaviour?
- Will this option support or improve tourism outcomes in your region?
- Will this option decrease pressure on the environment and local government infrastructure?
- Are there impacts of this proposal that you are concerned about?

The Clutha District Freedom Camping [Bylaw](#) already limits freedom camping on local authority areas to self-contained vehicles certified to NZS 5465:2001. CDC support this proposal as we believe it will have the following benefits:

1. It will provide consistency across the country. Currently, different districts have different requirements for self-contained/non-self-contained vehicles. A local example is the popular Catlins area, which straddles the Clutha and Southland districts. The SDC Bylaw allows camping in non-self-contained vehicles in some locations, while CDC does not. This creates confusion for visitors travelling through this area.
2. It will encourage better behaviour by campers. The number of instances of inappropriate disposal of human waste would likely reduce as a toilet would be available for use at all times by the vehicle users.
3. A nationally consistent requirement for self-contained vehicles would reduce local animosity towards freedom campers. People would become more accepting of these vehicles as they travel through their 'patch', as there would be a common understanding that they are all self-contained, and their users are less likely to have a negative impact on the environment.
4. As a result, local communities may be more willing to provide, through Council, basic facilities for freedom campers, especially where they see there is an economic benefit. A local example is the Owaka freedom camping site, where self-contained vehicles can stay overnight near the centre of town, right beside the local pub, and close to the library, cafés etc. The cost of providing such facilities may increase, but financial (e.g., waste removal in remote areas) and environmental costs (e.g., campers disturbing vulnerable wildlife on the coast) would decrease.

How might this proposal impact you?

When answering this question you may like to think about:

- Will this proposal increase or decrease the likelihood of you camping?
- 2.3 • Will this proposal have a direct financial impact on you or your business?
 - If yes, please indicate if this is a personal or business expense, and quantify how much you estimate it would impact you.
- Will this option increase or decrease the attractiveness of visiting other regions in New Zealand?

As above, CDC believes that self-contained vehicles encourage, and allow visitors to stay for longer in our district, especially in areas where there are limited accommodation options (hotels etc).

What things should Government consider to implement this option?

When answering this question you may like to think about:

- 2.4 • What exceptions should Government allow under this proposal?
 - Do you have any ideas about how this proposal could be implemented?
 - Should this option be considered alongside other options proposed in this discussion document?
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- A robust, nationally consistent method for certifying vehicles as self-contained is essential.
 - Support for local councils to ensure compliance with this proposal will be important. This includes financial support (e.g., to employ seasonal freedom camping rangers), and consistent guidance/training on ensuring compliance and educating freedom campers.
 - As such, this option needs to be combined with options 4.1 and 5.1 outlined below.

How much do you support the proposal to make it mandatory for freedom campers to stay in vehicles which are certified self-contained, unless they are staying at a site with toilet facilities (excluding public conservation lands and regional parks)?

3.1

Please write a (Y) next to the option which applies to you

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree Y	Strongly disagree
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Do you support this proposal?

When answering this question you may like to think about:

- Do you consider this option will improve camper behaviour?
- 3.2 • Will this option support or improve tourism outcomes in your region?
- Will this option decrease pressure on the environment and local government infrastructure?
- Are there impacts of this proposal that you are concerned about?

Our preference is for the option outlined in 2.1 above (i.e., to make it mandatory for vehicle-based freedom campers to use a certified self-contained vehicle, no matter where it is parked).

We believe that proposal 3.1 would increase uncertainty around freedom camping regulations, and would reduce the positive impacts outlined in our response to 2.2 above.

How might this proposal impact you?

When answering this question you may like to think about:

- Will this proposal increase or decrease the likelihood of you camping?
- 3.3 • Will this proposal have a direct financial impact on you or your business?
 - If yes, please indicate if this is a personal or business expense, and quantify how much you estimate it would impact you.
- Will this option increase or decrease the attractiveness of visiting other regions in New Zealand?

See above.

What things should Government consider to implement this option?

When answering this question you may like to think about:

- What do you think is required to achieve this option?
- 3.4 • What exceptions should Government allow under this proposal?
- How far from toilet facilities should a person be able to freedom camp if not in a vehicle with a toilet? eg, 100 metres, 200 metres?
- Should this option be considered alongside other options proposed in this discussion document?

As above, this option is not CDC's preference.

How much do you support the proposals to improve the regulatory tools for government land managers?

4.1

Please write a (Y) next to the option which applies to you

Strongly agree Y

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Do you support this proposal?

When answering this question you may like to think about:

4.2

- Are there any specific parts of this proposal you support or propose?
- Do you consider this option will improve camper behaviour?
- Will this option support or improve tourism outcomes in your region?
- Will this option decrease pressure on the environment and local government infrastructure?
- Are there impacts of this proposal that you are concerned about?

CDC generally supports the proposal to improve the regulatory tools for government land managers. Specific comments are provided below:

- **Stronger infringement scheme:** We support amending the Freedom Camping Act (2011) to ensure that those who rent vehicles are held responsible for their actions. This should include making vehicle rental companies responsible for passing on any infringement notices to campers, and holding them accountable for non-payment. CDC is neutral about the proposal to enable local authorities to issue larger fines.
- **Vehicle confiscation:** We support the proposal to amend the Act to enable the confiscation of a vehicle that does not contain a toilet, or that has received multiple fines for breaching requirements. Although this action may be unlikely in the Clutha District, it may be appropriate in other parts of New Zealand, or in extreme cases locally.
- **Regulatory system for self-contained vehicles:** We strongly support the proposal to provide national oversight of legislated requirements for self-contained vehicles, through a new or existing agency. The certification process, and the lack of compliance with the current system of vehicle certification has been identified as a major issue by residents of the Clutha District.
- **Allowing local councils to enforce rules on other government owned land:** We are neutral on this proposal. We agree that a more consistent approach across Government and local authority areas is required.

How might this proposal impact you?

When answering this question you may like to think about:

4.3

- Will this proposal increase or decrease the likelihood of you camping?
- Will this proposal have a direct financial impact on you or your business?
 - If yes, please indicate if this is a personal or business expense, and quantify how much you estimate it would impact you.
- Will this option increase or decrease the attractiveness of visiting other regions in New Zealand?

What things should Government consider to implement this option?

When answering this question you may like to think about:

4.4

- What would you like to see in practice?
- Should this option be considered alongside other options proposed in this discussion document?

CDC believes that this option should be combined with options 2.1 and 5.1, as proposed in this discussion document.

What would be an appropriate penalty?

When answering this question you may like to think about:

4.5

- Should non-compliant vehicles be confiscated? If so, under what conditions?
- If vehicles are confiscated, what conditions should be placed on returning the vehicle?
- Should fines be similar to those for not holding a valid Warrant of Fitness for a motor vehicle?
- What levels should fines be set at?
- Who should collect a fine?

Do you think that the requirements for self-containment should be strengthened?

5.1 Please write a (Y) next to the option which applies to you

Yes **Y**

Neutral

No

Is the current standard fit for purpose?

When answering this question you may like to think about:

5.2

- Should there be a requirement that self-contained vehicles have fixed toilets?
- Should there be specific reference to the types of vehicles that can be self-contained?

The requirements in the current standard are, in general, adequate. CDC has a bylaw that restricts freedom camping to vehicles that are certified as self-contained.

- Government should create a central register of certified self-contained vehicles. This would make it easier for council to enforce its bylaw. It would also address public concern about inappropriate certification of vehicles and the falsification of certification documents.
- All certified self-contained vehicles should be required to have a permanently plumbed toilet. Our freedom camping rangers note that they sometimes observe vehicles where the toilet is unable to be practically used, despite the vehicle being certified as self-contained.

Who should certify to the Standard?

When answering this question you may like to think about:

5.3

- Should any Plumber registered under the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 1976 be able to certify to the Standard, or should certifiers be separately recognised and licensed?
- Once a vehicle has passed its initial certification, should other entities be able to re-certify it?

CDC's submission is that certifiers should be separately recognised and licensed.

What transition arrangements should be in place?

When answering this question you may like to think about:

- 6.1
- How long should Government give people to upgrade or dispose of their vehicles?
 - Should currently certified self-contained vehicles be exempt from any new rules?
 - Are there any other transition arrangements we should consider?

CDC does not have a preference for implementing any transition arrangements.

How could Government ensure vulnerable groups are not further disadvantaged?

- 6.2
- Could Government make homelessness exempt from any new regulatory system? What might this look like?

People living out of their vehicle is not a common occurrence in the Clutha District. CDC does not have a view on this issue.

7.1 Is there anything else on the proposed changes or discussion document you would like to mention?

CDC is grateful for the opportunity to provide a submission on this subject.

Although their numbers are relatively small, irresponsible behaviour by some freedom campers has been of concern to residents of the Clutha District for some time, and CDC is pleased that Government is stepping up to address this issue.