

As per our request of early this morning for more time to allow a submission we submit as below.

Dear MBIE

The NZ Outdoors Party would like to make a submission on the proposed reforms to freedom camping in New Zealand.

We have just learned that the deadline was midnight last night, and would be grateful for a 24 hour extension please so we can add the important perspective of our members.

I would be very grateful if you would please confirm this extension is available and the correct email address for lodging our submission.

Thank you and kind regards



SUBMISSION BY NZ OUTDOORS PARTY on Freedom Camping Regulations.

Prepared and lodged by President and Co-leader- Alan Simmons

Privacy of natural persons [0274 980 304](tel:0274980304)

INTRODUCTION

This submission is lodged by the **NZ OUTDOORS PARTY**, a registered political party under the Electoral Act.

The NZ OUTDOORS PARTY has a rapidly growing and active membership, who value freedom and New Zealand, including its people, tikanga and environment.

The NZ OUTDOORS PARTY promotes connection of New Zealanders with each other and with nature.

The OUTDOORS PARTY promotes:

- democracy where people play an active role in decision making, knowing their views are valued and will be listened to.
- freedom from excessive government and international interference in the lives of New Zealanders;
- more self-sufficiency for New Zealand and New Zealanders,
- better care of our water, land, soil, wildlife and of our people.
- natural and organic regenerative approaches to agriculture to promote community wellbeing and thriving rural communities and local businesses.
- “localism” to encourage and empower local people to support their local communities and have an active role in decision which affect the health and wellbeing of their community;
- food and body sovereignty;

- transparent representation and informed decision making which will promote a long-term vision for protecting and promoting the interests of all New Zealanders, our children and grandchildren.

The NZ OUTDOORS PARTY requests the opportunity to be heard in person on this submission.

SUBMISSION

Many of the concerns around Freedom Camping were caused by the government promoting freedom camping in its overseas marketing campaigns. As a result, some communities around NZ were overwhelmed by excessive numbers of tourists, in particular young backpackers. They swarmed into areas of our back country that were unregulated and often drove New Zealanders out. I personally can produce many examples of this from my own business.

The backpackers and overseas tourists have gone (at least for the duration of Covid restrictions) and NZ has settled back to mostly New Zealanders enjoying their own country.

As a result there is no immediate urgency for restricting freedom camping. Indeed the situation has reversed. Instead of managing excess overseas tourists, our goal should be to encourage and empower New Zealanders to connect with nature and outdoors for the obvious physical and mental health benefits.

I personally have had a tourism business for more than 40 years and having been on numerous tourism boards or committees and have witnessed the overwhelming rise in freedom camping until covid came along. On numerous occasions tourism bodies pushed ahead ignoring experienced and well reasoned advice and even awarded one of the companies responsible for much of the "freedom camping problems" as "business of the year" or giving the many of the companies who sprung up "Qualmark Status". The advent of the small van/car type campers caused much of the problems we are trying to address today around toilets and abuse of our back country. Everyone in the industry knew that the toilets were sealed in plastic bags and a penalty was charged if the seal was broken but no one in authority ever stood up and said this is wrong and took action. The drive for more tourists, even if they were low end, was relentless government policy.

The NZ Outdoors Party supports a tourist levy to provide for toilets and other infrastructure for tourists. However contrary to its intended purpose, only a small part of the "Tourist levy" has been used to assist regional councils to build more facilities.

We are also concerned that some regional councils have restricted freedom camping areas without any consultation with residents.

The NZ Outdoors Party believe all New Zealanders regardless of the status of their vehicle should be able to park up overnight in any area that has toilet facilities, and longer if it is in a recognised or designated area where extra facilities exist. Most New Zealanders prefer to stay longer in properly designated camps with facilities.

As a party which advocates for the right to enjoy outdoors activities, sports people must be able to participate in sport and recreation without harassment. Fisherman, kayakers, trampers, photographers and cyclists should be able to stop beside a river, beach or forest to engage in their sport. New Zealanders engaging in outdoors recreation do not and should not be restricted by freedom camping regulations.

Often the designated facilities are miles from the resource and in inaccessible places. The idea of fining New Zealanders unless they are in a registered camper van is ridiculous and contrary to the New Zealand way of life, which depends on access to the great outdoors. If I want to fish a beach over the night as often happens, I should not have to do so in fear of an infringement notice or confiscation of my vehicle.

The designation of "Fixed toilets" in campers being proposed will have the effect of making many vehicles illegal and cause an uprising amongst those who currently have van type campers with portable toilets. It is bureaucracy gone mad.

The proposal to confiscate or make illegal and phase out these vehicles is draconian and we believe will result in a substantial backlash.

Our elected representatives and public servants must remember that their role is to represent the interests of those who elected them, and those who pay their salaries. We live here, we cherish our outdoors and connecting with nature. We cherish the egalitarian idea that anyone can carry a backpack with a tent and fishing rod, or have a simple affordable vehicle and get outdoors to celebrate nature and the Kiwi way of life. We strongly oppose any steps that will restrict our access to any part of our country.

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