

14-May 2021

PO Box 37143

Parnell

Auckland 1151



Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment
15 Stout Street
PO Box 1473
Wellington 6140
Attention: Responsible Camping Submissions

The New Zealand Four Wheel Drive Association Inc. (NZFWDA) is the largest recreational four wheel drive organisation in New Zealand with an active membership of over 2200 people, not including their families.

Recreational four wheeling frequently involves extended cross-country touring and overnight stays in back-country areas. A growing trend is the travel category often referred to as 'Overlanding' where the vehicles use rooftop tents or sometimes a specialised trailer with suspension etc. designed to cope with basic backcountry routes such as unformed legal roads or other primitive routes like disused roads.

There is little reference made in the 'freedom camping' regulations and various bylaws to the use of tents as an ancillary to a vehicle. Consequently, the ability to include a 'fixed' toilet facility within a four wheel drive (4WD) is very difficult.

A philosophy encouraged by the NZFWDA is that of 'pack it in, pack it out' and there are a growing number of products entering the NZ market to manage the short-term transport of bodily waste.

Focusing on the specifics of the four proposals:

The NZFWDA members are divided over the proposal that freedom camping in a vehicle is to be done in a certified self-contained vehicle.

The second proposal to restrict non-certified freedom campers to sites with toilet facilities could directly impact most of our members. Very few recreational 4WD vehicles have the space for anything apart from a platform for sleeping within the vehicle, thus it is usual for some form of ancillary shelter attached to or adjacent to the vehicle.

Improving the regulatory tools for government land managers may be useful, but regulation in itself does not necessarily create solutions. The Allen and Clarke "Research to inform the Responsible Camping discussion document and regulatory impact analysis" document identifies several examples of regulations being flouted or simply skirted around, such as having a certified toilet option, but preferring not to use that.

Strengthening the requirements for self-contained vehicles may remove some types of vehicles from the freedom camping fleet, although it may also discourage the use of more economic, yet environmentally effective toilet options.

The Allen and Clarke document identifies that the standard and availability of freedom camping sites in NZ is lower than in Australia and our NZFWDA members in an internal survey indicated that a stronger education message around freedom camping protocol and responsibility for their human waste should be implemented.

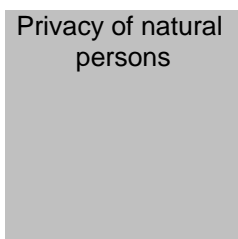
All recreations involving humans generate waste, but it tends to be those that are restricted to specific areas, such as created by limited availability of freedom camping sites, that put pressure on

the environment. Dispersed recreation and camping, along with education, such as encouraged by the NZFWDA, would seem an alternative to concentrated gatherings of freedom campers.

Among the responses to a NZFWDA member survey were... "A self-containment certificate does not make me (anyone) a better camper. Their attitude does. If the current climate (post-covid) has taught us anything, it is the desire of Kiwi's to visit and camp in our own backyard". and "I think a distinction is necessary between areas subject to high-density freedom camping along routes frequented by tourists and low-density back country and remote area camping. Education on respect for the environment needs to be at the forefront of NZ's response and both policing and penalties for abuse must be severe".

The graphic component of that survey can be found below.

Yours faithfully,



Peter Vahry
Northern Public Relations Officer
New Zealand Four Wheel Drive Association Incorporated

M +64 274 310923

nthzpro@nzfwda.org.nz